

THE IMRALI POST

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

Issue № 54/ 8 June 2023 ★ Contact: imralipost@freeocalan.org

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Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Union of Young Women in Euphrates region protests the isolation of Öcalan

ANF | KOBANE | 3 JUNE 2023

The Union of Young Women in the Euphrates region of North-East Syria organized a panel to discuss the aggravated isolation imposed on Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan in Turkish custody.

The panel held at the Euphrates Region Democratic Autonomous Administration Executive Council building began with a minute of silence in memory of the martyrs.

Speaking here, Euphrates Region Youth and Sports Committee Co-Chair Avaşin Misto condemned the isolation of Öcalan and the international silence about it.

Misto denounced Turkish violation of human rights and the hypocrisy of international bodies.

Abdullah Öcalan's assessments were read out during the panel, and the struggle against isolation was discussed.

The participants defined the isolation of Öcalan as a continuation of the international conspiracy, stating that more effective steps should be taken to achieve the physical freedom of the Kurdish leader.

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Demo in Ain Issa demands freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | AIN ISSA | 4 JUNE 2023

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

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

Hundreds of refugees from Turkish-occupied Gire Spi (Tal Abyad) and residents of Ain Issa staged a march on Sunday to protest the isolation regime imposed on Öcalan, chanting the slogans Bê Serok jiyan nabe” (No Life Without the Leader) and “Bijî Serok Apo” (Long Live Leader Öcalan).

The march was followed by a rally where Hedle Hec Muslim, a member of the North-East Syrian women’s umbrella organization, Kongra Star, addressed the crowd, saying: “The Turkish state has been subjecting Leader Abdullah Öcalan to aggravated isolation for over two years. In doing so, it is trying to crush the will of the leader because peoples who demand freedom base on his ideas on the path to achieve freedom, justice and democracy.”

The Kongra Star member criticized the international silence about Öcalan’s isolation and called for enhanced struggle for his freedom.



Lawyers submit another application to visit Abdullah Öcalan

ANF | ISTANBUL | 6 JUNE 2023

Asrın Law Office lawyers Rezan Sarıca, Raziye Öztürk, Mazlum Dinç and Faik Özgür Erol, applied to the Bursa Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office and the Imralı Penitentiary Directorate to meet with their client Abdullah Öcalan, who is held under heavy isolation conditions in Imralı F Type High Security Prison. Lawyers also applied to both the prosecutor’s office and the prison directorate to meet with other prisoners on Imralı; Ömer Hayri Konar, Hamili Yıldırım and Veysi Aktaş.

Background

On March 14, 2021, rumours spread on social media claiming that Öcalan had died in prison. Immediately, protests were organised around the world demanding an urgent visit by the lawyers to Imralı.

On March 25, 2021, Öcalan was able to talk with his brother Mehmet Öcalan. The short phone conversation happened about a year after a previous call, on 27 April 2020, and it is the first time since then that Öcalan had actual contact with someone outside.

The phone conversation was held under the supervision of the Urfa Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office and was very short. The call was interrupted pretty soon. Likewise, the phone call by another prisoner on Imralı, Hamili Yıldırım, with his family was also abruptly interrupted. It was reported that the other two prisoners, Ömer Hayri Konar and Veysi Aktaş, did not make the phone call they were offered to protest isolation.

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

After Öcalan's lawyers applied to a Bursa court for an "urgent meeting" on November 22, it came out that two further bans had been issued against the Kurdish leader. The Bursa court rejected the application, citing a 6-month visitation dated October 12 as a reason.

The court also rejected the application of the families for a meeting with their relatives, citing a 3-month family visitation ban issued by the Disciplinary Board of the Imrali Penal Institution dated August 18, 2021.

The Imrali Delegation, which was able to hold talks with Öcalan within the framework of peace negotiations, has not been allowed to visit the prison island since April 2015. Since the last visit of the team of lawyers on August 7, 2019, the Turkish authorities have not responded to any of the continuous requests for visits.

The Turkish authorities use the "roadmap for negotiations" submitted to the European Court of Human Rights in 2009 as the justification for the ban on visits by Abdullah Öcalan's team of lawyers.

On the other hand, the investigation launched in 2012 against lawyers of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan, Rezan Sarıca, Ali Maden, Baran Doğan, Cengiz Yürekli, İnan Akmeşe, Mahmut Taşçı and Mehmet Selim Okçuoğlu, was picked up again at the beginning of 2021.

The lawyers went to the prosecutor's office and gave a statement. After the statements were taken, the indictment prepared by the prosecutor's office was accepted by the Istanbul 33rd High Criminal Court. Lawyers are accused, among other things, of "membership of a terrorist organization", and they are expected to appear in court in September.

In the indictment, where lawyer meetings with Öcalan were shown as a criminal element, the lawyers' refusal to accept the accusations against them was also cited as a criminal element. In addition, while lawyer Cengiz Yürekli's use of his right to remain silent was shown as an element of crime, phone calls made by detainees with their families due to their profession were also considered a crime.

The most interesting subject of accusation in the indictment was that statements such as "isolation is being applied to Öcalan" and "lawyers have not been allowed to see him for 300 days" were cited as criminal elements. These were sentences contained in statements made by the lawyers to the press.

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. In a statement on 3 October, the CPT announced that Imralı F Type High Security Prison was among the institutions it visited.

However, Asrın Law Office reported that the CPT had no meeting with Abdullah Öcalan. Asrın Law Office said on 29 November: "We have heard that Mr. Öcalan did not attend the visit during the CPT's visit to Imralı Island in September 2022."

On 30 March, 2022, the CPT published its general [report](#) on its activities covering the year 2022. borders. In the course of 2022, the CPT organised 16 visits (totalling 140 days), including seven periodic visits and nine ad hoc visits. According to the report, CPT also visited the Imrali Island Prison, where Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan has been held since his arrest and handover to Turkey as a result of an inter-

national conspiracy in 1999. The report, however, did not provide any information on the conditions of the Kurdish leader who has been held in incommunicado detention in violation of domestic and international laws and standards since his imprisonment.

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Prisons in Turkey

Seriously ill Kurdish political prisoner in solitary confinement

ANF | 3 JUNE 2023

Önder Poyraz, a prisoner who was sentenced to two aggravated life verdicts, was arrested for “membership in a terrorist organization” and “threats to the unity and integrity of the state” during the curfew decreed in 2015 in Cizre.

Poyraz is fighting for his life in Erzurum-Dumlu High Security Prison. He lives with a spinal prosthesis, and has several of his organs damaged by the bullet he received when he was wounded during the curfew. Poyraz, who lives with only one kidney, said in a phone call with his wife that his right hand was paralyzed and that he was sent to solitary confinement.

Poyraz’s wife, Firdevs, said that her husband was taken to hospital by ambulance after getting ill on 7 March, but was taken back to prison without treatment. “In 2015, they removed the bullet that wounded him in the back, but all his internal organs were damaged. He lives with only one kidney. He has a lumbar disc prosthesis. The last time I went to visit my husband was 4 months ago.”

Prison prevents care

Stating that her husband demanded treatment, but the prison administration rejected his demands, Poyraz said: “They persecute the prisoners. My husband cannot eat because of his illness. He can only eat fruit, but they don’t give it to him. Everything is so expensive there that the money we send is not enough for him.”

“Prisoners must be taken care of”

Poyraz called for solidarity to improve detention conditions and ensure a fair trial. “Everyone should take care of the prisoners. We call on public opinion to show solidarity with prisoners.”

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Suspicious death in KDP custody

ANF | HEWLER | 7 JUNE 2023

KDP forces detained Zirek Ali Muhammed (40) at his restaurant in Hewlêr at noon on Tuesday. Two hours after he was taken into custody, Muhammad's family was called and informed that he had passed away.

Speaking to Rojnews, Zirek Muhammed's older brother, Zana Muhammed, stated that Zirek was detained by the KDP public order while working in his restaurant. Two hours later, the family was called and were informed that Zirek Muhammed's body had been taken to the Forensic Medicine Institute. Zana Muhammed said: "This is a suspicious death. Public order is responsible for this incident."

Zana Muhammed said that they will not take the body until they learn the real cause of death of her brother and said that if the cause of death is not disclosed, they will take the body to the Sulaymaniyah Forensic Medicine Institute.

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Former HDP MP and former mayor of Dersim, Edibe Şahin, has been released from prison

ANF | KOCAELI | 6 JUNE 2023

Kurdish politician Edibe Şahin has been released from prison. The 63-year-old was able to leave the Kandira high-security prison in Kocaeli on Monday. She had been a political hostage for around seven years. In front of the prison she was received by family members and friends.

Edibe Şahin was mayor of her native city of Dersim between 2009 and 2014. The politician was elected for the Democratic Society Party (DTP). In the local elections of 2009, the DTP won the mayoral offices in over 100 Kurdish towns and cities. The Turkish constitutional court banned the party in the same year. Its successor, the Party of Peace and Democracy (BDP), was then founded. Şahin also joined them.

In the parliamentary elections in June 2015, Şahin ran for the HDP and became the first woman from Dersim to win a mandate in the Turkish National Assembly. At that time, the HDP made it into parliament for the first time and received 13 percent of the votes nationwide. At the same time, Erdoğan's AKP lost the absolute majority. In the hastily scheduled new elections in November 2015, the HDP was able to just about maintain its result, with only 10.8 percent, remaining above the ten percent threshold that was still valid at the time.

After the elections, a period of bloody attacks and clashes began. On 20 May 2016, the immunity of HDP MPs was lifted and after the attempted military coup of 15 July 2016, the start button for the 4 November 2016 arrest operation was pressed. Scores of party members and political figures ended up behind bars, in-

cluding nine MPs and city leaders. Edibe Şahin had failed to re-enter parliament in the previous year's elections. At that time, she concentrated again on community and women's political work.

In December 2017, Şahin was sentenced to eight years and nine months in prison for “membership of a terrorist organization” and “propaganda for a terrorist organization”. Since she has served 75 percent of the sentence, she was released.



ECHR: Demirtaş and Yüksekdağ were deprived of effective assistance from their lawyers

ANF | 6 JUNE 2023

In today's Chamber judgment in the case of Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, former co-chairs of the Peoples' Democratic Party, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) held, by a majority that there had been a violation of Article 5 § 4 (right to a speedy review of the lawfulness of detention) of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The former co-chairs of the HDP, both of whom have been jailed since November 2016, complained in their application with the ECHR that they had not had effective legal assistance in order to appeal against their pre-trial detention, on account of the prison authorities' surveillance of their meetings with their lawyers and the seizure of the documents exchanged with them. The measures in question were ordered by the Turkish courts for a three-month period under Emergency Legislative Decree No. 676, which was enacted following the attempted coup of 15 July 2016.

The Court found, in particular, that the domestic courts had not demonstrated the existence of exceptional circumstances that could justify derogating from the core principle of the confidentiality of the applicants' meetings with their lawyers, and that the breach of lawyer-client privilege had deprived the applicants of effective assistance from their lawyers for the purposes of Article 5 § 4 of the Convention. It also observed that the restrictions in issue had not been accompanied by adequate and effective safeguards against abuse. Lastly, the Court found that the national authorities had not adduced any detailed evidence capable of justifying the imposition of the measures in question on the applicants under Emergency Legislative Decree No. 676.

On 22 December 2020 and 8 November 2022, the Court delivered judgments in which it held, among other findings, that the applicants' pre-trial detention had been contrary to Articles 5 (right to liberty and security), 10 (freedom of expression) and 18 (limitation on use of restrictions on rights) of the Convention, and to Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 (right to free elections).

On 15 November 2016, in the context of the applicants' detention and at the request of the Diyarbakır public prosecutor, the Diyarbakır 4th Magistrate's Court ordered the following measures under Emergency Legislative Decree No. 676: audio and video recording of the applicants' meetings with their lawyers; pres-

ence of an official during the meetings; and seizure of all the documents exchanged between the applicants and their lawyers.

The applicants appealed unsuccessfully against the orders, arguing that the judge had ordered the restrictions in question in an unlawful and arbitrary manner. On 2 and 3 January 2017, they lodged individual applications with the Constitutional Court alleging a violation of their right to liberty and security and their right to a fair trial. The Constitutional Court found no violation of the applicants' right to liberty and security, ruling that the measures in question were to be considered proportionate during the state of emergency. It declared the complaint concerning the right to a fair trial inadmissible.

According to ECHR, it was apparent from the reasoning of the decisions given by the Diyarbakır 4th Magistrate's Court that the requirement for "information, findings or documents" to have been obtained had not been satisfied. Moreover, the decisions in question had been couched in stereotypical language and had not complied with the requirements laid down by domestic law.

Furthermore, the Constitutional Court had not carried out an adequate assessment on this point or an individualised examination of the applicants' situation. It had also observed that the applicants had been found guilty of a terrorism-related offence, although at the material time, on 15 November 2016, the applicants had not been found guilty of any offence. In this context, the Court emphasised that it had found in its previous judgments concerning the applicants that there were no facts or information capable of satisfying an objective observer that they had committed the alleged offences, and that none of the decisions on the applicants' pre-trial detention contained evidence that could indicate a clear link between their actions and the terrorism-related offences for which they had been detained.

Lastly, the Court observed that if a detained person was unable to have confidential meetings with his or her lawyer, it was highly likely that he or she would not feel free to talk to the lawyer. The legal assistance provided by the latter was thus liable to lose its usefulness in practice.

The Court therefore concluded that the applicants had been deprived of effective assistance from their lawyers for the purposes of Article 5 § 4 of the Convention.

The Court held that Turkey was to pay the applicants 5,500 euros (EUR) each in respect of non-pecuniary damage and EUR 2,500 jointly in respect of costs and expenses.

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Prisoner on hunger strike is on the verge of death

ANF | AMED | 7 JUNE 2023

Prisoner Emrullah Kanioglu, jailed in Diyarbakır No. 2 T Type Prison, was taken to Diyarbakır Gazi Yaşargil Training and Research Hospital after he turned his hunger strike that had been going on for 300 days into a death fast 5 days ago.

According to reports, Kanioglu, who is originally from Mardin province, said that he did not commit the crime that he is accused of. After his conviction, he went on a hunger strike 300 days ago to demand a fair trial.

Kanioglu stopped consuming liquid food during the hunger strike after he started the death fast 5 days ago. The prisoner was taken to Diyarbakır Gazi Yaşargil Training and Research Hospital after his condition deteriorated yesterday. He was taken back to T Type Prison No. 2 after refusing to be treated.

Kanioglu was again taken to Diyarbakır Gazi Yaşargil Training and Research Hospital after he felt faint in prison today.



Kurdish journalists, one year in prison for doing their job

ANF | AMED | 8 JUNE 2023

One year ago, on 8 June, police in Amed (Diyarbakır) raided the newsroom of the website *Jin News*, confiscated computer hard drives, and also detained *Jin News* manager Safiye Alagaş and editor Gülşen Koçuk after raiding their homes and confiscating their phones and other equipment, according to those reports, which said authorities did not provide information to the journalists' lawyers about the operations or the investigation.

Diyarbakır police also detained Mezopotamya News Agency editors Aziz Oruç and Mehmet Ali Ertaş, former Mezopotamya editor Ömer Çelik, freelance journalists Lezgin Akdeniz, Kadir Bayram, and Serdar Altan, and Mehmet Şahin, a columnist with the Kurdish-language weekly *Xwebûn*.

One year on, 16 journalists are still in prison. Lawyer Resul Temur said that the indictment prepared against them accuses them for their journalistic activities and added that the long detention process has turned into an arbitrary punishment.

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

After 10 months, an indictment was prepared against 18 journalists, 2 of them not in prison, demanding 7 years, 6 months to 15 years in prison for "membership in a terrorist organization".

The first hearing of the journalists will be held on July 11 at the Diyarbakır 4th High Criminal Court.



CoE Committee of Ministers calls for the immediate release of Demirtaş and Yüksekdağ

ANF | 8 JUNE 2023

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers has published the [case-by-case decisions](#) taken during the Committee's meeting from 5 to 7 June to supervise the implementation of judgments and decisions by the European Court of Human Rights.

The Committee of Ministers adopted 38 decisions concerning 19 states during the meeting, including the cases of former co-chairs of the HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party), Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, who have been behind bars since November 2016.

The Committee of Ministers called for the immediate release of both politicians who remain in detention despite the Committee's previous calls and the interim resolution adopted to that effect at the March DH meeting;

The Deputies recalled that in the *Selahattin Demirtaş* case the Court found that the applicant was detained in the absence of evidence to support a reasonable suspicion he had committed an offence and that his arrest and pre-trial detention pursued an ulterior purpose; that the lifting of the applicant's parliamentary immunity and the way the criminal law was applied to penalise him for political speeches were not foreseeable and prescribed by law and that his consequent detention made it effectively impossible for him to take part in the activities of the National Assembly.

The Deputies expressed their deepest regret that the Constitutional Court has still not delivered its decision on the applicant's current detention and the 22nd Assize Court has not considered alternative measures to detention and that the applicant therefore remains in detention despite the Committee's previous calls and the interim resolution adopted to that effect at the March DH meeting;

In view of the Court's finding under Article 18 that the applicant's detention pursued the ulterior purpose of stifling pluralism and limiting freedom of political debate, the Deputies urged the authorities to ensure the applicant's immediate release by exploring alternative measures to detention pending the completion of the proceedings before the Constitutional Court; furthermore decided to consider further steps if the situation of the applicant remains the same by the Committee's next examination of the case;

In *Yüksekdağ Şenoğlu and Others case*, the Deputies urged the authorities to ensure the immediate release of Figen Yüksekdağ Şenoğlu who is the only applicant still detained in this case.

Military aggression and occupation

SDF captures arsonist responsible for crop burning and extortion

ANF | QAMISHLO | 3 JUNE 2023

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said in a statement that “the arsonist responsible for crop burning and extortion” was captured.

The statement said that in recent times “the Northern and Eastern Syrian regions have witnessed a series of deliberate burning of crops by unknown individuals. These acts have not only threatened the region’s food security but have also caused significant material losses to the local populace.”

The statement continued: “According to extensive investigation and monitoring conducted by our SDF special units, the causes and repercussions of these acts are ranging from intentional acts of terrorism to criminal motives.

Over the past few days, our SDF special units successfully arrested a criminal mercenary responsible for burning crops and extorting money from farmers. The criminal called Muhammad Mustafa Al-Khalaf, born in 1985 and hailing from the village of Al-Rawda in Tal Tamir, confessed to these crimes during his initial interrogations. The criminal revealed that he received SIM cards and instructions from a relative named Mahmoud, who provided him with the phone numbers of local farmers.”

The statement added: “The criminal first targeted a farmer from the Assyrian community in the Tal Tamir area, followed by a farmer from the Kurdish community in the same region. Finally, he attempted to extort funds from a farmer from the Arab community in Deir Ezzor, who had leased agricultural land in Tal Tamir. Al-Khalaf employed threats and extortion, and attempted to incite inter-component strife among the different ethnic communities.”

The statement said that “thanks to the cooperation of the local populace and thorough investigative efforts, our SDF special units successfully apprehended the criminal and dismantled this criminal network. It has been discovered that the criminal network received instructions from entities based in the Turkish-occupied areas. Ongoing investigations aim to uncover further details regarding the extent and implications of these criminal acts.”

The Syrian Democratic Forces urged “all peoples of NE Syria to cooperate and promptly report any instances of extortion or threats by terrorist and criminal gangs to the relevant security and military authorities.”

Yasir Silêman: No steps are taken to end the conflict in Syria

ANF | 3 JUNE 2023

After a 12-year hiatus, the Damascus government attended the Arab summit held in Jeddah on May 19 for the first time after the Arab League's Foreign Ministers decided to reinstate Syria into the Arab League on May 7. During the summit held in Jeddah, many important issues were discussed, including the Syria conflict that concerns the Arab world.

The Jeddah declaration pointed out that the Arabs should make further efforts to end the Syrian crisis and pave the way for the return of Syrian refugees to their country. Also, Arab leaders hope that Syria's return to the Arab League will help achieving stabilization in the country.

North and East Syria Autonomous Administration (AANES) General Assembly Co-Chair Yasir Silêman spoke to ANHA about the policies of the Damascus government and the developments that followed the Arab summit.

Silêman said: "The Damascus government should have been pressed to end the conflicts in Syria and to ease the suffering of the Syrians. In particular, a call for should have been made to embrace patriotic actions such as the declaration published by the Autonomous Administration."

Regarding the post-Arab summit process, Silêman said: "Syria's return to the Arab League is a rapprochement. However, the Syrian government still delays the issues and does not fulfil its responsibilities. No steps are taken to end the conflict and to create opportunities for a dignified life for the Syrian people through developing a peaceful and political solution."

Emphasizing that the Autonomous Administration was ready for cooperation to resolve the crisis, Silêman continued: "The Autonomous Administration issued a declaration aimed at resolving the Syrian crisis. It also introduced a roadmap that could neither be replicated nor changed. The views and decisions that emerged with the final declaration of the Arab League summit correspond with the proposals presented in the Autonomous Administration's declaration."

Silêman remarked that one of the first steps to be taken after the return of the Syrian government to the Arab League should be to start working towards solving the issue through peaceful methods and to work for the return of refugees. He added that a mechanism should be established to bring those involved in crimes to account and to launch an investigation into the fate of the disappeared."

Emphasizing the importance of resolving the Syrian crisis through peaceful and political methods, Silêman concluded: "For a genuine political transformation, states need to be active to deal with Syria. The states active in the Syrian conflict should put pressure on Syria to secure a political and peaceful transformation, safe return of refugees, disclosure of the fate of the disappeared, and reconstruction of Syria."

HPG: Attacks by the Turkish army continue

ANF | BEHDINAN | 4 JUNE 2023

According to the Press Office of the People's Defense Forces (HPG), the Turkish attacks against guerrilla forces and their positions in southern Kurdistan continue unabated.

HPG detailed the latest attacks as follows:

Western Zap region

On June 1, the Turkish army attacked our forces in Girê FM Resistance Area. Our forces responded to the attack and stopped the movement of the invaders.

On June 2, Turkish troops attacked forces in Girê FM Resistance Area. Fighters of the Free Women's Troops (YJA Star) responded to the attack, leaving one of the invaders dead and stopping their movement.

Metîna region

On May 31, our forces responded to the invaders' attack on Girê FM Resistance Area, which was then shelled with howitzers.

Attacks by the Turkish army

The Turkish army carried out 13 airstrikes targeting the areas of Ava Lolanê, Sinînê, Goşînê and Girê Şehîd Hawar in Xakurkê on June 1; the areas of Deşta Kafya and Girê Zengil in Garê on June 3; and Girê Amediyê Resistance Area in western Zap.

On June 1 and 2, a total of 152 attacks with howitzers, tanks and heavy weapons were directed against the Sîda Resistance Area in eastern Zap; Girê Cûdî, Girê Amediyê and Girê FM in western Zap; Girê Şehîd Piling Resistance Area in Metîna; Girê Şehîd Hakî, Girê Şehîd Kamuran and Ava Lolanê in Xakurkê.

On June 1, the Girê FM Resistance Area was bombed twice with explosives.

The Turkish army continued trying to demolish the guerrillas' positions in Girê FM Resistance Area with heavy construction equipment on June 2.

Turkey continues to build colonial settlements in occupied Afrin

ANF | 4 JUNE 2023

Turkey continues to build colonial settlements in occupied Afrin in northern Syria. In the course of the policy of ethnic cleansing, selected groups are settled in the newly built housing blocks by the Turkish state. Most recently, a settlement was built in the village of Kefer Rûmê in the district of Shera. The settlement consists of 50 four-storey buildings. Another 200 residential buildings are to be built near the village.

Settlement construction in the Turkish occupied zone is taking place with the support of “aid organisations” from Qatar, Kuwait and Palestine. Fifty new residential buildings have recently been built in the village of Shadar in the Sherawa district. Preparations have been made for further settlements on the thirty-hectare site.

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



Balance sheet of Turkish violations and SDF operations against ISIS in May

ANF | 4 JUNE 2023

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) released a balance sheet of violations by the Turkish state and anti-ISIS operations by the SDF during the month of May.

The balance sheet published by the SDF Media Center on Sunday includes the following:

“The Turkish occupying State and its affiliated mercenaries have committed numerous violations against the occupied areas and the safe areas of North-East Syria. These violations include killings, kidnappings for ransom, theft of civilians’ money and property, deforestation and cutting fruit trees (particularly olive trees) to sell them as firewood, imposing royalties, extortion, and looting of antiquities and buried treasures through illegal excavations and bulldozing of archaeological sites. Following the earthquake, there has been an accelerated construction of settlements, especially in the occupied region of Afrin, under the

supervision of Turkish intelligence services operating under the guise of fictitious “charitable” associations and organizations.

In the areas covered by the Ceasefire Agreement, the Turkish occupying forces have targeted them using artillery and airstrikes, resulting in the loss of civilian lives, as well as damage to the region’s infrastructure.

The consequences of these violations and acts of terrorism are as follows:

Number of abductions in the occupied regions of Afrin in May: 25 civilians, including four women.

Reported cases of rape: Two minors were raped by Turkish occupation mercenaries in the occupied Afrin.

Deforestation: In May alone, the mercenaries of the Turkish occupation cut down a total of 2,124 olive and pomegranate trees in the occupied Afrin region. Additionally, approximately 18,000 olive trees were burned. Furthermore, intentional fires destroyed numerous forest trees.

Excavation and bulldozing of archaeological sites: Six archaeological hills and a Yazidi shrine were subjected to excavation in the occupied Afrin.

Moreover, a stone quarry was established to transport stones to Turkey.

Demographic change: Four new settlements were established with the support of associations affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and organizations connected to the Turkish occupation intelligence. These settlements were built on lands of the forcibly displaced Kurdish people. The Turkish occupation also constructed a mosque in the city center of Afrin and named it after a Turkish man to change the identity of the Kurdish city. Additionally, a new camp was established in the village of “al-Muhammadiyah” in the countryside of the town of “Jenderesa/Jenderes.”

Artillery and tank attacks: 32 incidents

UAV Attacks: 4

Military martyrs: 4

Civilian martyrs: 2

Civilian injuries: 9

Killed soldiers of Damascus Government Forces: 4

The number of shells fired: More than 45 artillery shells, mortars, tanks, and missiles were fired on various areas. The majority of these shells landed in the districts of Ain Issa, the occupied Afrin countryside, and Tal Tamir.

Anti-ISIS and Anti-Turkish Spies Operations during May 2023

During May 2023, our Anti-terrorism Units (YAT) conducted intensified and precise security operations against ISIS cells. Some of these operations were in coordination with the Counter-Terrorism Group (CTG) of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and with the participation and support of international Coalition Forces., our forces successfully arrested dozens of mercenary terrorists who were planning to target SDF forces and civilians, as well as extort them under the guise of “zakat” payments. Significant quantities of weapons, ammunition, military equipment, and communication devices were seized. Furthermore, severe blows were dealt to the remnants of ISIS cells, leading to the destruction of their hideouts and strongholds. Additionally, our forces dismantled several spy networks linked to the Turkish occupation intelligence. The captured agents, through their confessions, admitted their involvement in targeting our fighters and civilians. They also admitted to carrying out bombings within Autonomous Administration institutions in exchange for monetary gains.

The outcomes of the security and military operations against ISIS cells underscore the ongoing threat posed by terrorist elements and their preparations to carry out attacks in the region. There is information indicating the organization’s attempts to reorganize its ranks in various Syrian regions and launch new terrorist attacks.

The outcome of Anti-ISIS operations during May is as follows:

Unilateral operations: 12 operations, including one operation against Turkish spies.

Partnered operations: 4 operations with the participation of the Counter-Terrorism Group (CTG) of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the International Coalition Forces.

Terrorists captured: 21 terrorists, including two spies linked to the Turkish Occupation.

Terrorists killed: 1

In the face of ongoing attacks targeting the regions of North-East Syria, our SDF reaffirm their unwavering readiness to deter any potential threats and to ensure the safety and security of the region and its population.”



Turkish drone attack kills one person and injures another in Sulaymaniyah region

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 5 JUNE 2023

On Sunday night, an unmanned armed aircraft belonging to the Turkish state carried out an attack on two people on motorcycles near the Qelereş Valley in the Sharbajêr region of Sulaymaniyah.

According to information obtained from local sources, one person was killed and another injured.



HPG: Sinan, Mazlum and Ararat fell as martyrs in South Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 5 JUNE 2023

Guerrillas Sinan Dijwar, Mazlum Koçer and Ararat Tolhildan fell as martyrs in an attack in South Kurdistan on 10 March. The Press Center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG)

issued a statement to pay tribute to the fallen guerrillas. "Our commander and comrade Sinan Dijwar, together with our comrades Mazlum Koçer and Ararat Tolhildan, fell as a result of an enemy attack on 10 March 2023 while fulfilling his task in Başûrê Kurdistanê. Heval Sinan devoted thirty years of his life to the liberation struggle and, as a loyal PKK militant, took on tasks at regional command level. His death along with that of our other two comrades represents a great loss in our struggle. Our friends Sinan, Mazlum and Ararat dedicated their entire lives to the free future of our people and fought unreservedly for it. We express our condolences to the precious families of our fallen companions and to the entire people of Kurdistan."



Turkey-backed mercenaries lay a tax on grape trees in Afrin

ANF | 5 JUNE 2023

The Turkish state and its mercenaries, which occupied Afrin in 2018, continue their inhumane crimes, such as killings, kidnappings for ransom, theft of civilians' money and property, deforestation and cutting fruit trees (particularly olive trees) to sell them as firewood, imposing royalties, extortion, and looting of antiquities and buried treasures through illegal excavations and bulldozing of archaeological sites.

According to information provided to ANHA by a source from the Shiye district of Afrin, the Al-Amshat mercenary group receives a tax of 1 dollar for each grape tree in the vineyards that belong to the Afrin people.

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



19 young men join Yazidi Asayish forces in Shengal

ANF | SHENGAL | 5 JUNE 2023

Yazidi youth continue joining the Asayish (Public Security Forces) in the Yazidi town of Shengal (Sinjar) in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). 19 young men from the villages and towns of Shengal have joined the ranks of the Asayish most recently.

The participation of the new members came after completing a military training cycle that lasted 30 days.

The military ceremony marking the end of their cycle and participation in the ranks of struggle began with one minute's silence to commemorate the victims of the 74th massacre suffered by the Yazidi community in 2014.

Military discipline, Yazidi history and self-defence were taught during the cycle in the Martyr Dijwar Term at Shengal Academy.

At the ceremony, Zinar Feqir made a statement on behalf of the Yazidi Asayish Administration and congratulated the new members. Feqir said: "We have many enemies, especially the invading Turkish state and its collaborators, who want to massacre us and to implement their vicious plans against our people and Shengal. They are bombing Shengal with fighter jets in an attempt to make us stop fighting. We have just completed a training cycle, and this is the biggest blow and response to the enemy. We can dub this training cycle the revenge of the martyrs."

Feqir continued: "We will fight to protect our people, whatever the cost, and we will not surrender our people to anyone. We made a promise, and we will continue to fight in the footsteps of martyrs. Because as the Yazidi people, we have been subjected to numerous massacres and never protected. There is no other way but to resist. We have paid a huge price with hard work and struggle, and we deserve to live freely."

After the military ceremony, İlyas Xwedêda made a statement on behalf of the Shengal Executive Board and stated that the Yazidi youth who considered themselves responsible for the defence of their land and people boosted their morale and strength. Xwedêda added: "This will, which develops in Shengal and makes our people feel responsible for their society, emerged thanks to the efforts of Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan. Resistance remains essential for our people to live freely and govern themselves."

In a speech on behalf of the Yazidi Women's Freedom Movement (TAJÊ), Rîhan Xidir said: "When our youth complete their training and undertake responsibility for their people, this gives us strength. It is our duty to embrace the labour of the martyrs."

The Yazidi Asayish Administration then presented a photo of Martyr Dijwar Faqir (Mervan Bedel), who was martyred as a result of an attack organized by Turkish intelligence MIT and KDP's intelligence Parastin in Xanesor (Khanasor) on December 7, 2022, to his mother.

After the oath-taking ceremony, the Asayish forces performed a traditional dance with the citizens present at the ceremony.



Mercenary gunfire injures two civilians in occupied Girê Spî

ANF | 5 JUNE 2023

The Turkish occupying army and its mercenary factions persist in committing human rights violations against the remaining population in the occupied territories.

Following the occupation of the Girê Spî Canton by the Turkish state and its mercenaries on October 9, 2019, thousands of its residents were forcibly displaced. The local people who remain in the canton are subjected to never-ending repression and attacks at the hands of the occupation forces.

According to ANHA, gunfire by Jabha al-Shamiya mercenaries injured two residents of the town of Ain al-Arus on Sunday evening.

According to the report, the injured civilians, named as Yasir El Emar and Xalid El Emar, were taken to Girê Spî Hospital.



HPG Commander Çiya: The elections have been a robbery by the regime

ANF | 6 JUNE 2023

HPG commander Yaşar Çiya talked to ANF about the past eight years of the freedom struggle. After the Rojava revolution and the increasing political successes of the radical democratic paradigm of the freedom movement, in 2015 the Turkish state launched the “plan of subjugation” and ended the ceasefire. In addition, it attacked the northern Kurdish cities where people had proclaimed democratic autonomy. Since then, a hot war of high intensity has been raging. Commander Çiya underlined that the Turkish state was unsuccessful with its plan of annihilation and instead pushed the country into a deep economic, political and social crisis, spending money on war.

These were not elections, but a robbery by the regime

Commander Çiya said: “To overcome this crisis, the regime hoped to prolong its life through elections. After the earthquake of 6 February, the situation of the Turkish state deteriorated even further. Before the elections, everyone had already seen that the Turkish state had failed in its attacks on the Kurdish people and their movement. It was expected that this would be the last period of the AKP-MHP government. People too thought this. In fact, both the people of Kurdistan and Turkey wanted to get rid of this regime. But these elections were not elections, they were a robbery by the regime. The government made the following calculation: militarily speaking, the AKP-MHP regime was defeated, but this was not only the de-

feat of the AKP-MHP, but also that of the Turkish state. Although the election was ostensibly presented as a democratic election, this was not the case at all. All institutions worked together. The regime tried to create an image as if the people supported it. However, this was not true. The regime acted as if the elections took place in a democratic environment and the people supported them. As if the people had chosen the regime under such circumstances. But the truth is different. The Turkish state has committed systematic fraud. This is a novelty.”

Erdoğan is just a puppet

Commander Çiya said: “The problem is not the AKP-MHP. The problem is the fascist mentality of the Turkish state. The AKP and Erdoğan are puppets in the hands of the state. The state has taken Erdoğan hostage; he's just a puppet. Erdoğan has certain qualities, the state uses them. Like Islamic identity, for example. These properties are used extensively. Both in relation to North Kurdistan and the entire Middle East. This reality must be seen. The people must understand this.”

The Turkish state has reached a historic low

Commander Çiya underlined that “the election results therefore do not reflect the will of the people of Turkey.”

As to North Kurdistan, he said: “Our people in North Kurdistan have made their will clear. During the elections, the will of Kurdistan became clear. The people rejected the regime. It showed the regime the red card. This is a historic success, a historic message to the fascist Turkish state.”

— ★ —

Gendarmerie and police attack a village in Şırnak

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 6 JUNE 2023

The village of Oyali (Qesra Develê) in Idil district of Şırnak was occupied by units of the police and gendarmerie (military police) on Tuesday morning. In the village, the Green Left Party won 80 per cent of the votes in the parliamentary elections on 14 May. Apparently, electricity is to be cut off in the village with over 3000 inhabitants.

The Turkish forces used water cannons and tear gas in the raid. People in the village are resisting state terror and say they are collectively punished because of the election results.

— ★ —

Another civilian kidnapped in occupied Afrin

ANF | 6 JUNE 2023

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

The so-called “Military Police”, a paramilitary criminal network established by the Turkish state in the occupied Afrin region, kidnapped a civilian from the Jindires district.

According to local sources, a 34-year-old resident of the village of Heciler, identified as Amir Muslim Silêman, was kidnapped by the occupation forces and his aftermath remains unknown.

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 Afrin-Syrian Human Rights Organization reported on June 1 that the Turkish state and its mercenaries (police, civilian police, al-Jabha al-Shamiya and al-Amshar gangs) 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.



YRK fighter martyred in Turkish drone attack

ANF | 7 JUNE 2023

In a written statement on Wednesday, the Defence Forces of Eastern Kurdistan (YRK) Press Office reported that the Turkish state bombed Mount Asos on 3 and 4 June.

Accordingly, the attack at 8 p.m. on 4 June was carried out by an armed drone of the Turkish occupying state and directed against YRK fighters who were carrying out their duties near the village of Gelale.

YRK stated that one of their fighters was martyred as a result of the attack, and that his identity would be made public in the next few days.

The village of Gelale is located in the town of Mawet, which is situated at the foothills of Mount Asos. Air strikes by Turkey in violation of international law have been routine for years in the region, which lies a good 200 kilometres from the Turkish state border. Other areas of the territory of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and Iraq, especially those where Kurdish guerrillas are suspected, but also civilian settlement areas such as Shengal, are also regularly bombed by the Turkish army.



307 IDPs return to Shengal and Nineveh

ANF | 7 JUNE 2023

The Iraqi Ministry of Immigration issued a written statement concerning the return of IDPs who had been staying in camps in South Kurdistan since the ISIS onslaught on Shengal, on 3 August 2014.

According to the statement, 307 IDPs from the Sharya Camp in Duhok returned to Shengal and the village of Cezire in Nineveh yesterday.

According to the statement, the IDPs in question have returned to their lands voluntarily and would be provided with all the help they need.

Background

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

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

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



5-year-old child killed by Turkish military vehicle in Yüksekova

ANF | HAKKARI | 7 JUNE 2023

A five-year-old child was hit by an armored vehicle of the Turkish army while on the move from Yüksekova district of Hakkari to Van province.

According to reports, the armored vehicle was driven by a specialist sergeant from Yüksekova District Gendarmerie Command. The child died at the scene and the body was taken to Yüksekova State Hospital.

Time and again, there are alleged accidents caused by armoured police and military vehicles in Kurdish cities. According to a tally by the Human Rights Foundation Turkey (TIHV), at least 19 people have died in so-called armoured accidents in the Kurdish region between 2018 and 2022, including nine children and young people. Another 50 people were injured, 14 of whom were under the age of 18. The perpetrators are not held accountable, and soldiers and police officers generally do not fear criminal consequences.



Turkey further reduces Euphrates water in summer increasing problems in Northern and Eastern Syria

ANF | 8 JUNE 2023

Temperatures are expected to be high in the region this summer. The interruption of the supply of the Euphrates River by the Turkish state will further aggravate the situation of the people of Northern and Eastern Syria. The water problem of the Euphrates River increases every year in the summer months and reaches a catastrophic level.

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the Turkish state started to use the water level of the Euphrates River as a war tool by constantly violating the agreement it signed with Syria in 1987. According to this agreement, the Turkish state must release 500 cubic meters of water per second, and Syria has to share this amount with Iraq.

However, the vacuum and security problem created by the crisis in Syria enabled the Turkish state to control the waters of the Euphrates River on its own, without being accountable to anyone. As a result, the Turkish state is stealing the share of water that is the right of Syrians.

After the Rojava (Tişrîn) Dam and the Tabqa Dam were liberated from ISIS, the Turkish state began to cut off the water of the Euphrates River.

The Turkish state has been cutting off the water of the Euphrates from time to time since 2016. A large amount of water that must flow into Syria has been cut off since 2021, leaving a flow of only 200 cubic meters of water per second.

Deeper crisis in the summer

The amount of water released during the summer season is decreasing and the crisis is getting deeper. Since the natural flow of water decreases after the spring, the Turkish state steals the Syrians' share of the river's water. For this reason, the amount of water passing through Syria and then entering Iraq is further decreasing.

In the summer of 2021, the water level in Tişrîn Dam Lake reached 4 meters. In the Euphrates Dam, which contains 14 billion cubic meters of water in the 80 km long and 8 km wide reserve, it reached 6 meters.

More water is consumed in summer. While 25 cubic meters of water is used for drinking, 75 cubic meters of water evaporates without any benefit. Between 140-160 cubic meters of water is used in agricultural irrigation projects in summer.

This means that 240-260 cubic meters of water are consumed every second. However, the water in the reservoirs of the lakes is also decreasing. The water coming from Turkey does not exceed 200 cubic meters per second and does not meet the needs of the region.

The amount of water required to be given to farmers for irrigation is also decreasing, and so are the hours of electricity. On the contrary, the level of pollution in river waters is increasing, and with the increase in temperature, microbes are too. As a result, hundreds of poisonings, diarrhoea and skin diseases occur, especially in the summer.

This situation is expected to affect electricity the most, because the General Directorate of Dams gives importance to drinking water first, then comes agriculture and finally electricity. For this reason, electricity distribution hours will decrease, as there will be water shortages for farmers in the region.

Problems in agriculture

According to many agriculture committees and boards in different regions, the difficulty of obtaining the required amount of water will damage 90,000 hectares of wheat, cereals, orchards and fruit trees in Syria irrigated by river water. Since the summer of 2020, 400 thousand hectares of agricultural land have been left without water. The Dam Administration recently warned that 600 thousand hectares of agricultural

land on the banks of the Euphrates River in Syria could be damaged due to the Turkish state's continuous reduction of river water.

Tiştirin Dam Administration announced on 1 March 2023 that the dam was out of service due to the water level and that cities, towns and villages in Northern and Eastern Syria were without electricity. After sufficient water was collected, the dam started working again on 8 March.



No news about two guerrillas wounded and captured by the Turkish state

ANF | 8 JUNE 2023

The HPG has been in a position of inaction since 9 February. However, clashes continue to occur frequently as the Turkish state has intensified its attacks, ignoring the inaction decision taken by the guerrillas.

Clashes are taking place, especially because of the Turkish army's incessant attacks on the war tunnels in Zap's Çemço Resistance Area.

According to the information provided by the sources in the region, Sarina (Gülistan Gülmez), who was born in 1990 in Mersin, was wounded on 2 June, and Xabur (Hesen Remzi), who was born in 1996 in Afrin, was wounded and captured on 3 June.

It is stated that both guerrillas were subjected to pressure and torture for days and were forced to make confessions. Their families, who have not heard from the wounded guerrillas, are worried.



44 people, including 21 children, killed by military and police vehicles in the Kurdish region

ANF | AMED | 8 JUNE 2023

The Amed (Diyarbakır) Branch of the Human Rights Association (IHD) has released its report on deaths in the Kurdish region caused by vehicles used by soldiers and the police. The report noted that 5-year-old Erdem Aşkan lost his life after he was hit by a vehicle driven by a specialized sergeant in the Gever (Yüksekova) district of Hakkari province on June 7.

In a reference to the “Report on Violations of the Right to Life Due to Armoured Vehicle Crashes” published by the IHD in July 2019, the report said that further deaths and injuries have been recorded in the Kurdish region since.

‘44 people killed’

The report continued: “With the death of Erdem on June 7, 2023, a total of 44 citizens, including 21 children, lost their lives in 82 crashes involving armoured vehicles and vehicles under the control of the law enforcement, while 94 citizens, 23 of whom were children, were injured in Kurdish cities in the last 15 years.”

The report emphasized that killings by vehicles were not independent of the Kurdish question. It added: “Due to irregular use of armoured military vehicles in Kurdish cities that experience violence and conflicts related to the Kurdish question, crashes have become common and continue to violate the right to life.”

IHD listed their demands as follows:

- Removal of armoured vehicles, the employment of which is noncompliant in areas of social life in accordance with scientific reports, from civilian settlements;
- Disincentive measures against violations by law enforcement officers serving in the region, caused by careless driving that endangers citizens’ right to life;
- Effective judicial and administrative investigations against law enforcement officers involved in crashes that caused deaths and injuries.”

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Ahl al-Bait Association will fight ISIS-Turkish reactionism

CEMIL EBDO / MUSTAFA ÇOBAN | TABQA | 8 JUNE 2023

The North and East Syrian Association of Al-Ashraf Ahl al-Bait (Devotees of the Prophet Muhammad) announced its establishment at a conference held in Tabqa on June 3, 2023. The association, which is based on the Charter of Medina, is organized under the umbrella of the Democratic Islamic Congress and will establish a special council at the General Council of the Congress. The association will form committees and open offices in all cities of North and East Syria. 15 members will be assigned to each committee. It will also maintain close relations with all institutions and organizations in North and East Syria.

Şêx Sînan Seydoş, Head of the Ahl al-Bait Faith Association, explained the founding purpose and function of the association to ANF, saying: “We had the opportunity to establish the Ahl al-Bait Association in the North and East Syria regions under the umbrella of the Democratic Islamic Congress. We sought to determine the working and management model of the Ahl al-Bait Association at the founding conference.

We want to spread the ideas and moral teachings of the Prophet in society as extremist groups acting under the name of Islam have corrupted and discredited the religion of Islam in every aspect.”

Seydoş added: “One of our aims and objectives is to reveal the essence of Islam by creating peace and unity between Muslims and Christians, between all religions and beliefs. As the Ahl al-Bait movement, we want to take our place in the Muslim community and warn our society not to fall into the trap of forces like the Turkish state which abuses Islam against societies.”

Women’s offices will be opened

Diya Al-Makdad, a member of the Ahl al-Bait Faith Association, pointed out that the Ahl al-Bait movement, which is also of great importance for women, would introduce major changes. She said: “Throughout history, women have been ignored in every aspect and their voices have been suppressed. All the achievements and views of women have been undermined under the cover of religion. With the Ahl al-Bait founding conference, we wanted to promote women’s voices and women’s participation in all areas of life, including in the field of religion. Therefore, we will lead Muslim women and help them get rid of extremist ideas.”

Al-Makdad continued: “Women’s committees will be formed within the Ahl al-Bait Association. These committees will constantly inform women about religion and faith. Likewise, we will follow in the footsteps of Fatma Zehra by including women in the activities of the association. Women’s offices of the Ahl al-Bait movement will be opened in all cantons and regions of North and East Syria, so that we can spread our ideas within the community.”

‘Turkey’s abuse of Muslims will be stopped’

Naser Din Cüneyd Al Sayadî, Office Director of the Ahl al-Bait Association, revealed that their main activity would be to stop the efforts of the Turkish state against all Muslims, including Syrian Muslims. He said: “We know very well how the AKP government used the Syrians to prolong its rule before and during the elections. We will protect Muslims, especially Syrians, from becoming a puppet controlled by foreign forces. We established the Ahl al-Bait faith association in partnership with the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. I would like to urge our people and tribal leaders living under the occupation of the Turkish state not to fall into the trap of colonial powers and to reclaim their roots and nobility.”

‘We will eliminate false notions’

Democratic Islamic Congress Co-Chair Delal Xelîl pointed to the vicious policies against Rojava, stating: “All these vicious policies are pursued under the name of Islam. Especially recently, many extremist views and organizations have emerged. We all know only too well that the Turkish state promotes reactionary ideas. Therefore, we, as the Democratic Islamic Congress and the religion and faith union of North-East Syria, consider it our duty to eliminate these violent and vicious ideas.”

Xelîl added: “We wanted to intervene after witnessing how they wanted to destroy society by abusing Islam. With the introduction of true Islam, women will have a role and mission. We discussed how we could protect our society from these schemes by bringing together male and female religious figures. Be-

cause ISIS must also be defeated intellectually. The influence of the radical ideas of ISIS still exists in society. Some people interpret Islam in line with their own interests. The Ahl al-Bait faith movement seeks to eliminate false notions. We will develop the religion of Islam by referring to the Charter of Medina, Prophet Muhammad and the holy book of Islam.”

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Maxmur Refugee Camp

Children of Maxmur Refugee Camp resist Iraqi blockade

ANF | MAXMUR | 3 JUNE 2023

The seeds of resistance by the people of Botan are growing in the hearts and minds of children. Children in the Martyr Rustem Cudi Refugee Camp in Maxmur in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), who grew up with this tradition of resistance, have high hopes for themselves in the lands of resistance. Together with their parents, they are keeping guard in resistance tents with their songs and slogans for freedom, defending their will for 15 days.

Since May 20, the Iraqi army has been trying to besiege the Maxmur Refugee Camp with barbed wire and watchtowers. The camp residents have been protecting their will from the siege attempt and refuse to surrender. The residents of the camp continue to keep guard in resistance tents. The participation of children in the vigil with their songs brings enthusiasm and joy to the resistance.

The resistance that has grown in Maxmur for years can be seen in the eyes of the children in the camp today. The resistance can be discerned in the songs, slogans, laughter and hopes of children, who are holding their mother's hands as they happily go to the resistance tents. They are strengthening the struggle of their parents with the slogan 'Biji Berxwedana Mexmurê' (Long Live the Resistance of Maxmur).

The camp children are taking the culture of resistance one step further with songs and slogans of resistance. They are pinning their hopes on themselves. In the words of the children who grew up with a culture of resistance, even if only children are to be remembered from this resistance, the struggle will continue.

— ★ —

Maxmur people's resistance against Iraqi siege continues on day 16

ANF | MAXMUR | 4 JUNE 2023

The Iraqi army has been besieging Maxmur Camp since May 20, surrounding the self-governing camp with barbed wire and trenches and installing surveillance towers. The residents are putting up determined resistance around the clock and respond immediately to any attempt to advance the militarisation of the camp.

Several attempts by the security forces to enter Maxmur and implement the planned militarisation have so far failed due to the resistance of the residents. The people are blocking the army and thus preventing the establishment of an open-air prison. Diplomatic negotiations have not brought any results so far.

The residents of the camp continue to keep guard around the clock to defend their will.

They have erected guard tents where people discuss and sing on the 16th day of resistance against the siege.

About twelve thousand people live in Maxmur, which is located southwest of Hewlêr (Erbil) in an area disputed between the South Kurdistan regional government and the Iraqi government in Baghdad. A large part of the Maxmur residents was expelled by the Turkish state in the 1990s in the course of the anti-Kurdish "counterinsurgency" and the so-called scorched earth policy - under the pretext of fighting the PKK, about 3,000 villages were depopulated or burnt down at that time. After an odyssey of several years and stays in various camps, the people founded the Maxmur camp on the edge of the desert in 1998. The camp population thus forms the largest Kurdish refugee community worldwide.

Officially, Maxmur is under the protection and control of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), but in practice the organisation is only nominally present. It left the camp during the attacks of ISIS in 2014 and did not return afterwards. In the course of the resistance in Maxmur against the military blockade, however, the organisation was forced to hold talks with the People's Council of the self-administered camp. The promises made by the UN and the government in Baghdad to end the siege have not yet been honoured.

Since 2019, the camp has been subject to an embargo by the government of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), dominated by the Barzani party KDP, at Turkey's request. The Barzani clan collaborates with the Turkish state, including in the "fight" against the Kurdish guerrillas. The current crackdown on Maxmur Camp is also likely due to an initiative by the Turkish state, which criminalises the camp as a "breeding ground" of the Kurdish Workers' Party, PKK, and argues that the camp must be "cleaned up". The Maxmur People's Council suspects that Ankara is using water as leverage against Baghdad. Iraq has been suffering from a devastating drought for years and Turkey is believed to be making the dismantling of Maxmur Camp a precondition for lifting the water blockade of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

Iraqi army withdraw from Maxmur

ANF | MAXMUR | 4 JUNE 2023

Maxmur Democratic People's Assembly said this evening that as a result of the agreement reached, the Iraqi army withdrew from around the camp and the people's vigil came to an end.

Democratic People's Assembly Co-chair Yusuf Kara said: "Our people have been resisting the siege by the Iraqi army for 16 days. This siege was not something new. In 2021, they wanted to surround our camp by wire fences. The attacks in question are being developed under the pressure of the Turkish state and the Barzani family. The KDP and the Turkish state want to evacuate the Maxmur Camp. The people living in the camp have not violated Iraqi laws so far. In our meetings with Iraq, we constantly reminded them that they should not act in line with the wishes of the Turkish state and the KDP.

On 20 May, the Iraqi army once again wanted to besiege Maxmur. However, our people developed resistance against this siege."

Kara added: "We had many meetings. We held our last meeting in Baghdad. As a result of the negotiations, we came to an agreement to solve the problems through dialogue. The Iraqi army withdrew its forces. For this reason, we have terminated our actions. However, it should be known that whenever there is an attack and the will of the people of Maxmur is wanted to be surrendered, this people's resistance will be met.

As the people of Maxmur, we would like to thank all institutions, parties and individuals who supported us and stood up."

Background

The people of Maxmur have been resisting for 16 days against the blockade initiated by the Iraqi army on the camp on 20 May. The Great Democratic People's Assembly and the Diplomacy Committee held many meetings with Iraqi officials for the Iraqi army to end the blockade.

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Ünver: The resistance in Maxmur was successful but the dangers are still there

REBER COLEMERG / AWYER BOTAN | MAXMUR | 6 JUNE 2023

Martyr Rûstem Cûdî Refugee Camp (Maxmur) Foreign Relations Committee member Bêwar Ünver spoke to ANF about the Iraqi state's attempt to surround Maxmur and the resistance to the attacks.

Ünver said that the Iraqi army tried to surround the camp with armored and military vehicles on 20 May, and added: “The Iraqi army blockaded the camp with armored and military vehicles on 20 May, together with the police. When the people saw this, they stepped in front of the armored vehicles and defended their will against the Iraqi army by using their democratic rights. Day after day, the resistance grew. After 30 years, the people will never accept that wire fences are built around the camp, surrounded by towers, ditches are dug.

Our resistance made the Iraqi government reconsider its decision. This resistance brought good results. Righteous resistance will always result in victory. Resistance brought success. The struggle and will of the people led to results from the meetings. The Iraqi state had previously said that only one group did not want these towers but, on 20 May, they saw the will of the people. The people had a very strong will.”

Ünver said: “The Maxmur resistance proved once again that the will of this people cannot be broken by oppression and cruelty. Everyone from 7 to 70 took their place in the resistance. This situation shocked the Iraqi state. The Maxmur resistance both pushed the Iraqi state back and got the Kurdish public opinion to react. Without the resistance, the Iraqi army would have surrounded the camp in a matter of hours.”

The UN is under the influence of the Turkish state

Criticizing the UN’s attitude towards oppression and sieges, Ünver said: “The UN recognized us as political refugees from 1994 until 2014, when the ISIS attacks took place. But after the ISIS attacks, they left instead of protecting the camp. Since then, they have not protested to the attacks on the camp, to the pressures, and to the KDP’s embargo. Many talks were held, but the UN preferred to remain silent. They left unanswered the reports we sent from the camp. It is obvious that the UN is acting under the influence of the Turkish state.”

Ünver continued: “After the siege attempt on 20 May, the UN returned again as a result of the resistance of the people of Maxmur. The struggle of the people in the camp against the Iraqi soldiers forced the UN to return to the camp. The UN came to understand the situation in the camp, to document the violence perpetrated by Iraqi soldiers and the injury of a young man. The UN must fulfil its duties and responsibilities within the framework of international law. There are some talks with Iraq on this issue, and time will tell how these will turn out.”

Emphasizing that the Turkish state’s attacks against Maxmur continue, Ünver added: “There is no doubt that the attacks carried out by Iraq and the Turkish state will not end. We may encounter such attacks in the coming days. Attacks on the camp are linked to the concept of war. The fascist AKP-MHP government will continue to attack the camp and the gains of the Kurdish people. The people of Maxmur will resist as they have resisted until now.”

Ünver underlined that “the institutions and people in Maxmur have long brought the issue of security to the agenda of the Iraqi government, the UN, civil organizations and the public. In 2014, ISIS gangs attacked the camp and a heavy price was paid. Since 2017, the Turkish state has been carrying out airstrikes. The Turkish government and ISIS launched coordinated attacks from the ground. Many martyrs were killed and injured in these attacks. We have always put this on the agenda of the Iraqi government. Ac-

cording to the Iraqi government constitution, they are responsible for the needs of political refugees as well as for their defense.

The Maxmur resistance was supported by our people abroad as well, who put pressure on the Iraqi government. But we should be careful. In addition to negotiations about a solution to the problem, there is pressure from the other side to turn it into a crisis. The Kurdish people should be careful. It is unclear what will happen tomorrow. As the people of Maxmur, we are in favor of solving problems through dialogue. Iraq should not be a part of the dirty politics of the Turkish state. They should not accept oppression and act voluntarily. The UN must also fulfil its duties and responsibilities.”

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Feminicide

Men kill at least 40 women in May

ANF | 3 JUNE 2023

The We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP) published its May 2023 Report. According to the report, men murdered at least 40 women in May. In addition, 22 women died suspiciously. 7 out of 40 women were murdered because they wanted to make a decision about their own life.

Who were women killed by?

According to the report, of the 40 women murdered in May, 12 were killed by their husbands, 8 by someone they knew, 7 by the men they were dating, 3 by their ex-husbands, 3 by their ex-partners, 3 by their son, 2 by their relatives and 2 by their brothers.

This month, 30 percent of the women killed were murdered by their husbands.

Most femicides in May occurred at home

30 femicides occurred at home, 7 on the street, one in a car, one in a deserted place. This month, 75 percent of women were murdered in their homes.

The Platform

The platform works to stop femicide and ensure the protection of women from violence. It fights against all types of women's rights violations, starting with the violation of the right to life.

The We Will Stop Femicide Platform was founded by the families of many women killed, women from various political parties, bar associations, business associations, trade unions and other organizations, as well as independent women.

Given that femicide in Turkey is a problem that concerns the whole society, representatives of all political parties, with or without parliamentary groups and various civil society organizations, artists, journalists, writers, sports fans, LGBTT organizations participate in the platform's activities.

The Platform's priority is to keep women alive. To this end, it provides legal assistance to women who want to be safe from violence and join their fight for their lives. It calls the authorities to duty in order to implement the law no. 6284; organizes training sessions to inform women of their rights under the protection of the law; organizes press-related activities; gets support from its friends in the art world; raises social awareness and creates public opinion.



Many detained in police attack on Saturday Mothers

ANF | ISTANBUL | 3 JUNE 2023

The Saturday Mothers have continued their action in Istanbul for their relatives who disappeared in state custody and the punishment of the perpetrators for the 948th week. Despite a contrary ruling by the Turkish Constitutional Court, the initiative was again denied access to their ancestral rally site in front of the Galatasaray High School on Istiklal Avenue.

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

Participants of today's action included former deputies of the HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party), Musa Piroğlu and Oya Ersoy.

After arriving in the square, the Saturday Mothers and human rights defenders were blockaded by the police, handcuffed and taken into custody. The detainees include In Istanbul, the Saturday Mothers' vigil was once again violently prevented and at least many were taken into custody by the police.

Journalists were obstructed while documenting the police crackdown.

In 1995, women in Istanbul took to the streets for the first time to draw attention to relatives who had been arrested and then disappeared. Since a large-scale attack on the Saturday Mothers ordered by the Ministry of Interior in the summer five years ago, Galatasaray Square has been a no-go zone for the Saturday Mothers. But this is contrary to the right to freedom of assembly and demonstration, ruled the Turkish Constitutional Court on 22 February 2023, rejecting the ministry's objection that the Saturday Mothers threatened the "protection of public order". "Everyone has the right to take part in unarmed and

peaceful assemblies and demonstrations without prior permission,” says Article 34 of the Turkish Constitution, which the security authorities violated by banning the Saturday Mothers’ forcefully dispersed action in August 2018 and all subsequent ones. The blockade of the square is therefore invalid, said the court ruling. The Turkish Interior Ministry and the Istanbul police ignore the ruling and continue to violently crack down on Saturday Mothers.

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Survivors of 1937-38 Dersim Genocide die

ANF | 3 JUNE 2023

Eşliye Çiçe (Fecire Erol) from the village of Zimek (Çığırılı) in Xozat (Hozat) district and 94-year-old Necef Duman, who survived the Dersim Genocide, hiding under the dead body of her mother Besi who was shot dead in the hamlet of Hopik, have died.

The two women were buried in the village of Zimek.

Cice spoke some time ago to the Pir News Agency (PIRHA) about the Dersim genocide and said: “They rounded up everyone and took them to the area of threshing. Machine guns were installed there. Everyone started screaming, some managed to escape. They separated the men from the women and took them to the mountain, saying that they would take their picture. They took us to the mountains. We were children, we were hungry, we wanted bread and water. My mother put me between her legs and put my brother on her chest and hid us by lying face down. My mother was killed. I pretended to be dead. When evening fell, a young woman came and shouted: ‘The soldiers are gone, those who are alive, get up’. They killed scores of us in Hopik (Beyaz Dağ). We knew our dead by their clothes.”

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70-year-old woman killed in Turkish-occupied Afrin

ANF | 4 JUNE 2023

The Human Rights Organisation Afrin-Syria announced that a woman was killed in the northern Syrian canton of Afrin occupied by the Turkish state.

According to the report, 70-year-old Qedriye Elî died as a result of gunfire in the neighborhood of Marate in central Afrin on June 3, Saturday.

The organisation reported that the woman from the village of Kobaka was shot in front of the station base of Turkish-allied Sultan Mihemed al-Fatih mercenaries.

While the woman was taken to the Avrin Hospital in Afrin, it came out that she had been shot dead with a silenced gun.

Afrin occupied since 2018

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



A mother fighting the embargo

ANF | ALEPPO | 5 JUNE 2023

Sadet Mihemed Elî, a mother of 6, wakes up early every morning and starts her journey against the hardships of life. She goes to the agricultural lands in the neighbourhoods of Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye and collects herbs.

The woman, who migrated from occupied Afrin, collects and sells herbs to meet the needs of herself and her children.

After the Turkish state occupied the Afrin Canton in 2018, Elî migrated to Aleppo with her family. Like thousands of Afrin refugees who settled in Shehba, Şêxmeqsûd and Eşrefiye, the family are experiencing difficulties due to the embargo by the Damascus government.

In order to meet the needs of her children and livelihood, Elî goes to Til Eran, Til Hasil and Ramûsê regions, which are famous for agriculture, in the southeast of Aleppo. She brings the herbs she collects to Aleppo and sells them. Elî told ANHA: “My husband is disabled and old. He cannot do any work. Therefore, I have a double responsibility. I have to meet the needs of my children and the costs of my husband's treatment.”

Despite all the difficulties, Elî still welcomes its customers with a smiling face. She waits for customers at the market to the west of Şêxmeqsûd. “Because of the embargo and the high prices, I can't get my children many things. The money I earn from the sale of herbs is sufficient for basic needs such as bread and food.”

Elî added: "I am struggling more and more every day because of the embargo and the high prices."

The Turkish state attacked Afrin Canton on 20 January 2018, and occupied the city of Afrin on 20 March, after the citizens and defense units put up 58 days of great resistance.

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Emine Şenyaşar's Justice Vigil enters its 807th day

ANF | URFA | 7 JUNE 2023

On 14 June 2018, the bodyguards and relatives of AKP Urfa MP Ibrahim Halil Yıldız attacked the Şenyaşar family's shop in Suruç during the election campaign. In the attack, brothers Celal, Adil, Mehmet, Fadıl and Ferit Şenyaşar were severely injured and hospitalized. Relatives and supporters of AKP MP Yıldız killed Celal and Adil Şenyaşar in hospital, and their father Hacı Esvet Şenyaşar, when he went to the hospital to see his sons. He was brutally murdered, being lynched in front of his wife, Emine Şenyaşar.

Emine Şenyaşar and her son Ferit have been holding a Justice Vigil in front of the Courthouse of Urfa since 9 March 2021, demanding those responsible to be brought to account.

Ferit Şenyaşar, who was elected a deputy from the Greens and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) in the May 14 election, did not attend the vigil today as he is in Ankara for parliamentary activities.

The Education and Science Workers' Union (Egitim-Sen) Urfa Branch paid a support visit to Emine Şenyaşar today.

In a speech during the visit, Egitim-Sen Branch Co-Chair Mahmut Binici said: “Mother Emine does not demand justice only for herself but for everyone. She is fighting for the independence of the judiciary. Our union has paid support visits to her many times and will continue to do so. The new Minister of Justice must strive to bring the perpetrators to justice, the lack of which is the main reason behind all problems. If justice is secured, all problems will be resolved.”

Emine Şenyaşar noted that she had been continuing her struggle for justice for about 5 years without interruption. She said: “I am coming here despite all the difficulties, including weather conditions. It's get-

ting hot, yet I'm still here. We have been subjected to serious persecution. We are demanding justice. Enough is enough, release my child (Fadıl Şenyaşar) from prison. There is no such a state anywhere in the world. My son Ferit is in Ankara, and I continue to struggle here. I will appear before a judge tomorrow. (The mother is accused of 'insulting' AKP's İbrahim Halil Yıldız). Stop prosecuting us."

— ★ —

Martyr Elefterya Music Group, the voice and resistance of women

ANF | QAMISHLO | 8 JUNE 2023

Koma Martyr Elefterya, founded by 8 people in February 2021 in the city of Dêrik in the Cizre Region, continues to carry out its activities under the umbrella of Northern and Eastern Syria Hilala Zêrîn Women's Art and Culture.

Growing up in families passionate about music and art, the group members took their first steps in culture from their childhood. After participating in Hilala Zêrîn's activities and forming the group, they moved from being an amateur to a professional.

Young women received basic musical education in addition to musical instruments such as saz, tambourine, guitar and darbuka for more than 2 years. They also studied the dengbêj, traditional and modern folk songs. They learned 40 songs by Kurdish artists such as Ayşe Şan and Aram Tîgran and sang them in celebrations and at different events.

Working on lyrics and music writing along with traditional songs, Koma Elefterya composed a song called 'Xeml û Xêza Kurdistanê' about the beauty of Kurdistan and another called 'Gurzê Gerila' about the resistance of Kurdistan freedom guerrillas.

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Six Peace Mothers detained in Antalya

ANF | ANTALYA | 8 JUNE 2023

Turkish police stormed several houses in the southern province of Antalya this morning.

Those targeted in the operation following an investigation launched by Antalya Chief Public Prosecutor's Office are accused of "providing financial assistance to the organization", meaning the PKK.

Peace Mothers Fatma Gün, Emine Tekmenuray, Zekiye Alak, Hülya Ayık, Hüzna Göksel, Ayşe Arslan, Valide Kaplan and Emine Arslan were taken into custody on the grounds of sending money to prisoners.

The detained mothers were taken to the provincial police department and are expected to be referred to the courthouse today.

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Emine Şenyaşar fined for “insulting” an AKP MP

ANF | URFA | 8 JUNE 2023

On 14 June 2018, the bodyguards and relatives of AKP Urfa MP Ibrahim Halil Yıldız attacked the Şenyaşar family’s shop in Suruç during the election campaign. In the attack, brothers Celal, Adil, Mehmet, Fadıl and Ferit Şenyaşar were severely injured and hospitalized. Relatives and supporters of AKP MP Yıldız killed Celal and Adil Şenyaşar in hospital, and their father Hacı Esvet Şenyaşar, when he went to the hospital to see his sons. He was brutally murdered, being lynched in front of his wife, Emine Şenyaşar.

Emine Şenyaşar and her son Ferit have been holding a Justice Vigil in front of the Courthouse of Urfa since 9 March 2021, demanding those responsible to be brought to account.

Ferit Şenyaşar, who was elected a deputy from the Greens and Left Future Party (Green Left Party) in the May 14 election, did not attend the vigil today on its 808th day, while his mother continued the action in her house in Suruç due to health problems.

In the meantime, the second hearing of the case against Emine Şenyaşar, who is accused of “insulting a public official” for her remarks on 9 August 2022, was held on Thursday.

Emine Şenyaşar’s lawyers, Meral Halat, Ayşe Şehriban Demirel and Müslüm Saraçoğlu, attended the hearing held at the 5th Criminal Court of First Instance in Urfa.

The court board imposed a fine of 8000 Turkish liras on Emine Şenyaşar and postponed the announcement of the verdict.

Emine Şenyaşar has been subjected to 31 investigations so far for allegedly “insulting a public official” over her remarks against AKP deputy İbrahim Halil Yıldız. 10 of these investigations have turned into lawsuits.

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Ecocide

Power plants and dams destroy natural habitat in Lake Van basin

ANF | VAN | 3 JUNE 2023

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

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

Power plants kill natural life

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

Power plants cause mass death of fish species

Originating in the Zılan region of Erciş, the Zılan Stream is home to numerous endemic species and living creatures, especially the Pearl Mullet. Pearl mullets, which migrate between April 15 and July 15, migrate to the Zılan Stream and lay their eggs. Due to the power plants and dams on the Zılan Stream, the stream water is poisoned, and the bed of the stream dries up. Thus, pearl mullet fish, which cannot migrate, cannot lay their eggs. Moreover, migratory routes are closed due to obstacles around the stream. Therefore, thousands of fish die on the migratory routes.

A power plant brings damage to the Bendîmahi Stream passing through Çaldıran and Muradiye districts. The power built in the Bendîmahi Stream, which is one of the creeks where pearl mullets migrate and is a breeding site for them, causes mass mortality of fish.

Reed fields burned

The AKP government, which has destroyed hundreds of thousands of species for the sake of profit, has been systematically burning the reeds, which are the breeding and feeding sites for thousands of species in the Lake Van basin. The fires which break out and last for days around the reed fields are not extinguished on purpose, killing thousands of living creatures.

The reeds in the Gölağzı neighbourhood of Erciş have been burned several times in the last few years. In May, a reed field on the shore of Lake Van in Gölağzı district was burned twice. Thousands of animals died in the fire that lasted for days.



Green Left declares June 5 'Collective Resistance Day' for environment

ANF | 5 JUNE 2023

Green Left Party Co-Spokespersons Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar and İbrahim Akın made a written statement to mark June 5, World Environment Day.

The Co-Spokespersons noted that since the recognition of World Environment Day, capitalism has continued to massively change and destroy the world's ecosystems.

The statement said: “Unfortunately, the world has entered ‘the sixth mass extinction’. The capitalist system continues its attacks against nature through world governments on June 5, Environment Day. Our mountains, forests, agricultural areas, seas, lakes, streams, creeks and wetlands are being plundered.”

The statement added: “A struggle for nature is rising from all over the country; from those who fight against the rubble removal work that threatens nature and public health in the earthquake region, the expropriation of lands and houses; from those who resist the tree cutting in Cudi, to the village women who oppose the construction of solar panels in Samsun to defend their pastures, to those who take care of their cities, parks, forests, pastures, seas, rivers, history on the 10th anniversary of the Gezi resistance, to those who stand up against chromium mines in Munzur, to those who confront gold mine in Divriği, to those who bring a suit against urgent expropriation and geothermal power plants in Aydın.

We declare this week and June 5 World Environment Day as the “Day/Week of Collective Resistance Against Ecological Destruction.” We will stop all ecological destruction, and we will continue to raise our struggle for the punishment of ecocide criminals. We will win, nature will win.”



650 pomegranate trees cut down in Turkish occupied Afrin

ANF | 8 JUNE 2023

According to local sources, the Turkish-backed al-Hamzat Brigade mercenaries have cut down 650 pomegranate trees in the village of Ain Dara, in Shera district of Afrin.

The trees reportedly belonged to resident Mihemed Elî Hemkiro from the village of Gurzêlê.

The Turkish state and its mercenaries, which occupied Afrin in March 2018, have turned the city into a hotbed of crimes, continuing to commit crimes including theft, kidnapping, rape, massacre, demographic change and destruction of nature in an attempt to displace the people of the region.

Hundreds of people have been murdered and hundreds of thousands of others have been displaced in Afrin since it was occupied in violation of international law. Nearly 500 thousand foreigners and families of mercenaries have been settled in the city in their place.

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

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Turkish state cuts down four million trees in southern Kurdistan

ANF | 8 JUNE 2023

The Turkish occupying forces are pursuing a policy of plundering and scorched earth in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). Whole swathes of land are contaminated by ammunition and chemical weapons, and forests are cut down or set on fire to prevent the movement of the guerrillas. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 1.3 million hectares of land have been burnt over the last ten years, mainly by Turkish attacks.

In addition, profit is made from the felled trees by selling them in Turkey. South Kurdistan's ruling party KDP, which is completely dependent on Turkey, participates in this colonial approach. Companies are making a profit from the destruction.

Milko Bazanyani, leader of the Kurdistan Green Party, spoke to RojNews about the extent of the destruction and said: "Last year, the Turkish state had four million trees cut down in Behdinan by a Turkish company. Some areas in Behdinan have turned into desert. We have complained to the United Nations (UN) about Turkey's destruction of the forests in Kurdistan. Unfortunately, we have not received a reply."



Human Rights Violations

Six members of HDP İzmir Youth Assembly sent to prison

ANF | İZMİR | 3 JUNE 2023

Six members of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) İzmir Youth Assembly, Uğur Yıldız, Mustafa Yalçın, Emre Yalçın and Harun Yakaç, Abdurrahim Kaymaz and Özkan Çakal, were remanded in custody.

The six young activists were taken into custody in İzmir on 31 May. They were sent to prison accused of being “members of a terrorist organization” by the prosecutor's office. The young people were sent to Buca Kırıklar F-Type Prison.



Trustee changes name of park dedicated to Kurdish activist

ANF | NUSAYBIN | 4 JUNE 2023

According to Mezopotamya news agency (MA), the trustee appointed to the municipality of Nusaybin in the province of Mardin had the Kurdish name “Parqa Kader Ortakaya” removed. The park was named after Kader Ortakaya, a Kurdish activist murdered at the Kobanê border in 2014.

On 6 November 2014, the Free Art Initiative tried to reach the border of Kobanê through a human chain action. The border had been closed by the Turkish government to prevent humanitarian aid and human rights observations and to cover up Turkey's support for the Islamic State. The Free Art Initiative action was banned and attacked with tear gas and Live Ammunition. In this attack, a border guard shot Kader Ortakaya with a bullet to the head.

Kader Ortakaya

Kader Ortakaya, a 28-year-old Kurdish woman, was killed by Turkish soldiers near Suruç on 6 November 2014.

She was part of a crowd gathered in support of the people of Kobanê's resistance against the Islamic State.

Ortakaya was born to a working class family in the Siverek district of Urfa. She was a woman who started working at a young age, trying to contribute to her family through her work.

In order to support the labor movement, in which she was also active, she used her academic time after graduating in sociology at Eskişehir Anadolu University, Turkey, by writing her research papers on labor movement issues in the Department of Development Economics and Labor Economics at Marmara University. Kader Ortakaya was a member of the Initiative for a Free Society (TÖP-G). In June 2025, as a tribute to Ortakaya, the Kurdish Municipality of Nusaybin created the “Kader Ortakaya Brotherhood Park” on an area of 4,000 square meters next to the historic Baghdad Bridge.

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DFG: There are 79 journalists in prison

ANF | AMED | 4 JUNE 2023

Dicle Fırat Journalists Association (DFG) has released its May Report on Rights Violations Against Journalists. The report draws attention to the detention of DFG co-chair Dicle Müftüoğlu and Mesopotamia Agency (MA) Editor Sedat Yılmaz on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day. “As we said at the time, two journalists were handcuffed on 3 May, World Press Freedom Day. We won’t forget this either...”

The DFG report noted that the pressure exercised by the government was felt in all areas of society for a long time, and is now at an extreme level. According to the report, the presidential and parliamentary elections were held in a period when the economy, politics, freedoms and life as a whole were at a stalemate point.”

The report said: “Our biggest goal is to become a country that does not occupy the bottom place of the world press freedom index, but experiences the opposite. We work not for a press that ignores and covers up the truth, but on the contrary, for one that brings that truth to light, no matter what the conditions are. Our struggle was for this and it will be for this in the future.”

The violations reported in the May report are as follows:

- Journalists attacked: 8
- Journalists whose homes were raided: 6
- Journalists taken into custody: 9
- Journalists remanded in custody: 3
- Journalists subjected to ill-treatment: 4
- Threatened journalists: 4
- Journalists prevented from covering news: 11
- Violations against journalists in prisons: 4

- Journalists under investigation: 9
- Journalists prosecuted: 1
- Journalists fined: 8
- Journalists on trial: 71, number of files 42
- Number of imprisoned journalists (as of 1 June 2023): 79
- Closed website: 29
- News with a ban on access: 545
- Social media content with a ban on access: 18



HDP co-chairs say they will not run as candidates at the party's next congress

ANF | 5 JUNE 2023

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) co-chairs Pervin Buldan and Mithat Sancar were guests of a live program on Medya Haber TV.

Speaking about the election results, Buldan said: "We could not reach our target. I want to express this very frankly. This is, of course, a matter for self-criticism. We found that we could not manage the campaign process very well. We could not reach circles outside ours, we could not grow. Not all different segments were represented. For example, the lack of representation of Armenians, Yazidis and disabled people were important shortcomings."

Buldan said: "Our party will go to congress after the meetings with our committees, since our goals were not achieved. I am ready to do whatever is my duty at every stage of this struggle, and take into account all the criticisms. I would be honored to leave the post of co-chair to another friend of mine at this congress. I will not take part in any decision mechanism during the congress process. At this stage, we have a responsibility to respond. There is no leaving. We will be accountable to our people, to our base, to women. I think that's the most important thing."

Emphasizing that the Green Left Party could not achieve the votes they wanted, Sancar said: "We consider ourselves unsuccessful in this respect, but there was no defeat. The government did everything to liquidate democratic politics. The fact that we could even be elected is an important situation in itself. We broke that, we entered the election."

Regarding the statements of HDP former co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş, Sancar said: “Demirtaş is a very valuable friend and comrade. It is not something we consider right to question his intentions. We did not rely on any factor other than the concern of how we could strengthen our party in harmony with all our friends. We visited Demirtaş in prison. He said that he had a legal obstacle, and then he explained it to the press. Then we went to Kandıra to get ideas from Figen Yüksekdağ and Gültan Kışanak. They suggested that if a candidate was to be presented, it should be a woman. We discussed these proposals in our committees. There was a strong favour for female candidates. This was conveyed to Demirtaş as well, and he said that he supported this idea.”

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HDP Youth Assembly calls for participation in the process of democratic transformation

ANF | ANKARA | 5 JUNE 2023

In a written statement on Monday, the Youth Assembly of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) said: “Turkey has left behind the most unequal and unjust electoral process in its political history. In this period, when all kinds of oppression and fraud were introduced, the peoples of Turkey and Kurdistan struggled to protect their democratic will and reflected their will at the ballot boxes with intense participation in the voting. They strongly revealed their demand for change, both on the streets and in the elections, to protest the government’s lack of pro-youth policies.”

The statement added: “We are aware that our party HDP, which is the party of women and youth, bears responsibility for the election results. We admit that we remained inadequate in responding to the expectations and needs of our patriotic people and the democratic public opinion. As a response, our party has launched its congress process for reconstruction. We will come together with all segments of society, especially the youth, all over Turkey, by making comprehensive endeavours to review past mistakes and to prepare for the new period of struggle. We will manage a radical criticism-self-criticism process to determine our deficiencies and inadequacies, and we will continue to build the politics of the future.

According to our tradition, election results do not have the final say, but always point to a new beginning for the expansion of struggle. For us, elections constitute only one stage of our struggle, and political activity should focus on the streets, factories and the entire public sphere. In this context, as the HDP Youth Assemblies, we announce that we will play our role based on the responsibility we have inherited from history in the new period. We will strongly take part in the reconstruction process based on the expectations of our patriotic people.

We call on all young people to participate in this process and ensure democratic change in order to contribute to the reconstruction process of our party and to expand the democratic struggle in Turkey.”

— ★ —

Green Left Party Co-Spokesperson: We will come out of this process stronger

ANF | ANKARA | 6 JUNE 2023

Party Assembly members of the Green Left Party and the People's Democratic Party (HDP) gathered at the World Trade Centre to evaluate the results of May elections, discuss the transformation process, and determine the new line of struggle.

In a speech here, Green Left Party Co-Spokesperson İbrahim Akin said: "We have experienced an undemocratic, unjust, unlawful, and irregular electoral process never seen in the history of Turkey. All the state apparatus was mobilized against our party. Our party and its allies were under serious attack. We tried to take measures against all kinds of attacks. As a result, however, we must also face our shortcomings and weaknesses in terms of our political goals. Although we did our best to replace the palace regime, we accept the failure of the opposition as a whole and our own failure."

"Every other person wanted a change"

Akin continued: "At the same time, there was something else we promoted. As we mark the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, we had the goal of building a more democratic life and creating a Democratic Republic. We wanted to win more seats in the parliament. Although we were partially successful in this regard, a failure emerged. Yet, we would like to express the following: despite such unequal and unfair election conditions, every other person wanted a change. 50 percent of our people - including those who did not go to the polls - have been and continue to be in the field of struggle to change this regime.

Policies seeking to save the palace regime have also failed. We will not allow the government to make people pay for it. In today's discussions, we will determine how we will fight for Turkey's freedom, equality and justice more strongly and we will continue to represent the opposition and society."

'We salute the Kurdish people's resistance'

The YSP Co-Spokesperson further stated: "We announced that we would carry out our post-election discussions in a transparent and collective manner unlike the other parties. We have openly revealed our stance to our peoples through the discussions we have had together with our co-chairs. I would like to salute especially our peoples in Kurdistan, for their honourable resistance and their interest in our party despite everything done to keep them away from the polls. We bow respectfully before our people for their attitude to defeating the Palace despite all the pressures and attacks during the election campaign."

'We will not give credit to discussions that are raised to undermine us'

Akin remarked: "We are determined to carry out these discussions collectively with all our people and our friends, including those in prisons. We do not want anything to be kept secret or covered up. We are in favour of an open discussion, but I would like to underline this: we will not give credit to discussions that are raised to undermine us and to pit us against each other. We have no problem with carrying out a col-

lective discussion, acting with a common sense, and taking opinions from everyone regarding our institutional structure, whether they support us or not.”

‘We will come out of this process stronger’

Akin concluded “I would like to express that we will stand stronger and more assertive against those who try to pit the Kurdish people against each other and those who try to prevent and terrorize us from speaking out on behalf of the opposition in Turkey. We will ensure that our Party Assembly, which is our greatest board, conducts these discussions collectively and concentrates them with society before our congress.”

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Eight people taken into custody in Bitlis

ANF | BITLIS | 7 JUNE 2023

Eight people were taken into custody in the new police political operations carried out in Bitlis (Bedlis) center, Tatvan (Tetwan), Norşin and Xizan on Tuesday.

Sources said that 8 people were detained following house raids and were taken to the provincial gendarmerie command. The reason for their detention could not be learned due to the confidential decision brought into the file.

The names of some of the 8 detainees are as follows: “Belgin Korkmaz, Ahmet Akdeniz and Vizier Karahan.”

— ★ —

MA journalist Fırat Can Arslan taken into custody

ANF | 7 JUNE 2023

As part of the investigation launched in Kırşehir, Mesopotamia Agency (MA) journalist Fırat Can Arslan was detained following a raid on his house in Ankara.

Arslan, who was detained on charges of “making propaganda for a terrorist organization”, was taken to the Ankara Security Directorate.

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New police raids in Cizre, two people taken into custody

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 7 JUNE 2023

According to information coming through, Turkish state forces raided many houses in Cizre (Cizîr) in the province of Şirnak (Şirnex) this morning.

Two people identified as A.R. and M.R. were taken into custody.

The reason for the detention was not disclosed. Two people were taken to the Cizre Gendarmerie Command.



5th 'Ma Music Days' kicks off today in Amed

ANF | AMED | 7 JUNE 2023

The Ma Music Academy in Amed will organize the 5th 'Ma Music Days' this year. The activities, which will start today with the slogan "Em ê zarokên vî welatê bê muzîk nehêlin/We will not leave the children of this country without music". The festival will end on 11 June.

Ma Music was born from a group of 35 people who worked in an institution that provided academic art education in Kurdish language at Aram Tigran City Conservatory, affiliated with Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality from 2010 to 2016.

After trustees were appointed to the municipalities, the team was dismissed from its jobs. With the leadership of these 35 people and the support of families of 400 students and non-governmental organizations in the city, a new institution was established in Diyarbakır on 4 March 2017.

Declaring that 'Even if not a stone is left on top of another, we will not leave the children without music', this volunteer team continues its work under the name 'ma', delivering music to everyone in the city, the region, the country, and abroad, based on the Kurdish mother tongue and with content from many different languages and cultures, six days a week.

To promote cultural and artistic production, ma music was established as a private company in Diyarbakır in March 2017. The human resources and experience of Ma Music are based on the previous history of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Conservatory before trustees were appointed. Ma Music has been teaching children, especially through workshop activities and concerts via the Zarok-Ma program, since its establishment.

In 2023, to bring a new dimension to the relationship with civil society and due to political obligations, a non-profit association called Ma Association was established on 21 November 2022, to continue the existing activities that were carried out under the company structure under the association structure.



HDP and the Green Left Party Women's Assemblies enter a restructuring process

ANF | ANKARA | 7 JUNE 2023

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and Green Left Party Women's Assemblies announced the final declaration of the meeting where they discussed the May 14 and 28 elections and their results.

The declaration said: "The government and its alliances, which feared the change that our women's liberation paradigm would bring about in the election process, have increased their attacks against women and negotiated over our achievements. The judicial crackdown and detentions directed against women's freedom struggle continued increasingly in the election process as well."

'The target is the growing solidarity and organization of women'

Pointing to the attacks against the essence of the women's struggle, the declaration stated: "We know the target of the misogynist fascist government, which appoints trustees to the achievements won by the Kurdish women's struggle at great cost and tries to suppress our struggle through detentions and arrests. What is targeted is women's liberation struggle and the growing solidarity and organization of women."

The declaration further stated the following:

"Our Co-Chair, Pervin Buldan, was subjected to an attack by the digital media of the government, which actually targeted women's participation in democratic politics. Of course, we are a party that is open to all kinds of criticism and self-criticism. However, we did not and will not allow any attempt by the government to discredit our politics under the cover of criticism. All women know that this is an attack directed against our women's liberation paradigm. They can halt neither women's politics or the achievements of their struggle through such methods.

'As long as isolation continues, attacks on women will not stop'

Warmongering policies reproduce and deepen misogynistic policies instead of offering a democratic solution to the Kurdish question. As long as the absolute isolation (of Abdullah Öcalan) continues on İmralı (Prison Island), the government will keep attacking women and their achievements. On this basis, we emphasize once again that the isolation should be lifted for the sake of honourable pro-peace policies against war."

'We will organize women's meetings at local level'

We came to these days through our labour. We will never degrade the determination of historical women's struggle into election results. We prepared the content of our declaration regarding the electoral process based on the accumulation of Kurdish women's struggle. We decided to reflect the common struggle of

women's movements in our work during the election process as well. However, we found out that we could not provide integrity in consistence with the content of our election manifesto. We could not provide a political representation that would ensure pluralism, including disabled women, sexual identities, beliefs and peoples, although it was included in our declaration. The insufficiency we experienced is not acceptable to us. We, as the HDP and the Green Left Party Women's Assemblies, are entering a restructuring process. We will resolutely set forth the line of struggle with women's meetings we will launch at local level. On one hand, we will overcome our deficiencies, and, on the other, we will start an organizational mobilization through restructuring that will reach out to all women. We will do self-criticism by expanding the struggle.

'We are in every area of life'

We do not judge the justification of our struggle according to the election results. The one-man regime and the misogynistic alliance are not the winners and women are not the losers of the elections. We will not renounce our struggle to reclaim our usurped rights. The parliament has now become a more male-dominated assembly. We, however, are more than just an assembly. We are the ones who carry representation from the streets to the parliament. We are in every area of life.

The authoritarian regime has entered a new phase of self-consolidation. All the dynamics of struggle, especially women's movements, will be restructured according to the new period. We will lead a stronger line of struggle in social life, in our party and in the parliament, to confront the increasingly male-dominated policies. We are preparing to discuss this process at each of our boards at local level and to make further progress.

Let no one fall into despair. Fortunately, we have an organized women's struggle. We have the solidarity and struggle of women. We, women, are here and will not allow the enemies of women in either the parliament or on the streets.

'No option other than to struggle'

Here is our appeal to all women: we will increase women's solidarity with all our differences, identities, faiths and languages. We have no option other than to struggle. We will defend ourselves and build together by strengthening the struggle and organization. The future is ours, to be painted in the colors we wish."

‘One of the plans to annihilate the Yazidi people is to prevent their return to Shengal’

ANF | SHENGAL | 7 JUNE 2023

Shengal Autonomous Council Vice Co-Chair Hisen Sado spoke about the latest situation in Shengal and the dirty plans targeting the town, the ancient settlement of the Yazidi community.

Sado noted that the people of Shengal have been returning to their land in recent days and added, “The region will enter a new phase in the coming period. Therefore, it is crucial for our people to prepare themselves.”

Commenting on the situation in Shengal, Sado stated, “The current process is not easy and the plans being made right now are even more dangerous than the onslaught of ISIS. Shengal is in a very strategic position. Some neighboring countries are trying to impose themselves on us through certain political factions within us. As the Autonomous Administration of Shengal, we will continue to fight with all our might to protect our people from these dirty schemes and plans. We will not stop marching on the path for which we have sacrificed thousands of martyrs.”

Regarding the return of Shengal’s people to their land, Sado said, “We are at a convenient time for our people to return home. We think that the region will enter a new phase in the upcoming period and its impact on our people will be significant. Once on their own land, our people can resist any plans. As the Autonomous Administration of Shengal, we welcome our people who return to their homes and provide them with support within the bounds of possibility. Through our municipality, we are doing our best to provide essential services.”

Emphasizing that one of the plans to annihilate the people is to prevent their return, Sado stated, “As the people return to their land, the Turkish state targets the region with aircraft and seeks to portray Shengal as unstable. However, these attacks will not be able to prevent the return of the Shengal people because they know that if they do not return home, they will be destroyed. They are aware of the Turkish state's goal of leaving Shengal without Yazidis.”

Sado pointed out that the invading Turkish state not only targets Shengal but also carries out attacks on Iraqi territory through collaboration. He continued, “That's why there is silence among the public. They attack Iraq's sovereignty by warplanes and, as Yazidis, we are subjected to these attacks. During the attacks of the ISIS gangs on Shengal, they besieged the village of Kocho. At that time, too, they had aircraft, but they did not use them to rescue the Yazidis. They use their aircraft for the interests of dominant states, not to save the lives of civilians.”

Referring to the statements of the Iraqi government regarding the attacks by the Turkish state, Sado noted that when Iraq's sovereignty is violated, only weak statements are made. He added that, in addition, no practical steps are taken and the Turkish state continues its attacks disregarding these statements.

Speaking about the wave of migration, Sado concluded, “Whenever our displaced people return to Shengal, there are some parties that bring up the issue of migration. They try to send our youth and people abroad. This is a great threat to the future of our people. Our people should not fall into these traps and should not leave their lands.”

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Scores taken into custody in Istanbul at screening of ‘Pride’

ANF | ISTANBUL | 8 JUNE 2023

A large number of citizens gathered at the Science Aesthetics Culture and Art Research Foundation (BEKSAV) foundation building in Kadıköy for the screening of the movie 'Pride', organized by Cinema Collective. The screening was part of the “Month of Honor” events. As the movie time approached, the police started to cordon off the foundation building and to take into custody BEKSAV executives as well as many people who had come to watch the movie, claiming that the event was banned by the Kadıköy District Governor’s Office.

Protesting the detentions, BEKSAV said in a written statement posted on its social media: “On Wednesday, 7 June, before the screening organized by the BEKSAV Cinema Collective of the movie ‘Pride’, the foundation building was besieged by the police. BEKSAV and Cinema Collective members as well as many of our friends who came to watch the movie were taken into custody. We defend the colors of the rainbow and protest the hostility shown by the government toward the LGBTI+ community.”

The movie ‘Pride’

‘Pride’ is a 2014 British historical comedy-drama film written by Stephen Beresford and directed by Matthew Warchus. Based on a true story, it depicts a group of lesbian and gay activists who raised money to help families affected by the British miners’ strike in 1984, at the outset of what would become the Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners campaign.

It was screened as part of the Directors’ Fortnight section of the 2014 Cannes Film Festival, where it won the Queer Palm award.

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Interview

Foza Yusif: The Autonomous Administration is the address for the solution to Syrian crisis

MUSTAFA ÇOBAN | HESEKE | 3 JUNE 2023

What happened in Syria before and after 2011? What is the situation called the Syrian crisis? Who led to the deepening of the crisis, who made an effort for a solution? Democratic Union Party (PYD) Co-Presidency Council member Foza Yusif answered these questions to ANF.

What is the situation caused by the so-called 'Syria problem or Syria crisis'?

The so-called Syrian problem is the absence of a democratic system, of personal, religious and women's rights. This is the problem of all states in the region. The absence of such a system paved the way for many political and economic problems. This caused social crises. The reality of the nation-state in the Middle East is that the dominant powers that won the war after the First World War established countries based on racism, religion and sexism. One of these nation-states was Syria, which was torn apart in this war. The Syrian state was based on the nation-state mentality. Likewise, Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians and all peoples living in Syria were denied. This led to political and religious problems as well as great pressures over time. During the past period, there has been great unrest in society and especially among the peoples of Syria. Positive and negative situations throughout Syria, and the discomfort against this undemocratic system in Syrian society led to the start of the 2011 uprising. We can say that Syria's main problem is connected to the nature of the nation-state, or, in other words, the lack of a democratic system.

2011 is the date given for the beginning of the crisis. Wasn't there a Syrian problem before?

There were problems before 2011 as well. For example, the racist politics in Rojava in 2004. Radical groups that emerged in many regions were also a reason for problems. We had serious sexism issues. The situation in 2011 exploded with the bankruptcy of the nation-states throughout the Middle East. This process was called the Arab spring. In Syria, the bankruptcy of the nation-state was clearly revealed. The nation-state was no longer able to run itself, and there was a need to establish a new system with changes and transformations. There was a great difficulty not only for the Kurds, but also for all the peoples of Syria. The interesting thing is that this activity started in Deraa. This shows that the Syrian problem has reached an intolerable level. In this direction, the 2011 popular movement and the uprising emerged.

The people had many demands. The main demand was equality. For this, the system needed to be changed. Again there were requests for dialogue. Because there was great poverty and injustice. There was no freedom, there was great pressure. Each region had an intelligence and security system. Kurdish identity was denied in Kurdish regions, there were economic and democracy problems. Democracy, economic and social problems were deep in many Arab areas. Social identity was denied. When all these were

brought together, there was a demand from the people to establish a system that would cover the rights of all Syrian peoples.

What is the damage caused since the 2011 uprising?

The crisis has caused great suffering and destruction in 12 years. Millions of people had to migrate, hundreds of thousands were killed and hundreds of thousands injured. Major destruction occurred in Syria's infrastructure and some cities were completely destroyed. The ISIS war and the prolongation of the Syrian problem have had negative effects on Syrians and have caused them to leave their homes. Poverty exacerbated all this. More than half of the people living in Syria are in poverty. There was great damage in the fields of science and education. All this destruction has created a wounded society. People have been living with these problems for 12 years, and all of this leads to bigger crises.

Who and what forces were involved in this situation? What caused foreign interventions?

If the Syrian government had followed a peaceful, democratic and dialogue method to solve this issue, the situation might have been different. The intervention of foreign powers also developed as a result of the government's violent attitude towards popular movements. With foreign interventions, everyone intervenes according to their own interests. Turkey's intervention was through the Front Al Nusra and other groups. After ISIS, coalition forces intervened. After 2015, Russia intervened. After 2014-2015, the Syrian problem clearly turned from a domestic problem to a regional and international issue. Because many forces are positioned in Syria, it has become a regional and international issue. The intervention by different powers and groups led to even more clashes, which put the Syrian crisis on a longer and more difficult path.

This crisis has two sides. The first is the government forces in Damascus and the forces in Syria, which have no will for a solution for Syria. The Damascus administration has always avoided a solution, and the powers that define themselves as opposition have given all their weight to foreign powers. Eventually, they came to act under the initiative of foreign powers. The emerging Syrian coalition, opposition forces, Ceyşul Hur and most of the gang groups pursued personal politics. The forces in Northern and Eastern Syria have worked hard for a democratic solution to the Syrian crisis. But this has always been overlooked, ignored. They were not included in any international platform where Syria was discussed. This resulted in the absence of Syrian power and a will for a solution.

The second side is represented by the international powers that use the Syria issue for their own benefit. They wanted to solve a crisis with a crisis. International and local powers have a great responsibility in the Syrian problem. The negotiations in Geneva collapsed because they did not have the right strategy. Neither did Astana, nor did Sochi... Many initiatives developed, but due to the interests of international powers, they did not want the Syrian crisis to be resolved and extended its duration. These have left Syria faced with such a situation today. The will for a solution did not emerge due to the actors in Syria and the current lack of will, but also because of the role of international powers, that wanted to create more turmoil in Syria.

How did the Autonomous Administration participate and contribute to the solution of the problem?

The Northern and Eastern Syria Autonomous Administration promoted a solution initiative. It wanted to present its solution project in the current political situation. Because the Autonomous Administration is an important force in Syria today.

30 percent of the peoples of Syria are governed under the roof of the Autonomous Administration. Not only did it have a solution project, but it also stood out as a political and military force. Therefore, the Autonomous Administration initiative is important. The Autonomous Administration has once again stated that it is responsible not only to the people of Northern and Eastern Syria, but to the entire Syrian people. In short, it is putting its will to the fore in solving the Syrian problem.

The Autonomous Administration has implemented an advanced governance model. But this has always been overlooked, ignored. It is obvious that a solution cannot be successful without the Autonomous Administration. This is the only model that can respond to all Syrian peoples. It also plays an important role for Arab countries. The Autonomous Administration warned everyone not to make mistakes made in Astana and Sochi again.



Sabri Ok: The Kurdish people did not bow. They showed their will

ANF | 8 JUNE 2023

KCK Executive Council member Sabri Ok, spoke in a special program broadcast on Stêrk TV. He spoke about the situation of Abdullah Öcalan, the elections, the future of Turkey, the siege of Maxmur.

This is the first part of the interview.

There has been no news from the Kurdish people's Leader Abdullah Öcalan for more than 2 years. The Asrin Law Office has called on the CPT to fulfill its duty to end this unlawful situation. How do you evaluate the ongoing isolation of Abdullah Öcalan?

The situation of Rêber Apo [Abdullah Öcalan] is always on the agenda of our party and our people. The occupiers and the forces involved in the international conspiracy [process starting with the illegal imprisonment of Abdullah Öcalan on February 15, 1999] also closely follow Rêber Apo's situation and the İmralı system. We know that nothing is done in İmralı in an unplanned, aimless or unconscious manner. They aim to aggravate the İmralı system day by day. They are thus playing with the psychology of the Kurdish people and their international friends. Their aim is to break the bond between Rêber Apo and the Kurdish people. They are trying to achieve their goals by increasing the pressure on Rêber Apo. What is happening in İmralı cannot be explained in terms of humanity, politics or law. If we consider it in terms of human rights, Rêber Apo should be allowed to live his life in comfort. But we know that the situation in

İmralı is not normal. As a people and as a party, we clearly have the right to be suspicious of this situation. We don't know what is happening in İmralı. But what we do know is that Rêber Apo is not being given the right to live his life under human conditions. This situation is the cause of both anger and suspicion.

Rêber Apo knows the occupying forces very well. The enemy is aware of what can change with a single word from Rêber Apo. Since the international conspiracy, hundreds of PKK militants have set their bodies on fire for Rêber Apo's physical freedom and in protest against this conspiracy. Since he has devoted 50 years of his life to the struggle, no one can treat Rêber Apo as an ordinary person. The Turkish state is doing whatever it can to take revenge on him. From a legal point of view, there is no explanation for this lawless situation. I have been in prison myself for years. A prisoner has the right to write letters and meet with his lawyers and family. Legally, there are these kinds of rights, but the Turkish state violates these. A few days ago, without anybody knowing why, they again prevented Rêber Apo from meeting with his family and lawyers. I don't want to use that word too much, but they gave him a 'punishment'. This means that Rêber Apo is not allowed to meet with his family and lawyers and to send any letters. What had he done when they decided to 'punish' him? The reason for this is clearly the fact that there is ongoing resistance in İmralı. Rêber Apo continues to resist the oppression against him. Therefore, the state is aggravating the isolation both to take revenge and to continue its oppression.

Both the Kurdish people, their international friends, the revolutionary, socialist forces and our party need to follow Rêber Apo's situation 24 hours a day, show empathy, be aware of their duties and responsibilities and keep up their struggle. The occupying forces continue the severe isolation. Therefore, our top priority needs to be the physical freedom of Rêber Apo. It is our duty to fight for this with courage and a great sense of responsibility. Again, in terms of legal issues, both in Turkey and internationally, work must be carried out uninterrupted. Most importantly, our people must always be on the streets. We all owe this to Rêber Apo. If his physical freedom is our primary goal, our people must act strongly, in an organized way and effectively against the enemy. Our movement must become more organized. We must all fulfill our duties and increase the struggle to protect the values created by Rêber Apo during the 50 years of his efforts. When we do all this, the enemy will not be able to resist. Only in this way can we fulfill Rêber Apo's wishes. This cannot be done only with speeches. There must be protests, organizing and increasing strength. Consequently, our struggle will definitely continue in a more organized and stronger way from now on.

An election recently took place in Turkey and North Kurdistan. How can we understand the election results in light of all the fraud that took place? What is the meaning of the different messages given during the election?

Everyone knows and consequently discusses the conditions under which these elections were held. These discussions are still going on. Everyone also knew that this election was not an ordinary election. If the fascist AKP-MHP government had been defeated, this would have led to a rupture in the mentality of the occupying Turkish state. The government was aware of this, so it mobilized all the forces and means of the state. This was a really historic election. But we have to accept that – Rêber Apo has also said this – the AKP has become the state. Erdoğan has even described himself as the second Atatürk. Atatürk played a role in the foundation of the Turkish state. Now, in Turkey's 2nd century, Erdogan says that he will play a similar role. At the same time, Erdoğan's role resembles that of Hitler in World War II. The recent elections were held under a government with this kind of mentality.

Süleyman Soylu recently used the expression ‘mind of the state’ for HÜDA PAR. He did not elaborate on this, but everybody knows what he wanted to say. There is no example of a chief of general staff playing a role in elections in any country in the world. But Turkey’s chief of general staff clearly worked for the AKP-MHP. They did this especially in Kurdistan. All religious sects and communities were mobilized. Because they are both mentally and ideologically united with the state who also finances them. Again, the entire bureaucracy of the state was mobilized. The governors at all different levels were mobilized. This was an election between the state and certain other forces. The state was also aware of this. It knew that if the AKP-MHP were to lose, there would be a rupture in their mentality in the 2nd century. That is why they did everything to prevent this. They also used very bad demagoguery and racism. They put the Kurds and also Rêber Apo and the PKK on the agenda. They made propaganda as if this was an election between the state and the Kurdish people or between the state and the PKK.

The National Alliance had only come together with great difficulties. Their strength, intelligence and alliance were not enough. But the Kurdish people and the democratic forces resisted all attacks. Therefore, I can say the following about the election results: First of all, this election is not legitimate. Why? Because it was a one-sided election based on the mobilization of all the state’s means and under heavy pressure. This was an election that had very little to do with law and democracy. Therefore, it is not legitimate. Secondly, the AKP and Erdoğan lost, especially in the presidential elections. Hundreds of thousands of Syrian immigrants voted. Yet they had no right to vote. Hundreds of thousands of HDP votes were invalidated and consequently not accepted. It is very interesting to see that before the election many polls had predicted that the MHP would get at most 7 percent of the votes and that the HDP would get 11 to 12 percent. Yet, the MHP received 10 percent and the HDP 8 percent. Everywhere, especially in Kurdistan, they registered the HDP’s votes as votes for the MHP. This is how the AKP and Erdogan were able to declare themselves the winners. But this is actually not true. According to the election results, the AKP will remain in power. The role of the Kurdish people, the democrats and socialists was also very important. Despite all the attacks and oppression of the state, the resistance and stance of the Kurdish people and the united actions of the democratic forces were very important. They did not give in but risked torture, death and arrest. Thus, they expressed their will clearly. Everywhere, especially in Kurdistan, they made Erdogan lose in the presidential election.

The HDP took part in the elections as the Green Left Party. After the elections, the HDP shared with the public what kind of a path it will follow in the near future. On the one hand, the party has launched a phase of self-renewal, but on the other hand, the attacks against the HDP are increasing day by day. How do you evaluate the HDP’s new road map and the ongoing attacks?

First of all, let me say that the HDP or the Green Left Party worked hard in this election and achieved a clear result. The aim of the AKP-MHP and those who are against the democratization of Turkey and the will of the Kurdish people is to demoralize everybody. But things are not the way they say. Dozens of HDP mayors are under arrest and hundreds of the party’s executives and members are in prison. A special war is being waged against the Kurdish people and the democratic forces. Any other party in the HDP’s place would not have received even a few votes in this election. But the HDP has a culture and a tradition. Its members have been paying a price and have made efforts for decades. The Kurdish people are organized and conscious people. That’s why, despite all the attacks, the Green Left Party achieved a good result. Of course, it was possible and would have been necessary to do better. But it is important not to allow the occupying forces to receive joy and morale from the current situation. And even more important than that is

not to allow them to play with the psychology of the Kurdish people and legitimate democratic politics. This must be prevented.

All parties are currently making their post-election evaluations. The AKP is in a state of drunkenness, but the CHP and the İYİ Party are holding internal discussions. It is very normal for the HDP to hold such discussions too. Already now they have prepared hundreds of legal proceedings against HDP members. There is great pressure on the HDP. Yet, a struggle is being waged. No one should understand these results as a defeat. Everybody needs to define their agenda correctly. In other words, they should not be influenced by other forces. They should create an agenda that recognizes their inadequacies, shortcomings and realities. If they overcome all this, they will be better prepared for the next period. Their most recent messages point in this direction. We consider their approach as positive. Criticism, self-criticism and discussion are important. These discussions about how to organize ourselves more and how to overcome the existing deficiencies are important. What is also important is how they will determine their road map in the coming period. The HDP and the Green Left Party are currently going through such a process.

There is another important thing to know: every vote the HDP or the Green Left Party received is very valuable and honorable. This value has been created based on labor and blood. The Kurdish people support the Green Left Party and the HDP, by risking many difficulties; death, torture and imprisonment. Surely we should be worthy of this. Many people are talking now. Some talk about how things were limited only to Kurdistan, while others say that they were too much directed towards Turkey. Both sides are wrong. The perspective of a democratic Turkey is the right one. Attempts have been made to follow this perspective and important steps have been taken. It is normal to have some shortcomings and inadequacies. We should not make a big deal out of them. They should not turn their energy and power into negativity. They should see their shortcomings and respond to the process with a new synergy. All criticism, self-criticism and discussions should definitely serve this. Some people who do not take any responsibility only talk about discharge, others only talk to be talked about. But this is what it means to take responsibility: they should set their real agenda, conduct serious discussions, give strength to each other, not tire each other out and carry out their work in a comradely fashion.

Nothing has been lost. This is politics, this was an election. The desired result has not been achieved, but there is a clear result. There are reasons for these results outside of our control and there are other reasons related to the HDP. These are already being discussed. The important thing is to draw conclusions from them and come up with a correct plan. But the biggest danger is to tire each other out, to revolve around an incorrect agenda under the name of criticism and self-criticism, to spend your energy on this, for the occupiers to make use of this and to create disbelief. There is no reason for this to happen. A good result has been achieved. No one gave in and everyone resisted. We would therefore like to congratulate everyone and wish them success once again. On this basis, they must have the right discussions, set the right agenda and strengthen each other. The best result will be achieved in this way.

Opinion

Socialists in Turkey: There is a strong ground for struggle

ANF | ISTANBUL | 5 JUNE 2023

Turkey's socialists have started to self-criticize after the elections. They spoke to ANF about the results of May's presidential and parliamentary elections.

Öztürk: There is a dynamic process

Hakan Öztürk, Chair of the Laborers' Movement Party, defined elections as a field of struggle and highlighted the possibility of fraud by the ruling classes. He said: "Election results give us the opportunity to discuss our mistakes. Now we see a dynamic process. The people withdrew their support from the ruling AKP to some extent, but not from Erdogan. This means that the conditions created by the AKP government by putting pressure on the Central Bank were effective. An unprecedented amount of funds was used by the government for its election campaign, halting the political trend against the government. Depending on the economic conditions, large sections of the public once again came to a standstill. We see that we have not reached the point where any retreat is impossible."

We are beyond the previous equation

Stressing that half of Turkey rejected Erdogan and the regime despite all the conditions, Öztürk continued: "Moreover, these conditions are extremely unfair. The AKP regime has no chance of winning elections except under such extraordinarily unfair conditions. Erdogan received 52 percent of the vote while his rival Kılıçdaroğlu got 48 percent. We are far beyond the previous equation proposing that 70 percent of Turkey is right (against change), 30 percent is left (for change)."

Inaction about the Kurdish question is not a solution

Öztürk pointed out that during the election campaign, public services, including nutrition, shelter, education and health, were not debated. He said: "Even a simple video, which the President also admitted to be fake, seriously affected the process. Therefore, trying to avoid discussing the Kurdish question is not a solution. We should talk about the basic economic conditions of the country and the Kurdish question. There is a problem with property relations in this country and there is a Kurdish question. We should be able to talk about the property question and the Kurdish question in a normal and just way."

We will resist again, we walk again

Öztürk remarked that history often progressed slowly, and basic conditions did not change according to the wishes of socialists. He added: “We cannot choose the objective conditions. We experienced 12 March, 12 September, the 90’s and resisted. We will resist again, and we will walk again.”

Dalveren: Opposition was fragmentary

Socialist Refoundation Party (SYKP) Istanbul Provincial Co-Chair Gürşenay Dalveren said that despite all the black propaganda and deceptions of the government, 48 percent of the people did not accept this monstrous system. Dalveren stated that they faced fraud, lies and conspiracies by the state and the AKP. “During its 22-year rule, the AKP made a certain percentage of voters depend on itself. The people who were made rich by the AKP did not want to give up on the AKP, and the state mobilized all its resources for this purpose. The opposition was fragmentary and could not fully explain to the masses what they would lose. Our inability to introduce policies at a sufficient level, our inability to consolidate the electorate and the restriction of the election campaign to distributing leaflets were our mistakes. The important thing is that we could not get the parliamentary majority. The Labour and Freedom Alliance, which offered 10% support to the Nation’s Alliance candidate in the 28 May election, was ignored and nationalist discourses were circulated. Some of the voters did not go to the polls in the second round.”

“We need to admit that we did not win this election. Without falling into despair and pessimism, it is necessary to grasp the reality that we are facing in this process when fascism is institutionalized. By subjecting ourselves to criticism and self-criticism mechanisms, we need to stand up and deal with this process correctly.”

Doruk: We knew it was not enough

Senem Doruk, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), stated that the election results were not surprising. She added that it was almost impossible for an opposition that imitates Erdogan to win an election in order to get rid of him.

Doruk revealed that they called support for Kılıçdaroğlu not because they embraced the Nation’s Alliance or Kılıçdaroğlu, but because they did not want to allow Turkish society to fall into pessimism and wanted to get rid of Erdogan. She said: “We worked with all our might both before and during the election, but we knew that this was not enough. Because this is the case not just in Turkey, but also in the entire world, there is no possibility of a permanent solution through ballot boxes. Convincing society that emancipation can only be achieved through elections and ballot boxes will not bring emancipation. Election dreams must be left behind now.”

Opposition made Erdogan win

Doruk stressed that the opposition helped Erdogan win the elections, and this was not the first time. She continued: “Moreover, we must openly say that Erdogan did not win the elections alone. The opposition directly helped Erdogan win the elections. This is not just something we experienced in the last election. Remember the CHP’s presidential candidate right after the Gezi Park Uprising... It is not only that Erdo-

gan was re-elected, but also the most reactionary parliament in history was formed after the elections. We must have the people stand up before this parliament. Political spheres outside the parliament must gain importance. For example, we need to avoid the perception that demonstrations on the street are a crime. We must seek our rights in every field. Considering the election results, no one has the right to try to put pressure on us revolutionaries, communists, saying that “this is not the time.”

Dilmeç: Opposition did not want to win

Hakan Dilmeç, a representative of the Kaldırac (Leverage) Movement, stated that Erdogan actually has not been able to win since the elections on June 7, 2015, but the opposition did not want to win the elections either. Dilmeç said that all the election fraud in the presidential elections were swept under the rug because the opposition did not make an objection. This silence caused the election results to be perceived as if they were genuine.

Dilmeç emphasized that it was wrong to make political analyses based on these results. He stated: “The election results are not real. One must know this in the first place. We already thought that it would be like this. There is an ongoing war in the region, or rather a war to divide the region, and the USA has been using Turkey as a hatchet man for a long time. They wanted to keep moving with Erdogan for the continuation of these war policies. Pressures on the working class, workers, peoples, women, students and young people will continue to increase. A Palace regime, which caused all kinds of economic, political, social crises, is trying to hold on to power through attacks. We kept saying this during the election process. It is necessary to put forward a common struggle based on resistance. Maybe it would make sense to use the elections for this, but there, too, the Labour and Freedom Alliance should have introduced its own candidate and made its own propaganda. We think that this was a big mistake. From now on, we will develop the common struggle. We will work together to expand the resistance.”

The Social Freedom Party Term Spokesperson Pelin Kahiloğulları emphasized that even though the election results helped the institutionalization of fascism, the people were not defeated. She said: “Now, besides his undistinguished victory, Erdogan has a collapsed economy and a dubious government which oscillates between NATO and Russia.”

Kahiloğulları said that the CHP adopted an approach that accepted all the impositions of Erdogan during the election process, which made it lose credibility in the eyes of the people.

No pause

Kahiloğulları added: “Instead of the elections and the parliament, which the people think could offer solutions to multiple crises, there are conditions where people could trust in themselves and meet their needs only through their own struggle. It is imperative not to make a pause for a moment in the fight against jihadist gangs, misogynists, and the enemies of the Kurds and Alevis. The votes received by the ruling party in Anatolian cities were the product of a union of corruption and business-government relationships, as well as the strengthening of the nationalist-conservative structure of those regions by the religious communities.

Even the organization of local workers’ resistance that rises in certain periods is an urgent need for the democratic transformation of the country. Otherwise, the poverty to which the working class is subjected

would not automatically produce an attitude of resistance . The ruling power could produce legitimacy by managing poverty, which is based on conscious policies through religious communities, local governments and pro-business unions.

We will promote a popular democratic option

The process of subjectification of the people, the ground for which was laid in the Kurdish people's movement and the Gezi uprising, and their coming to power by becoming a subject have not been defeated. Yes, Erdogan is going his own way, but the people have not been defeated in their own way, and the election process has shown that taking that path faster and stronger is needed for living.

Just as the process of institutionalization of fascism carried out by the ruling forces is making its own way, the people can also make their own way! We will promote a popular-democratic option with our own march."

— ★ —

Journalist Acar: We will continue to write the truth

ANF | 3 JUNE 2023

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ranks Turkey 165th out of 180 countries on its press freedom list, and the pressure on journalists continues. In addition to censorship and repression, 77 media professionals are imprisoned in Turkish jails for their professional activities, according to the latest report by the Dicle Fırat Journalists' Association (DFG).

Media professionals working in the tradition of the "Free Press" are the ones who suffer the most from the AKP policy of censorship and repression. In recent weeks, DFG co-chair Dicle Müftüoğlu, Abdurrahman Gök, Sedat Yılmaz and Mehmet Şah Oruç of the Mezopotamya Agency (MA), JinNews reporter Beritan Canözer and journalists Mikail Barut and Remzi Akkaya were imprisoned.

Journalists Diren Yurtsever, Selman Güzelyüz, Deniz Nazlım, Berivan Altan, Emrullah Acar, Hakan Yalçın, Ceylan Şahinli, Hakan Yalçın, Habibe Eren and Öznur Değer, who were detained on 25 October 2022 and jailed on 29 October as part of an investigation by the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office for "membership of an illegal organisation", were released on the first day of the trial at the Ankara 4th Heavy Penal Court on 16 May. Journalist Hamdullah Bayram, detained in the same investigation on 16 March 2023, remains in pre-trial detention.

Two weeks after his release, MA correspondent Emrullah Acar has spoken out about the pressure against journalists and the rights violations they faced in prison.

Seven months in solitary confinement

Acar explained that the illegality that began during the detention continued during imprisonment. He described the violations he experienced as follows: “We were taken to Sincan No. 1 High Security Prison, which houses prisoners with heavy sentences. We were held under the conditions of prisoners with severe life sentences. We were kept in solitary cells for seven months. Our right to walk in the yard was limited to one and a half hours per day. The only window of the cell was locked with iron bars and additionally covered with wire mesh. Prisoners of different categories of offences are housed in the same corridors. For example, one corridor held PKK members as well as ISIS members and military personnel who were arrested on 15 July 2016. Because we as journalists wrote about the rights violations in prison, we were threatened.”

Our only “crime” was our news

The increasing pressure from the government is aimed at silencing journalists from the Free Press tradition, said Acar and continued: “The arrests are a message to all journalists who write the truth.” Pointing out that pressure on the Free Press had increased ahead of the 14 May elections, Acar said, “Looking at the questions we were asked after the detention and the police summaries reflected in the indictment, our only ‘crime’ under investigation was our news reporting. We were charged four months after our arrest. In the file, our reporting on rights violations in prisons and the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan was considered a crime. It was not us who were charged, but our journalism. Although there was no concrete evidence, we were imprisoned for about seven months.”

The truth will not remain in the dark

Acar underlined that the main objective of the operations against journalists was to keep the truth in the dark: “However, this objective was never achieved. After our arrest, we pursued the agenda within our means and saw that our colleagues did an extraordinary job to keep the public informed. The fact that one journalist put in as much effort as two journalists and that many people started working at the Free Press after our arrest boosted our morale. The fact that the voice of the Free Press, which was supposed to be silenced with arrests and detentions, has become louder and sent the following message to those who charge us with police reports: Even if only one Free Press worker is left outside, the truth will not remain in the dark.

“We will write in place of our arrested colleagues”

Acar stated that he himself was motivated to work at the Free Press by MA editor Abdurahman Gök, who was arrested on 27 April. Gök had declared on camera after the mass arrests of colleagues in 2011: “We will write in place of our arrested colleagues.” Acar said, “I was 15 years old at the time, Gök’s words touched me a lot and encouraged me to become a journalist.”

For the sake of truth, everyone should stand up for the Free Press workers, Emrullah Acar concluded: “Those who call themselves democratic must not remain silent about the attacks. That is everyone’s duty. If no voice is raised today against the attacks on the Free Press, tomorrow there might be no media left to report on the total attacks on the dynamics of society. Let us raise the voice of truth together.”



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