

# THE IMRALI POST

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

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# Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

## Vigil in Maxmur against the isolation of Öcalan leaves one month behind

ANF | MAXMUR | 20 AUGUST 2023

A vigil was launched on 20 July in Martyr Rustem Refugee Camp in Maxmur to demand an end to the isolation imposed on Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and to demand his physical freedom.

The vigil has left one month behind and continues with the participation of more people every day.

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

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

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

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## Young women in Raqqa protest against the isolation of Öcalan

ANF | RAQQA | 21 AUGUST 2023

The Union of Young Women in Raqqa organized a protest march to denounce the isolation imposed on Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan and to demand his physical freedom.

Hundreds of people attended the march, including members of the Zenubiya Women's Community, women's organisations and political parties.

During the course of the march through the city center, demonstrators chanted slogans condemning the international conspiracy against Abdullah Öcalan that resulted in his handover to Turkey in 1999 since when he has been held in solitary confinement on the prison island of Imrali.

Reading a statement in the name of the Union of Young Women after a minute of silence, Letîfa Hesên stated that the international conspiracy by the Turkish state and its partners was directed against the free ideas of Öcalan.

The Turkish state, which has been targeting the democratic nation project for years, could not achieve any results in spite of its attacks against the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) for years.

Hesên vowed that young women will continue to embrace the ideas and philosophy of Abdullah Öcalan.

The statement in the name of the Zenubiya Women's Community in Raqqa was read by Kafiya Kurdî who denounced the isolation of the Kurdish leader and pointed out that the Turkish state fears Abdullah Öcalan's ideas that present a solution to the problems in the Middle East.

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## War veterans from Afrin and Shehba demand freedom for Öcalan

ANF | SHEHBA | 22 AUGUST 2023

War veterans from Afrin and Shehba gathered at the Berxwedan Camp in the Fafin district of the Shehba Canton to denounce the aggravated isolation imposed on Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan and to demand his physical freedom.

The press statement in Kurdish and Arabic pointed out that a stronger struggle would be waged against the special war policies against the people, saying: "We reiterate our promise to enhance our struggle. In addition, we will be shields against the war against our people. Our actions will not stop until the physical freedom of Leader Abdullah Öcalan is secured."

Defining the absolute isolation of Öcalan as unacceptable, the statement called for an end to the isolation and the Turkish fascism that violates international law.

"We will follow the path of Leader Öcalan's ideas and philosophy," said the statement and called on the people in four parts of Kurdistan and Europe to rise up for the freedom of Öcalan.

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## Akdemir: Isolation imposed on Öcalan must be lifted

ANF | 24 AUGUST 2023

Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan has been held in severe isolation conditions in Imrali F Type High Security Prison since 25 March 2021. The family and lawyers' requests for visits are rejected on the basis of so-called discipline punishments that have been systematized. The lack of news from Abdullah Öcalan worries the Kurdish people and their friends, as well as everyone who defends democracy.

Human Rights Association (IHD) Honorary Board member Şevket Akdemir said that such an isolation practice is not seen in either Turkish or world laws. Akdemir added that Abdullah Öcalan should benefit from the rights enjoyed by all prisoners in Turkey. "Like everyone else, he has the right to make phone calls once a week, open visits and regular visits. This right is expressly given by Turkish law. The isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan is therefore against both the law and the Constitution."

### 'Abdullah Öcalan's ideas are clear'

The isolation imposed on Abdullah Öcalan is reflected in other prisons, Akdemir said, adding that the war has been going on in Turkey for nearly 40 years and that the Kurdish leader has said many times that he would be able to contribute to solving Turkey's problems. "As a result of the continuation of this war, the economy has collapsed. No one can calculate where the Turkish economy is heading today. I think that political parties and everyone who loves their country should fight for the end of isolation and the opening of peace channels."

Akdemir continued: "If the isolation on Abdullah Öcalan is lifted and the Kurdish problem is resolved, Turkey's path will be cleared and Turkey will be among the rich countries of the Middle East. With the abolition of isolation, the economic crisis and the cost of living will disappear, and high inflation will disappear. The main source of all these problems is the isolation and the Kurdish problem. These are all interconnected. In other words, peace and tranquillity will come to the country. The Kurdish issue is 200 years old. It is very difficult to talk about democracy in the country today. A deputy makes a statement but is detained. You can't do this to an MP who has immunity. What is this based on? It is based on the Kurdish question. If the Kurdish problem had been solved, none of these problems would have happened. Abdullah Öcalan's ideas are clear. He defends the peaceful coexistence of two peoples. As soon as there is peace, everyone will be relieved. Abdullah Öcalan's ideas should not be feared. There is no harm in thinking. Isolation must be lifted."

## Strasbourg vigil for Öcalan's freedom on its 583rd week

ANF | STRASBOURG | 24 AUGUST 2023

The Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan Vigil was launched on 25 June 2012 in Strasbourg, to demand freedom for Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and an end to the isolation imposed on him in Imrali.

The vigil continues in its 583rd week and has been taken over by three patriots from the Parisian suburb of Drancy, including Fazil Kobanê, Mustafa Girişkin and Mehmet Acar.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Fazil Kobanê noted that Öcalan has not been heard from for 29 months. Concerns over the situation of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan increased after the Executive Council Member of the Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union (KCK), Sabri Ok [said](#) in an interview on the Kurdish TV Channel Sterk TV on July 8 that threatening letters had recently been sent to Abdullah Öcalan anonymously via the Imrali prison administration.

"We are on vigil here in front of the CPT (Committee for the Prevention of Torture) which claims to have met with Öcalan but has yet to present a report on its visit to him," said Fazil Kobanê and called on the Kurdish people to raise their voices.

"We take to the streets and demonstrate, chanting the slogan "No Life Without the Leader", but this should not be just talk without action. The Kurdish society, youth and women in particular, should put the words into practice," he said.



## Families of Imrali prisoners apply to visit their relatives

ANF | ISTANBUL | 25 AUGUST 2023

There has been no news from Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan for 29 months and there is absolute isolation imposed on him.

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

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

Concerns over the situation of Öcalan increased after the Executive Council Member of the Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union (KCK), Sabri Ok [said](#) in an interview on the Kurdish TV Channel

Sterk TV on July 8 that threatening letters had recently been sent to Abdullah Öcalan anonymously via the Imrali prison administration.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Concerns increased after the CPT visit to İmralı**

Concerns over the situation of the Kurdish people's leader increased after the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) visited Turkey on September 20-29, 2022. In a statement on 3 October, the CPT announced that İmralı F Type High Security Prison was among the institutions it visited.

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

### **Conditions of extraordinary isolation**

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

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

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

### **Öcalan held in a single cell since 1999**

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



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

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

### **Incommunicado detention**

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

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

### **Restrictions through fabricated decisions**

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

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

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



# Prisons in Turkey

## Activists in Istanbul and Ankara expose condition of ill prisoners Akay and Çakır

ANF | ISTANBUL/ANKARA | 20 AUGUST 2023

The Prisons Commission of the Istanbul Branch of the Human Rights Association (IHD) held the 595th of its weekly “F Sit-in” in front of the association building to draw attention to the situation of ill prisoners.

In this week’s action, attention was drawn to the health condition of Soydan Akay, a 30-year-old seriously ill prisoner held in Marmara Closed Prison.

This week’s statement was read by Meryem Bars, a member of the IHD Prisons Commission. Bars said that Soydan Akay suffered from joint rheumatism, hepatitis B, heart and prostate diseases, his health deteriorated rapidly due to the lack of adequate treatment and care in prison. She added that Akay has been kept in a solitary cell for 5 years despite these health problems. Bars said that Akay and all other seriously ill prisoners should be released.

### Ankara

The Freedom for Ill Prisoners Initiative made a press statement in front of the Human Rights Association (IHD) Ankara Branch on the 467th week of its “F Sit-in”.

Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Ankara Provincial Organization and Green Left Party Ankara Provincial Organization members participated in the action. IHD Prisons Commission co-spokesperson Nuray Çevirmen talked about the situation of Semiran Erbağa Çakır, one of the seriously ill prisoners in Tarsus Women's Closed Prison.

Çevirmen said that Çakır suffered many diseases, some of them chronic. Underlining that Çakır was constantly hospitalized due to his chronic illnesses and the drugs he has to take, Çevirmen said: “We demand that the release process be started, taking into account all the diseases and treatment conditions of the prisoner.”



## Court decides that journalist Arslan remains in prison

ANF | AMED | 24 AUGUST 2023

Mesopotamia Agency (MA) journalist Fırat Can Arslan was arrested on 25 July as part of the investigation launched by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on charges of "targeting public officials".

At the hearing to demand that Arslan be tried without staying in prison, the Prosecutor's Office opposed the request.

Arslan's lawyers said that there was no legal reason in the arrest of the journalist and added that the investigation threatened to intimidate and deter journalists. Recalling the decisions of the Constitutional Court (AYM) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the lawyers said: "The detention brought about by this judicial practice must be ended. There is no concrete evidence to show that the arrest is legal."

Despite the lawyers' argumentation, the judge decided for journalist Arslan to remain in prison.

### What happened?

As part of an investigation launched by the Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, Mesopotamia Agency (MA) reporters Delal Akyüz and Fırat Can Arslan, T24 editor Sibel Yukler, Bianet editor Evrim Kepenek and journalist Evrim Deniz were detained on 25 July.

The journalists were detained in Amed for sharing the news about the change of duty of the prosecutor who prepared the indictment of 18 other journalists on their Twitter accounts. The journalists were charged with "targeting a public official".

One of the journalists, Fırat Can Arslan, was remanded in custody on 25 July, while the other journalists were released on condition of judicial control.

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## Prisoner suffering from cancer continues to be held in jail

ANF | ANTEP | 25 AUGUST 2023

Mehmet Elçe (60) was detained and arrested in Silopi 5 days after the attack on the Police Department building in the Cizre district of Sirnak on 26 August 2016. In the attack, 12 police officers lost their lives. Elçe was sentenced to 12 times aggravated life imprisonment and 2,500 years in prison. Elçe, whose sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court, was not released despite suffering from cancer. He was diagnosed with stomach cancer after her arrest, and was transferred to Antep (Dilok) in 2022.

Ersin Aslan Training and Research Hospital wrote in his report that Elçe “cannot stay in prison”. However, the man was not released despite and continues to be held in Antep H Type Closed Prison.

Lawyer Yusuf Kartal, a member of the Lawyers’ Association for Freedom (ÖHD) Antep Branch Prison Commission, visited Elçe in prison and said that the man was chosen as the “scapegoat” for the incident. Kartal noted that despite the lack of any evidence, Elçe was given 12 aggravated life sentences and 2,500 years in prison.

Kartal said: “After he was diagnosed with cancer, the lawyers kept requesting his release. However, the Supreme Court upheld the sentence, and so did the Court of Cassation, despite all the evidence and medical reports saying that he should have been released.”

### ‘Enemy law applied to Kurds’

Kartal added: “The law applied to Kurds is the law of the enemy. In the case of Mehmet Elçe, innocent people living in that region were chosen as the scapegoat for the explosion. The legal system has not been operated fairly. Unfortunately, we have seen this happening many times.”

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## Military aggression and occupation

### Turkish attack kills 2 Syrian soldiers, injures 4 others in Manbij

ANF | 20 AUGUST 2023

Two Syrian regime soldiers were killed and four others injured in an attack carried out by Turkish forces and allied mercenaries in northern Manbij on Sunday.

According to reports from the ground, the attack with tanks and howitzers was directed against the posts of Syrian government forces in the villages of Toxan and Awn Dadat to the north of Manbij at 07:30 this morning.

The attack left two soldiers of the Syrian army dead and four others injured.

Manbij is located 30 kilometres south of the Turkish border and occupies a key strategic position in Turkey's plans for expanding its illegal zone of occupation in northern Syria. Administered by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), the town is located on the important M4 motorway, which runs through northern Syria as a lifeline and was a strategic supply route for ISIS.

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## HPG: Three soldiers killed, one helicopter damaged

ANF | BEHDINAN | 20 AUGUST 2023

The resistance of the HPG (People's Defence Forces) and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) against Turkish invasion in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) continues unabated.

According to the HPG Press Office, which publishes daily reports on the war in Kurdistan, three soldiers of the Turkish army were killed and four emplacements of theirs were damaged in the latest actions by the guerrillas.

Guerrillas carried out eight actions on Turkish positions in the Girê Cûdî and Sîda resistance areas from six o'clock on Saturday morning until 7:40 am today. Six of these actions were carried out by YJA Star guerrillas with heavy weapons and rifles.

While helicopters were observed flying over Girê Cûdî on Saturday evening, YJA Star guerrillas fired on a Sikorsky helicopter dropping off soldiers in the area. The helicopter was damaged and had to leave the area.

In Sîda, guerrillas hit shovel excavators with heavy weapons on Sunday morning. The Turkish army has been trying to demolish guerrilla positions with heavy construction equipment in the area for some time.

HPG also reported that the Girê Cûdî and Girê Bahar areas in the Zap region were bombed four times by Turkish army fighter jets on Saturday. The resistance area of Girê Ortê in Metîna was attacked four times by combat helicopters on the same day. In addition, artillery attacks were carried out in the region of Zap.

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## Two YRK guerrillas martyred in Turkish attack

ANF | 20 AUGUST 2023

The Press Office of East Kurdistan Defense Units (YRK) released a statement announcing the martyrdom of two guerrillas as a result of a Turkish attack in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the statement on Sunday, the two guerrillas, Şîlan Zagros and Amanç (Rêkeft) Şerîfî, lost their lives and two others were injured in a Turkish drone attack in the area of Çuwarta, in the Pencewîn district of Sulaymaniyah on 28 July.

YRK pointed out that the fascist Turkish state is attacking prominent popular figures and patriots in its large-scale annihilation campaign against the Kurdish people.

Paying tribute to the martyrs, YRK expressed their condolences to the families of the fallen guerrillas, the Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla and the Kurdish people.

“We promise to raise the flag of our martyrs higher in Kurdistan and to avenge them through building a free and democratic Kurdistan,” stated the YRK.



## SDF: One of ISIS leaders was arrested in Deir ez-Zor

ANF | 21 AUGUST 2023

The Special Units of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) conducted a security operation, dismantling an ISIS terrorist cell in al-Ozba town, in the eastern countryside of Deir ez-Zor.

According to the statement by SDF Media Center, the operation was supported by air surveillance and ground support by the international coalition forces. “As a result, our units successfully apprehended one of the ISIS leaders who was involved in transporting explosive materials, weapons and ammunitions to the ISIS cells in the al-Hol camp and providing ISIS families with forged IDs. He was also linked to other terrorists “Emirs” in the Turkish-occupied Serekaniye (Ras al-Ain).”

The statement pointed out that: “With unwavering determination, our forces continue their relentless efforts in counter-terrorism operations. These operations are carried out in cooperation with the international coalition forces, aiming to fortify security and stability in the regions of NE Syria and ultimately eradicate ISIS terrorism.”



## HPG: Two soldiers killed, one surveillance camera destroyed in actions by the guerrillas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 21 AUGUST 2023

The resistance of the HPG (People’s Defence Forces) and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) against Turkish invasion in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq) continues unabated.

According to the HPG Press Office statement on Monday, two more members of the Turkish troops were killed in guerrilla actions against the occupation forces at Girê (Hill) Cûdî in the Zap region. The guerrillas also destroyed a surveillance camera and sabotaged the establishment of military positions. The guerril-

las also took action against the Turkish invasion forces that attempted to airdrop more soldiers in the region.

Details of the latest actions by the guerrillas are as follows:

### **Girê Cûdî Resistance Area in Şehîd Delîl Western Zap region**

On 20 August, YJA Star guerrillas destroyed a surveillance camera using sniper tactics.

On 20 August, guerrillas struck the occupiers with heavy weapons and damaged a military position.

On 20 August, the occupation forces were hit by YJA Star guerrillas with heavy weapons and prevented from establishing military positions.

On 20 August, a group of occupiers moving in open terrain were struck and one soldier was shot dead by a YJA Star sniper.

On 20 August, guerrillas intervened six times against Sikorsky helicopters on a mission to airdrop troops in the area.

On 21 August, the occupiers were struck by YJA Star guerrillas and prevented from establishing military positions. One soldier was killed.

### **Attacks by the Turkish army**

On the other hand, Turkish fighter jets carried out at least six attacks on the Girê Cûdî Resistance Area and Girê Bahar Resistance Area on 20 August. On the same day, the regions of Zap, Şehîd Delîl and Metîna were attacked by artillery.



## **YJA Star guerrilla Kaymaz buried in Siirt under heavy police presence**

**ANF | SIIRT | 22 AUGUST 2023**

Free Women's Association (YJA Star) guerrilla Gurbet Kaymaz fell between 14 and 28 July during heavy fighting between guerrillas and the Turkish army in the region of Hizan (Xîzan) in the province of Bitlis (Bedlîs).

The fighting lasted twelve days. The relatives were summoned by the Bitlis Military Police Headquarters for a DNA test, and after comparing the data, the fighter's body was handed over to them.

### **Inhuman treatment by police**

The family arrived on Monday evening with the remains in the city of Siirt (Sêrt), and were greeted by a massive police presence. The police surrounded Zevyê Cemetery and prevented Kaymaz from being buried by an imam after preventing him from carrying out the religious burial rites.

Only ten family members were allowed to attend the funeral. Even washing the corpse was forbidden under massive threats.



## **Kurdistan Freedom Guerrilla inflicts heavy blows on the Turkish army**

**ANF | BEHDINAN | 22 AUGUST 2023**

The guerrillas have been successfully resisting Turkish attacks on the Medya Defense Zones for several years. The Turkish army had already attempted to capture Girê Cûdî in the western Zap the previous year, but failed and had to retreat in the face of guerrilla resistance. In the night between 20 and 21 July, the Turkish army again attacked the area. Journalist Dilara Nurhaq reported from the frontline about the developments in the Medya Defense Zones and analyzed the current situation in the combat zone in an interview with ANF.

### **Attack on Girê Cûdî aimed at expanding the occupation zone**

Nurhaq said: “The latest operation has been going on for a month now. In the past year, the Turkish army had not achieved any success with its operations. Despite all the technological weapons at its disposal, it could not achieve the desired result. Due to the strong attacks carried out by the guerrillas, the Turkish army had to retreat and had significant losses. After this retreat, it prepared intensively and launched a new operation against these areas seven months later.”

Dilara Nurhaq described the background of the attacks as follows: “The Turkish occupying state has identified the Kurdish freedom movement as a strategic target among all Kurdish movements and is attacking it. It is aware that it cannot expand its occupation in Kurdistan and the region as long as the PKK exists. The guerrilla areas are seen as an obstacle to the realization of the Misak-ı Milli Plan (establishing the borders of the Ottoman National Pact). Therefore, these areas are attacked. One of the crucial guerrilla areas standing in the way of Turkey’s expansionist plans is Girê Cûdî. The Turkish army launched another attack on this area, from which it had previously had to retreat. Girê Cûdî marks the border line to reach the cities in South Kurdistan and is the place where Metîna, Zap and Garê meet. So it is of great strategic importance.”



## Guerrillas strike back every day

Nurhaq continued: “Over the past year, the freedom guerrillas gained valuable experience in the war. The guerrillas plan their warfare based on these experiences. From the first night of the Turkish army’s renewed attack, they offered great resistance and inflicted a severe blow on the occupying army. The Turkish army suffered considerable losses, especially when the troops attempted to land. In response to the occupiers’ month-long attack, the guerrilla forces are conducting daily actions. They fought the occupying army with new tactics and coordinated professional operations. The attacks by the women’s guerrillas YJA Star are particularly effective in this context. The women guerrillas do not leave the soldiers the opportunity to leave their position or to move. The invaders cannot leave the landing area as they are immediately attacked by the guerrillas.”

## The Turkish army is stuck on the Girê Cûdî

The journalist added: “The Turkish army is currently on the defensive in this area, as can be seen from the action reports of the HPG press center. Defensive attacks are the main component of the Kurdistan freedom guerrillas’ tactics in this month-long war. With their effective actions, the guerrilla forces give the enemy no time to breathe. They prevent the enemy’s second attack on that area from reaching its target.

In order to understand the war that the guerrillas have been waging over the past month, a few facts are important. In this new war it is of crucial importance that the freedom guerrillas of Kurdistan organize daily actions with constantly evolving tactics. Tunnel warfare and the use of mobile units in the field complement each other. The guerrillas draw their will to win from these experiences. With the new war tactics, the technological advantage of the attackers is neutralized. In particular, the YJA Star performed impressively in the fight against the invading Turkish army and once again demonstrated the power of women.”

## Psychological superiority of the guerrillas

Finally, Nurhaq pointed to the psychological situation of the guerrillas: “Another striking aspect in this war is that even Turkish soldiers report how the guerrillas attack their helicopters. This illustrates their poor psychological state. It is no exaggeration to say that the Turkish army is stuck in every respect. The actions of the guerrillas and their results prove this. The war will continue in full force. The guerrillas are in the lead with psychological superiority. In such conflicts, initial performance is paramount.”

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## Turkish state bombs village of Tirvanîş in Metîna

LİSER KOÇGİRİ | BEHDİNAN | 22 AUGUST 2023

The Turkish state continues to bomb villages in Bashurê Kurdistan.

The village of Tirvanîş, located in Metîna, in the Medya Defense Areas, was bombed by the Turkish state with howitzers and artillery on Monday. The attack caused material damage to houses and gardens.

On the night of 21 August, the Turkish army also hit the village of Guherzê in Amadiye.

The KDP, acting jointly with the Turkish state, tried to direct the reaction of the people to the PKK by spreading the lie that these attacks were actually carried out by the guerrillas.

The Turkish state bombed a civilian vehicle in the village of Bilindbasê in Çemankê sub-district of the Garê region on 6 August, killing Alan Ismail and seriously wounding Haşim Şekir.



## 20 more young people join the guerrilla ranks

ANF | 22 AUGUST 2023

More young people are joining the guerrillas following the campaigns launched by the youth movements of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and PAJK (Party of Free Women in Kurdistan), Komalên Ciwan and Komalên Jinên Ciwan. The youth movements called on young people to join the struggle in the guerrilla ranks in the scope of the campaigns "Cenga Azadiyê Serbixin" [Win the Freedom War] and "Jin Jiyên Azadî, Serbixî Azadî" (Woman, Life, Freedom, Let's Win Freedom!).

On the anniversary of the 15 August Breakthrough, when the Kurdish guerrillas fired the first bullet at the Turkish army in North Kurdistan in 1984, 20 young women from four parts of Kurdistan joined the guerrilla ranks.

20 more young people announced their participation in the guerrilla struggle in a press statement on Tuesday.

The new fighters pointed out that there has been no news of Abdullah Öcalan since March 2021. The Kurdish leader is completely isolated on the Turkish prison island of Imrali, and even his lawyers and relatives have no contact with him. His isolation is part of the Turkish state's policy of extermination against the Kurdish people, said the statement and continued:

"During the revolutionary struggle that has lasted for fifty years, Leader Apo (Abdullah Öcalan) has raised and trained countless courageous comrades who sacrifice their own lives for the revolution and a free life. The international plot against him was the result of the fear felt by the hegemonic powers of capitalist modernity. His resistance on Imrali shows the correctness of his saying that the people are the greatest force. He has developed his revolutionary philosophy and his paradigm of a Democratic Nation is recognised worldwide."

The statement continued: "The start of the armed struggle of the freedom movement in Kurdistan on 15 August 1984 revitalised the Kurdish people and thousands of young people took to the mountains to fight

against oppression, genocide and fascism. We too join this revolutionary freedom march. We will fight side by side with our brave comrades who are resisting all NATO technology, chemical weapons and banned weapons used by the enemy against the guerrillas in the Free Mountains, Zap, Avaşîn and Metîna in the Medya Defence Zones. We will stand by those who inflict heavy blows on the enemy while defending the sacred lands of the Kurdistan mountains.”

The group said they participated in the struggle to achieve Öcalan’s freedom, avenge the martyrs and build a free life for the oppressed and called on the young people in all the four parts of Kurdistan to join this freedom march and the guerrilla of democratic modernity, the freedom guerrillas.

The new fighters vowed to take over the weapons of those who fell in Zap, Metina and Avaşîn, to enhance the revolutionary struggle and to realize the dreams and goals of those who fell, adding: “We will win the revolutionary struggle for the freedom of our people.”

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## HPG pays tribute to three women guerrillas fallen in Mardin

ANF | BEHDINAN | 23 AUGUST 2023

Guerrillas Gulbahar Mercan, Eylem Munzur and Dicle Eylem fell as the result of a military operation carried out by the Turkish army in the province of Mardin (Mêrdîn).

The press center of the People’s Defense Forces (HPG) said on Monday that the guerrillas died following an attack on the Bagok massif in Nusaybin (Nisêbîn) on 4 August.

Gulbahar Mercan was a commander of the Free Women’s Association (YJA Star), while Eylem Munzur and Dicle Eylem belonged to the Hêzên Taybet, a special unit within the guerrillas.

The HPG paid tribute to the guerrillas, “long-time apoist militants who, with their selfless attitude and a deep connection to Abdullah Öcalan’s paradigm based on women’s liberation, have managed to embody an avant-garde in the liberation struggle.”

The statement said: “Gulbahar, Eylem and Dicle championed the line of the PKK and PAJK; the ideology of women’s liberation and the reality of the free woman. They approached every task with determination and made the impossible possible, even under the most difficult conditions. We regard them as the epitome of the modern guerrilla existence of the YJA Star.”

The HPG expressed their sympathy to the relatives of the fallen and to the Kurdish people. The organization released the following information on the identity of the fighters:

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## Turkish drone strikes a village in Afrin

ANF | 23 AUGUST 2023

A Turkish combat drone struck the village of Elqemiyê in the Shera district of the occupied Afrin canton on Wednesday.

According to initial results, the attack resulted in material damage.

In a balance sheet of the crimes and violations committed by the Turkish occupation army and its mercenaries against the regions of North-East Syria during July 2023, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) reported on 10 August that the Turkish occupation army persistently violates the airspace of NE Syria, utilizing warplanes and UAVs to target both civilian and military locations, including cars on public roads. “These attacks have resulted in the loss of lives among our fighters and civilians. The warplane violations alone have reached 58, while the drones targeted areas 10 times, with 7 of those attacks conducted by the Turkish occupation army and 3 by its mercenaries. Disturbingly, the use of suicide drones in these attacks has been reported.”

In the village of “Hassan Agha,” south of the city of Manbij, a civilian car fell victim to a drone attack, resulting in the minor injury of the civilian, “Ahmed Al-Jassem.”

On the road between the village of “Khazna” and the town of “Tal Maarouf,” two cars were targeted by Turkish occupation drones, leading to the deaths of three individuals and leaving two others with minor injuries.

In the village of “Khirbet Khoy” in the “Amouda” area, the Turkish occupation drones carried out an attack that resulted in the deaths of four fighters from the Self-Defense Duty Forces.

The al-Shahba areas also faced aggressive targeting by the Turkish occupation drones. Notably, the center of the “Tal Rifaat” district sustained damage to civilian property due to one such attack.

Meanwhile, a suicide drone employed by the Turkish occupation targeted a military point in the “Menagh” military airport within the “Sharra/Sharran” district. Tragically, this attack caused the death of one member of the Syrian regime forces and left six others with serious injuries.

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## Village in Şırnak countryside under military siege for 27 days

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 23 AUGUST 2023

The military siege in the village of Bilbês in Beytüşşebap district of Şırnak has been going on for 27 days.

Turkish troops deployed on hills around the village are reported to be opening random fire on forestland. Inhabitants are allowed to enter and leave the village only after being subjected to a criminal record check (GBT), a database containing information on wanted persons as well as criminal and suspicious activity reports from the police and gendarmerie.

While pressure on the village population increases amid the ongoing siege and military operation in the region, search warrants have been issued for many residents.

A resident of the village, İzzettin Cin, was detained on August 1 and imprisoned on August 4 for allegedly “aiding and abetting the PKK”. In the scope of the same investigation, Levent Cin was also taken into custody on August 19 after he had been summoned to a gendarmerie station in the Silopi district on the grounds that he had to sign a registration form. The man was released from custody with a ban on leaving the country and on condition of judicial supervision.

There have been several skirmishes with Turkish soldiers and guerrillas in the region in the past weeks. The Turkish army responded to the guerrilla presence with heavy waves of aerial attacks and tank fire.



## Turkish drone targets Jin TV vehicle on Qamişlo-Amûde road killing one person and wounding another

ANF | QAMISHLO | 23 AUGUST 2023

A Turkish armed drone targeted a journalist’s vehicle at the junction of the village of Til Şîr on the Qamişlo-Amûde road in the afternoon.

The targeted vehicle belonged to JIN TV. As a result of the bombing, an employee named Necimedîn Feysel Hec Sînan fell as a martyr and a journalist was injured.

Turkish drones move unchallenged in the airspace over Syria controlled by the USA and Russia. In the last three years, Turkey has carried out around 200 attacks by unmanned aircraft in the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria. From Derik to Shehba, there was hardly a place that was not bombed by armed drones. The attacks targeted representatives of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), members of combat units as well as the civilian population and claimed well over a hundred lives. In addition, at least 46 members of the Syrian government forces were killed by the Turkish army in attacks on their bases in AANES.

In a [balance sheet](#) of the crimes and violations committed by the Turkish occupation army and its mercenaries against the regions of North-East Syria during July 2023, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) reported on 10 August that the Turkish occupation army persistently violates the airspace of NE Syria, utilizing warplanes and UAVs to target both civilian and military locations, including cars on public roads. “These attacks have resulted in the loss of lives among our fighters and civilians. The warplane violations

alone have reached 58, while the drones targeted areas 10 times, with 7 of those attacks conducted by the Turkish occupation army and 3 by its mercenaries. Disturbingly, the use of suicide drones in these attacks has been reported.”

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## KCK: First condition for Iraq’s territorial integrity is the end of Turkish occupation

ANF | BEHDINAN | 24 AUGUST 2023

The Foreign Relations Committee of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) released a statement about Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan’s trip to Iraq. Turkey’s former intelligence chief met with Iraqi government officials in Baghdad on Wednesday and issued a statement after talks with his counterpart Fuad Hussein in which he stressed Iraq’s common interests and sovereignty and called for a “joint fight against terrorism”. Fidan argued that the PKK was occupying Iraqi territory and demanded that the PKK be recognised as a terrorist organisation.

The KCK statement includes the following:

“The former Head of MIT [Turkish intelligence] and current Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan had a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein in Baghdad. In a subsequent statement, he emphasized common interests and Iraq’s sovereignty and called for a ‘joint fight against terrorism’, claiming that the PKK occupies Iraqi territory and demanding that the PKK be recognized as a ‘terrorist organization’.

It can be clearly seen in Fidan’s strategy of conducting foreign policy that he is trying to conceal those acts committed when he was head of the MIT intelligence agency and to market his own policy today under the guise of ‘diplomacy’.

It is the Turkish Foreign Minister, who is responsible for the Turkish invasion on Iraqi territory and the establishment of about 100 outposts, military bases and centers of MIT, who is now shamelessly talking about the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. It is Hakan Fidan’s intention to normalize Turkey’s military occupation of the Iraqi territory by making the Iraqi head of state accept this condition.

The Turkish state has made Erbil [Hewlêr] a de facto province of Turkey on a politically, militarily and economically level. What the latter is now trying to do is to make its occupation of Kurdistan and Iraq permanent through ‘diplomacy’. In doing so, it is deliberately trying to exploit the silence of the South Kurdish government, the Iraqi state and the UN.

For many years, Hakan Fidan has been known for being a conspirator and provocateur. For example, the following statement by him has become widely known: “If I have to, I will have some missiles fired at Turkey from the Syrian side” in order to be able to invade Syrian territory and legitimize a war. He, who is

known for such statements and a corresponding policy, is now conducting 'diplomacy' on behalf of Turkey.

It also happened under Hakan Fidan's responsibility that the cities of South Kurdistan got filled up with MIT agents and the number of hitmen increased. Despite the fact that he is the one being responsible for the murder of dozens of people in Sulaymaniyah, Şengal [Sinjar] and Mexmûr [Maxmur] by giving killing orders, he shamelessly speaks about 'terrorism' and 'joint fight against terrorism'.

The former Head of MIT and the new Turkish Foreign Minister thinks that he can sell his statements based on lies and demagoguery to the whole world with the lie that 'Turkey is and was waging a great struggle against ISIS'.

On June 10, 2014, when forces of [the so called 'Islamic State'] IS stormed the Turkish Consulate in Mosul, Consul General Öztürk Yılmaz and the special operations forces guarding the consulate surrendered without firing a single bullet. Hakan Fidan was the head of MIT at this time and he was instructing the Consul General and the special operations forces: "Don't give IS any difficulties, we are in charge". As a matter of fact, IS gangs, who seized the Consulate within 10 minutes, made a statement immediately after the raid: "We are ready to meet with Turkish authorities". IS's relations with Turkey, which started with this incident, continue today through Hakan Fidan and MIT as a public relationship. The release of the stolen Iraqi oil to the market through Turkey is also an activity carried out in partnership between the Turkish state and IS, and dozens of visual and written information on this issue have been made public. During the period when Hakan Fidan was the head of the MIT, dozens of massacres and bombings were carried out in partnership with the Turkish state and IS, and none of the real perpetrators were caught.

The main purpose of Hakan Fidan's visits to Baghdad and Erbil in his function as the Turkish Foreign Minister was to develop the policy of turning South Kurdistan into a province of Turkey by excluding the de facto occupation of Iraqi territory from discussion. While at the same time, the attacks and assassinations within Sulaymaniyah, Şengal and Mexmûr continue.

As a movement, we are not in conflict with the Iraqi state nor are we with the people of the country. We have always had friendly relations with Iraq as it is the only regional state that showed to be open for the development of solutions to the Kurdish question and constitutionally guarantee Kurdish existence and freedom. The Turkish occupation state wants to integrate the Iraqi state into its Kurdish genocide policy based on denial and extermination and tries to make the Iraqi state a partner in its crimes. This is the reason why Fidan insists that Iraq should declare the PKK as a 'terrorist organization'. That he said this to the face of the Iraqi foreign minister, who is a Kurd by himself, and there was no reaction against it, is strange. The colonialist Turkish Republic, with the support of the KDP, is incessantly trying to turn our movement and the Iraqi state against each other. We know that the Iraqi state and government officials, the patriotic intellectuals and the people will not play this game and will resist against this policy.

On this occasion, the people of Kurdistan and Iraq, in particular, the South Kurdistan administration, the Baghdad administration and the UN should make efforts to end Turkey's occupation of Iraqi territory and to remove all military bases. Land and air attacks on Iraqi territory due to 'terrorism' should not be naturalized by making them the justification for the Turkish occupation; The Turkish state should not be allowed to turn Kirkuk, Mosul, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah into the backyard of MIT and IS in the name of

political and trade relations. The first and decisive condition for Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity is the end of the Turkish occupation of Iraqi territory.

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## YRJ condemns deadly Turkish attack on journalists: “We will continue to expose Turkey’s crimes”

ANF | QAMISHLO | 24 AUGUST 2023

The Women's Press Union (YRJ) in North-East Syria released a statement denouncing the Turkish drone attack on Wednesday that targeted a car belonging to the Jin TV channel, which reports on current developments and backgrounds from a women's perspective. Necimedîn Feysel Hec Sînan, the driver of the car, which was on the move on the Qamishlo-Amude road, was killed in the attack and a female journalist, Delila Ağît, suffered injuries.

The YRJ statement on Thursday said: “This attack has revealed, once again, the invading Turkish state's policies hostile to the freedom of women who lead the revolution in North-East Syria. With such attacks, the Turkish occupation state has committed a crime against humanity and sought to undermine the gains made by our revolution thanks to the sacrifices of the daughters and sons of North and East Syria.”

The statement continued: “We reiterate our promise to the people of North-East Syria and to our fellow journalists who have sacrificed their lives to expose the Turkish occupation and crimes against humanity. We condemn this attack directed against female journalists. We call on all media outlets to expose the Turkish state's massacres against the people of North and East Syria and to call it to account for the crimes it has committed.”

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## More blows inflicted on the Turkish army in South Kurdistan

ANF | BEHDINAN | 24 AUGUST 2023

In a detailed statement providing information about the ongoing war in the guerrilla-held Medya Defense Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq), the Press Centre of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported dozens of guerrilla actions by the HPG and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) against the Turkish occupation forces.

HPG provided the following information on the guerrilla actions in different areas as well as on the latest attacks by the Turkish army:



### **Girê Cûdî in the Western Zap region**

22 August: YJA Star guerrillas struck Turkish army positions four times with heavy weapons, while another position was hit by the HPG guerrillas. In the late evening, the area was bombed eight times by Turkish attack helicopters. When a transport helicopter tried to drop troops, the YJA Star intervened twice and forced the aircraft to retreat.

23 August: Four guerrilla groups hit Turkish positions simultaneously. One soldier was shot dead, a surveillance camera installed by the army was destroyed, while two positions were damaged.

24 August: Last night, three Turkish positions were damaged and one soldier was killed in guerrilla actions with heavy weapons. Two of the actions were carried out by the YJA Star.

### **Sîda Resistance Area in Zap region**

The Turkish occupation forces have been trying to destroy the guerrillas' underground defence positions in Sîda Resistance Area with heavy construction equipment for some time. On Tuesday, as well as today at 7.30 a.m., guerrillas carried out actions with heavy weapons, and an excavator was damaged.

### **Girê Ortê Resistance Area in Metîna region**

On 21 August, two Turkish positions were damaged by the guerrillas with heavy weapons. On 23 August, YJA Star fighters struck the advancing occupation forces with heavy weapons. One soldier was killed, two military tents and a surveillance camera were destroyed.

### **Xakurke**

YJA Star guerrillas with heavy weapons damaged a position of the Turkish occupation forces at Girê Şehîd Axîn on 21 August and other positions at Girê Şehîd Şahan and Girê Şehîd Axîn on 23 August.

### **Attacks by the Turkish army**

Regarding the Turkish army's continued attacks, HPG reported that prohibited explosives were used against a guerrilla position in Sîda on 22 August. In the past two days, a total of eleven strikes were carried out by Turkish fighter jets on the western Zap region, the Çilûçar area in Xakurke and the Kanîsarkê and Gundê Pîrozana areas in Gare. The regions of Zap, Metîna and Xakurke were shelled by artillery.

### **'Turkish army pins its hopes on lies'**

On the other hand, HPG denied reports in the Turkish media about the fallen guerrilla fighter Bawer Botan (Bekir Kîna), who died together with Rêzan Güngen in an attack by the Turkish army on 6 August, and whose deaths were announced by the HPG on 10 August.

In the Turkish media, Bawer Botan was portrayed as "a sniper who was successfully eliminated in Sulaymaniyah." HPG pointed out that in the face of determined guerrilla resistance, the Turkish army needs

success stories and embellishes mendacious reports with alleged details to make them more credible. “That the Turkish army has fallen so low as to pin its hopes on lies by its special war media only shows its immense difficulties in the face of guerrilla resistance,” stated the HPG.

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## Turkish drone strikes a car in South Kurdistan

ANF | 24 AUGUST 2023

The Turkish state carried out another drone attack in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) on Thursday. The attack took place in the town of Sîdekan and targeted a vehicle moving along a busy road with three occupants. The RojNews news agency, citing local sources, reported that the airstrike did not result in any casualties. However, the car was completely burnt out.

The attack in the town of Sîdekan, which belongs to the district of Soran in the north-east of the KRI capital Hewlêr (Erbil) and lies close to the Iraq-Iran border, occurred at the same time as the inaugural visit of Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan to the KRI. The AKP politician, who is also the former head of the intelligence service MIT and is considered the planner of the Turkish state's drone war in Kurdistan, which is against international law, met with KDP President Massoud Barzani, KRI President Nechirvan Barzani and Prime Minister Masrour Barzani on Thursday. The main component of their agenda was the “fight against terror” - meaning the PKK. In Baghdad yesterday, Fidan called the PKK an “occupying force” and demanded that it be recognised as a terrorist organisation.

Turkish drone attacks in the KRI have remarkably increased in recent months. Baghdad and Erbil usually ignore these attacks and the international community also lets Ankara have its way in its war in Kurdistan. Turkey's drone war against the autonomous region of northern and eastern Syria also goes largely unnoticed internationally.

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## Turkish state bombs South Kurdistan three times, killing 4 civilians in Bradost

ANF | SULAYMANIYAH | 24 AUGUST 2023

The Turkish state bombed South Kurdistan (North Iraq) three times while the Kurdish regional government officials were meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan.

Four civilians were killed as a result of the attack, carried out by drones in Mergemîr in Bradost.



## HPG pays tribute to guerrilla commander Bêrîtan Sîser

ANF | BEHDINAN | 25 AUGUST 2023

The press center of the People's Defense Forces (HPG) has published information about guerrilla Bêrîtan Sîser (Gurbet Kaymaz), who died in Garzan. In the obituary, the HPG pointed out that the Turkish army launched a comprehensive military operation in the Garzan region in North Kurdistan in July. The area has been bombed continuously, and the fighters of the Free Women Associations (YJA Star) and HPG have responded with self-sacrificing resistance. "Our comrade Bêrîtan Sîser fought to the last breath and fell on 11 August," said the HPG.

Bêrîtan Sîser was the senior commander of the YJA Star. The HPG expressed their condolences to the relatives and people of Kurdistan.



## In memory of the martyrs of the historic action against Haruna military base

ANF | BEHDINAN | 25 AUGUST 2023

The year 2012 significantly shaped the Kurdish freedom struggle. In view of the Turkish state's policy of annihilation, the guerrillas initiated an extensive offensive in North Kurdistan, which put the Turkish state under so much pressure with massive actions that a new negotiation process was started. During this phase, the guerrillas controlled entire regions. This was a special twist, as instead of using traditional "hit and run" tactics, the guerrillas now held and defended positions, effectively blocking supplies for the Turkish army in many areas. The guerrilla offensive that began on 23 July, 2012 in the northern Kurdish cities of Hakkari (Colemêrg) and Şemdinli (Şemzînan) went down in history.

### **Military fortresses as a means of state terror**

For the Turkish army, military bases had been a key way of controlling the Kurdish areas. Especially along the border between Bakur and Başûrê-Kurdistan, outposts and military posts lined up almost seamlessly. After stationing hundreds of soldiers in these outposts, the state moved their families to the cities of Kurdistan to establish not only military hegemony but also social dominance. From these outposts, the occupying soldiers monitored every little movement of the population around the clock and bombarded the civilian areas, gardens and villages with heavy weapons. At the same time, they exerted psychological pressure on the population through shelling and threats. Many villagers, including many children, died in the attacks or were maimed by bombs that exploded while playing.

## Guerrilla controlled entire border

The guerrillas studied this development and prepared an offensive against it. Breaking military dominance over the population was a prerequisite for liberation. The guerrilla made appropriate preparations. In numerous actions in regions such as Karataş, Goman, Oramar, Şitaza, Kanî Orê and Çelê, they stormed the occupation troops' outposts and took control of the entire border to Southern Kurdistan.

## The historic action against the Haruna base

One of the most impactful actions in 2012 was the attack on the Haruna police station between Şemdinli and Gever. What made this action different from others was that the possibility of self-sacrifice was planned from the start. The guerrillas who signed up for this action were aware of this. This created a special connection between the organizers of the campaign. Guerrillas from all parts of Kurdistan were there: Ekîn Amed, Cuma Goyî, Aşîkar Bagok and Mordem Avaşîn came from Northern Kurdistan, Neval Sîdar and Çirav Urmîyê from Eastern Kurdistan, Karwan Gabar from Southern Kurdistan and Dinya Tilebyad from Rojava. When they started the action on 14 September at 3 pm, they set off to become a historic example.

The action was organized in two groups. One group was to penetrate the soldiers' barracks while the other group struck outside. The goal of the guerrillas was to completely destroy the outpost and deal a heavy blow to the army.

At 3pm, both groups began their operations. The group of eight launched their attack. They entered the base within a minute, having previously eliminated the sentry post and nearby positions. The military station buildings, barracks and casino were taken within five minutes. The militants searched the interior of the military station for about 20 minutes, eliminating the occupying soldiers who opposed them and at the same time destroying the military station's guard and security facilities. Two armored personnel carriers and a wheeled tank were destroyed.

The Haruna military base fell into the hands of the guerrillas within 20 minutes. 60 soldiers lost their lives in this action. Guerrillas Ekîn Amed, Dinya Tilebyad, Newal Sîdar, Çirav Urmîyê, Karwan Gabar, Cuma Goyî, Aşîkar Bagok and Mordem Avaşîn fell as martyrs.

After the action against the Haruna base, important documents from the Turkish army came into the possession of the guerrillas. These documents said: "If there are more attacks like the one on the Haruna military station, we will have to withdraw from Şemdinli." This is exactly the goal the fighters who lost their lives in Haruna had achieved.

## HPG reports ongoing resistance and actions against Turkish occupation continues in guerrilla areas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 25 AUGUST 2023

In its daily statement about the war in Kurdistan, the Press Office of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) reported that resistance continues unabated to the Turkish invasion of the guerrilla-held Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq).

According to the HPG statement on Friday, the guerrillas continued their actions against the occupying forces in the past 24 hours in the regions of Zap, Metina and Şehîd Delîl in western Zap, from which the Turkish army had to withdraw last winter after suffering heavy losses. Since 20 July, the area has again been the focus of occupation efforts as part of a new operation by Turkey.

### Zap

Guerrillas hit and damaged a heavy construction machine used to demolish the guerrillas' defensive positions in Sida Resistance Area at 08:30 on 25 August. The demolition work was then stopped.

### Metîna

The guerrillas carried out an action against Turkish troops in Girê Ortê Resistance Area on 24 August. The soldiers were struck with heavy weapons.

### Gire Cudi Resistance Area in Şehîd Delîl western Zap region

Guerrillas from YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) struck the occupation forces with heavy weapons at 06:00 on 24 August. In the afternoon, a Turkish soldier was shot dead by a guerrilla sniper.

Guerrilla strikes with heavy weapons left two positions of the Turkish forces damaged at 02:30 on 24 August.

On 25 August night, the area was shelled 7 times by attack helicopters. A Sikorsky helicopter with airborne troops on board was intervened by the guerrillas with heavy weapons and prevented from airdropping troops.

One soldier was killed by a YJA Star sniper at 01:30 at night.

At 03:00, YJA Star guerrillas struck the occupation forces, killing one of them and injuring one other.

### Attacks by the Turkish army

On the other hand, the Turkish army carried out artillery attacks on Zap, Şehîd Delîl Western Zap, Metîna and Xakurkê.



## DEM-NED calls on the KDP to align itself with the Kurdish Freedom Movement

ANF | 25 AUGUST 2023

Ali Avni, member of the Central Committee of the Barzani-dominated KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) in South Kurdistan, openly called on the Turkish state to murder leading PKK members during a recent TV appearance on a Barzani family channel. Eli Ewnî explained that the Turkish army and MIT are capable of targeting people with drones and questioned why the PKK leadership is not being eliminated with drones.

Avni said: “I say it to the leaders of the Turkish state. You can use drones, the airway and by means of the Internet to locate the members of the PKK in the tens of thousands of cars going to Ahmedawa and bomb them. Don't you know the leaders and vanguards of the PKK who come and go to Turkey through Ranya, Derbindaxan, Qeladizê and Bradost?”

The Democratic Kurdish Community Council in the Netherlands (DEM-NED) released a statement denouncing the KDP's course of betrayal and to align itself with the Kurdistan Freedom Movement.

The statement on Friday said: “The increasing talks between the Turkish state and the KDP in recent days signal an imminent process of aggression. A people and their representatives defend their land in the first place, and resist the invaders. The KDP officials, however, pay attention to their wallets instead of their consciences, saying nothing against the occupation of their land and deployment of the colonialists and fighting the Kurdistan Freedom Movement.

As patriots from Kurdistan, we call upon the KDP to stop walking on the path of betrayal and to align itself with the Kurdistan Freedom Movement that has been fighting to liberate their country from the colonialists.

Our place in the pages of history will be determined according to our actions, not our intentions.”



## Turkey and its mercenaries bomb a village in Sherawa

ANF | 26 AUGUST 2023

The Turkish state and its mercenaries shelled the village of Bînê in Sherawa district of Afrin Canton.

Further details of the bombardment could not be obtained.



## YRK reports increasing Turkish aerial activity and attacks

ANF | 26 AUGUST 2023

The Defense Units of Eastern Kurdistan (YRK) Command released a statement about the increased Turkish attacks in the regions of Asos and Pencewin.

According to the YRK statement on Saturday, the invading Turkish state has increased its SIHA (Combat Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) drone activity in the regions of Asos and Pencewin.

YRK pointed out that Turkish attacks caused pecuniary and non-pecuniary damage to the local people.

“Only our people in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq can break the attacks of the invading Turkish state, which we strongly condemn. Through these attacks, the Turkish occupation state seeks to expand its war against the Kurdish people,” said the YRK and called on everyone to react to Turkish attacks.

YRK stressed that the Kurdish people and Kurdistan Freedom Struggle will definitely win against the invaders.

Air strikes by Turkey in violation of international law have been routine for years in the region of Mount Asos, 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.

In an [interview](#) with ANF on June 19, Şiyar Şevger, one of the commanders of the YRK, stated that attacks against the Kurdish people in all four parts of Kurdistan continued uninterruptedly and behind it was an agreement between Iran, Turkey and Iraq to disarm the Kurdish freedom movements.

“There is an agreement according to which the Iranian intelligence service passes on the information it receives about PJAK to the Turkish state and the Turkish army carries out attacks on the basis of this information. Every day, reconnaissance planes circle over our areas, the collected information is passed on to the Turkish state by the KDP and Iran, and then attacks on us take place on this basis. However, the Turkish and Iranian states have not been able to achieve any results in these attacks so far and have failed against our Apoist movement,” Şevger said.



## HPG: Four soldiers killed, six positions hit by the guerrillas

ANF | BEHDINAN | 26 AUGUST 2023

Resistance continues unabated to the Turkish invasion of the guerrilla-held Medya Defence Zones in southern Kurdistan (northern Iraq). According to the statement released by the Press Office of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) on Saturday, at least four Turkish soldiers have been killed in the actions by the guerrillas from HPG and YJA Star (Free Women's Troops) in the Girê Cûdî Resistance Area in the Zap region of the Medya Defense Zones in the last 24 hours.

Two of the soldiers were killed as the guerrillas targeted the occupation troops who had gathered in open terrain.

Two other soldiers were killed as a result of actions by YJA Star guerrillas who also prevented an enemy advance on Girê Cûdî the previous day by using heavy weapons.

In addition, YJA Star and HPG guerrillas shelled a total of six positions of Turkish occupation forces in the area around the massif yesterday and today.

On the other hand, HPG stated that the Turkish army shelled various areas of the Zap region, especially the Şehîd Delîl western front, as well as in Metîna and Xakurke.

In Xakurke, several air strikes were carried out by fighter jets on the areas of Goşînê, Sinînê and Kendekola on 23 and 25 August.

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## Femicide

### Controversial headscarf law passed in Iran

ANF | 21 AUGUST 2023

About a year after the death of Jina Mahsa Amini, a commission of the Iranian parliament approved a tightening of the headscarf requirement. The new hijab law provides for even harsher penalties for violations. In the case of multiple violations, these include a fine of more than 5,000 euros, a ban on leaving the country and imprisonment of up to 15 years.

As examples of "bad clothing", the law mentions short-sleeved blouses or torn jeans for women, and trousers with short crotch length or tank tops for men. The law imposes detailed instructions on ministries



and security services with duties to enforce Islamic dress codes. Civilians and security forces will be able to easily report violations.

In the next step, the reform will be submitted to the Guardian Council, a supervisory body made up of arch-conservative clerics. The penal reform is a response by the clerical-fascist regime to the women-led “Jin, Jiyan, Azadî” [Woman, Life, Freedom] revolution that broke out in autumn 2022. Even though the street protests have died down, the resistance against the mullah regime continues. Numerous women are demonstratively opposing the compulsory wearing of headscarves, currently the maximum sign of civil disobedience.

Hardliners of the regime in Iran have been calling for a tougher law for months. In its current form, the draft law has already triggered criticism from many quarters. This is one of the reasons why the government convened a commission to approve the law without a vote in parliament. The law will initially be introduced on a trial basis.

The “Jin, Jiyan, Azadî” revolution is the largest wave of protest the Islamic Republic of Iran has experienced since its foundation in 1979. It was triggered by the killing of Jina Mahsa Amini. The 22-year-old Kurdish woman from Seqiz died on 16 September 2022 in a hospital in the Iranian capital Tehran. She had previously been detained by the so-called morality police and ill-treated at a police station. More than 500 protesters were killed and more than 20,000 arrested in the ensuing crackdown.



## Kurdish artist Çiftçi remanded in custody

ANF | AMED | 22 AUGUST 2023

Kurdish artist Emel Çiftçi, who went to the hospital for treatment in Amed on Monday morning, was taken into custody on the grounds that there was an arrest warrant issued against her. Emel Çiftçi was taken into custody as the result of an investigation launched in Ankara and Batman. She first gave a statement in Ankara and then was connected to Diyarbakir Courthouse via Audio and Visual Information System (SEGBIS). The artist was questioned on charges of “membership in a terrorist organization” and “management of an organization” because of her cultural and artistic activities. She was referred to the Penal Judgeship of Peace on Duty with a request for “arrest”.

### Risk of escape

Çiftçi was remanded in custody because the judge found there were “grounds for the suspicion of escape and the blackening of evidence.”

### Urgent surgery needed

Çiftçi’s health reports were presented by her lawyers, who said that the artist was diagnosed with uterine cancer and that she needed to undergo emergency surgery. Although it was said that Çiftçi was treated at

Bağlar State Hospital and had a fixed residence, the judgeship decided to send her to prison. Çiftçi also suffered from a thyroid condition.

Despite her health, the artist was taken to Diyarbakır Women's Closed Prison.

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## Sexual assault by village guards is part of special war policy

ANF | VAN | 23 AUGUST 2023

Sexual assault has been part of the Republic of Turkey's war strategy against the Kurdish population since its inception. With the beginning of the freedom struggle, which has continued for 50 years, the state's use of sexual assault as an instrument of terror has massively increased. Especially in the 1990s, sexual assault was systematically perpetrated in the custody of the military and the police to break down those affected, mainly women, but also men, and to destroy society. Part of this policy is also the so-called village guard system. These pro-government paramilitaries are encouraged by impunity to commit any crime. Closely involved with organised crime, they are responsible for displacements, armed attacks on civilians, threats and extortion. Besides extra-legal killings, sexual assaults are one of the most serious offences committed by village guards. Yet only a fraction of the cases is recorded. Taking advantage of social taboos, shame and fear, the village guards conceal their deeds and receive active support from the judiciary, police and military. The number of unreported cases is estimated at several hundred, which are, however, covered up by the state and the military. The cases that cannot be covered up are brought to court, but again, these usually result in virtually no punishment. In the last two years, six rape cases became public knowledge in the province of Van, of which only one led to permanent imprisonment. The other perpetrators were released from prison after a short time.

Women's rights activist Zozan Özgökçe spoke to ANF about the crimes of village guards and the impunity of their acts. She recalled that rape has been a method of war by the village guards, the paramilitary forces and the armed or unarmed bureaucracy of the state for years. Defining the current developments as a consequence of militaristic policies, Özgökçe said: "It was the same in the 1990s. Even if the form changes, the same policy continues permanently. In the 1990s and early 2000s, psychological, physical and sexual assault was used against women, especially in prisons, to degrade and destroy them through their bodies and their Kurdishness. Such policies prevail in all four parts of Kurdistan. Saddam Hussein had special paramilitary forces responsible for the 'dishonouring of women'. This was their mission. Women have been considered booty in wars for years. Currently, there is a conflict that has been going on for years. Women are part of this conflict and are greatly affected by it."

Zozan Özgökçe recalled the case of N.Ç. in 2002 and said: "With this incident, the assaults and rapes by village guards and security forces came on the agenda and reports were published. But it happens permanently and is covered up. The judicial and legal system is getting worse and worse. In the N.Ç. incident, the perpetrators were known, but no one was arrested. That was indeed the case. There have also been recent sexual assaults by village guards. We often use the term 'recent time'. Maybe we do it to put it on the agenda. Or our social trauma is always rehashed, and we say 'recent'. But women have been experiencing

this violence and impunity for years. Village guards are not arrested, there is no legal action against them. In the case of girls who are sexually assaulted, they ask about consent, about virginity. There are many kinds of sexual assaults on women, but they are analysed only on the basis of virginity. But for example, spreading rumours in the villages is also a form of violence. When a village guard or his son wants to get married, and if the girl's family doesn't want that, the village guard puts political and psychological pressure on the family."

Özgökçe continued: "Our people are thus made powerless. Because of the village guard system, people are migrating from their villages to the big cities. There is a psychological and asymmetrical war. Unfortunately, Kurdish women are more often victims, they are more vulnerable and bear more severe consequences. They pay for the consequences of the system with their lives. Everyone should be sensitive because it is a war policy. We must care for each other. We can take legal action and exert pressure as a public."

Calling for Kurdish academics, NGOs, journalists and human rights activists to conduct serious research, Zozan Özgökçe concluded: "The Kurdish people should be sensitized to this issue, girls should learn about their rights. Families must protect their children. The village guards use different methods. For example, they want to have a second wife, they want to marry off their children, but when that doesn't work, sexual assaults occur. When you put the poverty of the people into this situation, you understand the desperation in society."

The cases of sexual abuse committed by village guards in Van in the last two years are as follows:

On 23 December 2021, Faik Dural, a village guard, raped a 15-year-old girl attending Hoşap boarding school in Repetik in Gürpınar district. Based on the complaint filed by the victim's family, Faik Dural was arrested on charges of "sexual abuse of a minor". Subsequently, Dural and his relatives put pressure on the family and the victim, causing them to withdraw her complaint. The Gürpınar District Directorate of National Education also withdrew its report, claiming that the girl mentioned in the report did not attend a state school. The rapist, Faik Dural, was released after a short detention.

In 2021, a 12-year-old girl was raped by village guard Rıskı Okam in Çatak district. The incident was uncovered when the child told her class teacher about her experiences. The perpetrator was then arrested. Subsequently, the relatives of the village guard put pressure on the child's family, forcing them to leave their village. Okam was sentenced to 50 years in prison. The appeal in this case is still pending and there are fears that the Constitutional Court could overturn this sentence.

In 2022, in the village of Arıxan in Gürpınar district, the village guard Ziya Karakoç committed sexual assaults on about ten women in the village. However, these assaults were covered up by the military and political bureaucracy. Karakoç was released at the first hearing under conditions of judicial control.

On 3 February 2022, Osman Ö., a village guard who attempted to rape his two daughters in Çatak district and had threatened his wife with a gun to stop her from pressing charges, was released after a short detention.

On 18 August 2023, village guard B.A. raped a woman. B.A. was detained and taken to Köprüağzı Gendarmerie Station based on the woman's complaint.



## Two Peace Mothers die in car accident after giving statement to court

ANF | HAKKARI | 23 AUGUST 2023

Adalet Safali, Perişan Akçelik and her son Cihan Akçelik died in an accident in Hakkari (Colemêrg) on Tuesday.

The two women were part of the group of Peace Mothers. On 15 August, 23 people were taken into custody in the centre of Hakkari and its districts. Among those taken into custody were several activists from the Peace Mothers Initiative. Because Adalet Safali and Perişan Akçelik from Yüksekova (Gever) were not at home at the time of the raids, they were scheduled to go to the Prosecutor's Office in Van on Tuesday. The two women were taken to Van by their sons, Cihan Akçelik and Erdal Safalı.

On the way back, however, their car collided with a van. Adalet Safali and Perişan Akçelik died at the scene of the accident; Cihan Akçelik succumbed to his injuries a short time later. Erdal Safali was taken to Hakkari State Hospital in critical condition.

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) blamed the government for the deaths of the two women and the son of one of them and said: "Adalet Safali and Perişan Akçelik worked for peace and this is why they were prosecuted. They were considered fugitives. The two Peace Mothers lost their lives in a traffic accident on the way back from giving a statement to the court. Perişan Akçelik's son, Cihan Akçelik, was seriously injured in the accident and eventually passed away."

The HDP said that the "government uses the judiciary against the Kurdish Peace Mothers as well as the Istanbul Saturday Mothers and is responsible for their deaths. We express our condolences to our people. We promise to keep the memory of our mothers alive and to continue to spread their call for peace."



## Two women detained in Antep

ANF | ANTEP | 23 AUGUST 2023

Turkish police carried out raids targeting members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) in Antep province on Tuesday evening.

Two women named Mihriban Aslan and Hatice Özaslan were taken into custody during the house raids and an issue of the Atılım newspaper was seized.

The detainees were taken to the anti-terror department (TEM) of the police.

Mihriban Aslan told her lawyer that they had been subjected to a strip search at TEM where the two women are expected to give their statements today.

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## Women's Council of Martyrs' Families holds 2nd conference

ANF | RIMELAN | 25 AUGUST 2023

The Women's Council of Martyrs' Families is holding its second conference in the Rimelan district of Qamishlo Canton under the motto "With the spirit of August 15 resistance, we will enhance the women's struggle to ensure the freedom of Leader Öcalan".

500 delegates from North-East Syria are attending the conference which kicked off at Aram Tigran Culture and Art Center this morning.

Members of women's organizations and institutions in the region are participating in the conference in clothes representing their faiths and national cultures.

The conference, which started with a minute of silence in memory of the martyrs, will last two days, during which two-year activities of the Council will be read out, the regulation will be reviewed and re-approved, and members of the council will be elected.

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## Woman in Kızıltepe dies after setting her body on fire

ANF | MARDIN | 26 AUGUST 2023

A 50-year-old Syrian Aktürk woman living in the neighbourhood of Selahattin Eyyubi in Kızıltepe (Qoser), in the province of Mardin (Mêrdîn) set her body on fire for an unknown reason on the roof of her house.

Despite the intervention of the people who rushed to the scene, the woman died at the scene.

The woman's body was taken to Kızıltepe State Hospital morgue.

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## Saturday Mothers attacked and detained once again on the 961st week of action

ANF | ISTANBUL | 26 AUGUST 2023

Saturday Mothers have continued their action in Istanbul for their relatives who disappeared in state custody and the punishment of the perpetrators for the 960th 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, is considered a symbolic place for the struggle for human rights in Turkey.

This week's action by Saturday Mothers was supported by the Chair of the Human Rights Association (IHD), Eren Keskin, IHD executives and a number of human rights advocates.

Citing the "ban" imposed by Beyoğlu District Governor's Office, the police cordoned off the rally site and surrounded the Saturday Mothers and their supporters on their way to the area.

Journalists who wanted to film the crackdown were forcibly pushed back. The police also took action against passers-by who were taking pictures with their mobile phones and broadcasting them live on digital networks.

At least 20 people were detained and taken away in handcuffs during today's crackdown.

### Background

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.

# Ecocide

## 10th dam to be built on the Tigris River

ANF | ŞIRNAK | 20 AUGUST 2023

The Tigris River passes through the Cizre region of Şirnak and runs along the borders of the Federated Kurdistan Region before flowing into the Persian Gulf. A new dam will be built on the Tigris River, which is considered the longest river in the Middle East with a length of 2,800 kilometres. The project is called “Cizre Dam” and was put out to bid on 24 May 2013, but was suspended due to various disagreements.

In the decision taken by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change on 29 April 2019, the “Environmental Impact Assessment prepared and finalized for the Cizre Dam and HEPP (Energy, Drinking Water, Irrigation) to be carried out by the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSI) was found sufficient by the Investigation and Evaluation Commission and was accepted as final.”

### Ten dams

The “Cizre Dam” will be the 10th dam on the Tigris River, and the second largest dam after the Ilisu Dam built on the river.

The project of the dam, which has been the subject of a harsh debate for years, was accepted on 16 August. However, it is not known when the construction of the dam will begin. As it happened with other dams, this new one will mean that many species living in the Tigris River will once again be in danger of extinction.

The Tigris River also provides water to the South Kurdistan Region and its government as well as the Iraqi government will face a major water crisis with the completion of the dam. It is claimed that the dam, which will be built with a height of 40 meters and a water storage volume of 381 million cubic meters, will be completed within three years.

AKP Şirnak MP Arslan Tatar announced on his social media account that the tender for the dam has come into effect and said: “The tender for the construction of the Cizre Dam and HEPP project, which was designed for Energy + Drinking Water + Irrigation purposes and is a key project within the scope of the South-eastern Anatolia Project (GAP), has been assigned. Construction work should begin as soon as possible and complete it within 3 years so to quickly start energy production.”

After the 14 May elections, the first act of the AKP in Şirnak was securing the tender for the dam project, despite the catastrophic effects it will have on the environment. According to the project, the dam is expected to be built below the town of Qesirk (Kasrik), which separates the Cudi and Gabar Mountains, and

the village of Misûriyê. The project will also affect many roads, vineyards and settlements that, as it happened with the Ilisu dam, will be flooded.

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## Turkey continues to cut Euphrates River's water, affecting thousands living in Rojava

ANF | 23 AUGUST 2023

The Northern and Eastern Health Committee said that since the beginning of this year, they have recorded 6,879 people who have become ill due to the water cuts.

Kobanê Canton Health Committee spokesperson Elaedin Keno Eto said that swamps were formed and the stagnating water was polluted.

Speaking to the Euphrates Regional Executive Council Communication Office, Keno Eto said that many diseases have recently spread in towns and villages near the river, which is the main source of drinking water and irrigation.

According to the data recorded by Eto, 6,879 people have been ill in the riverside regions of the Kobanê canton since the beginning of this year. Of these, 6,200 people fell ill in the Qenaya district and 679 people in the villages of Melîha, Xişxaş, Cada and Remala Sirin.

Eto underlined that diarrhoea, liver inflammation and skin allergies and diseases are spreading.

Patients are treated free of charge in 9 health centers affiliated to the Kobanê Canton Health Committee.

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## Human Rights Violations

“The Turkish state wants to occupy the minds of young people”

ANF | 20 AUGUST 2023

The HDP/ Green Left Party Youth Council has been fighting for many years against the Turkish state's special war policy, which aims to make young people in Kurdistan and Turkey in particular dependent and unable to act. Oğuzhan Azbay, a member of the youth council, spoke to ANF about the issue.



Azbay pointed out that this policy has always been a combination of massacres, repression and assimilation. “However, we see that the special war policy is being implemented more profoundly and intensively, especially recently. Drug use is widespread in almost every neighbourhood in Kurdistan. While young people are struggling with poverty, they are also exposed to drugs. The Turkish state wants to take away the ability of young people to think for themselves and raise objections. No young person who thinks for themselves and is aware of assimilation is willing to accept the existing system. Those who know their own identity and where poverty comes from do not want to live in this system and object. That is why drugs are used as a means to occupy the minds of young people. Young people are not supposed to express themselves, not to be constructive and not to contradict. Meanwhile, there are already eleven-year-olds who are addicted to drugs. This is a terrible picture.”

Another instrument is the state promotion of prostitution, Azbay said and continued: “In Kurdistan, cafés and parks as supposedly social spaces have become places where prostitution is practised and marketed. Young women are forced into a life that completely contradicts the values of Kurdish society. In recent history, we have seen many examples of soldiers, police officers and village guards targeting young women in Kurdistan and driving them into prostitution and suicide. Military and police officers deployed in the region are constantly in the public eye as perpetrators of numerous incidents, from drug trafficking to systematic harassment and rape of women. The perpetrators continue to commit these crimes because they are sure that they will not be prosecuted, as in the case of Musa Orhan, who raped Ipek Er and then drove her to suicide. The sexual assault on Firdev Babats by village guards, the disappearance of Gülistan Doku with the complicity of state security are examples of this special war policy.”

The youth are the most exposed to this particular war policy, Azbay stressed, saying: “Therefore, the youth will always do their part and fulfil their mission, but society as a whole must be aware of the particular war policy. Everything the Turkish state does should be thoroughly analysed and mental pollution prevented. We continue our work in this context. We meet with families, youth and women in all walks of life and try to create awareness in society.”

Azbay shared that their current campaign against special warfare will continue until the end of May under the slogan “Li dijî şerê taybet têkoşînek bi heybet” and said: “Since the beginning of the campaign, festivals, picnics and workshops have been organised. At all these events, we address the methods of special warfare and how to fight them. We will continue our work without rest and continue to go from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, from street to street, from house to house to fight against it. Everyone now knows that this government will attack the Kurdish people at every opportunity to preserve its power. We appeal to all young people to resist these attacks and seek a way out. Unemployment, lack of future prospects, hopelessness and chaos are not the fate of us young people. We need to step up the fight in all areas. We call on all young people to organise in our Youth Council and to fight in an organised way to achieve their legitimate demands.”

## Attempted attack on HDP-Green Left Party office in Adana

ANF | ADANA | 20 AUGUST 2023

Several incendiary devices have been found in front of an office of the opposition parties HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) and Green Left Party in the southern Turkish city of Adana. An unidentified woman placed three bottles with a flammable liquid in front of the office on Sunday morning, said HDP politician Mehmet Karakış. The police suspect methylated spirits, but a precise analysis is still pending. The incendiary devices did not ignite, so no fire broke out.

The attempted attack occurred at a residential and commercial building in the central Seyhan district, where the provincial branches of the HDP and Green Left Party operate a joint office. According to Karakış, who is co-chair of the HDP organization in Adana, the alleged perpetrator attempted to gain access to the branch by ringing the doorbell at around 10:30 am. As the woman was unknown to the staff member present, he did not open the door to her. Before she left the building after about a quarter of an hour, she left three bottles with an unknown substance in front of the entrance door. The employee then informed the police.

The criminal investigation department secured traces and is now having the substance examined. According to the HDP and Green Left Party, as well as the police, it is not yet known who the perpetrator could be. However, footage from a surveillance camera shows the woman. Meanwhile, the party office is in regular operation. A long-planned event is taking place there this afternoon. It is the same HDP office that was the target of an attack by ISIS on 18 May 2015, which injured seven people.

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## Beştaş calls on everyone to attend actions to protest attack against Green Left Party MP Öcalan

ANF | AMED | 21 AUGUST 2023

Green Left Party Group chair, Meral Danış Beştaş said at a press conference attended by DTK co-chair Berdan Öztürk, DBP co-chairs Saliha Aydeniz and Keskin Bayındır, Kurdistan Communist Party chair Sinan Çiftiyürek, PIA chair Mehmet Kamaç that today at 7pm a number of actions will be held in various cities to protest the attack suffered by Green Left Party Urfa MP Ömer Öcalan on Saturday in Urfa, where he was attending a memorial for Bazo Yılmaz (67).

Yılmaz died in Urfa No. 2 T Type Closed Prison on 18 August 2022.

Beştaş said: "We call on the Speaker of the Assembly to stand against this attack. Today, we will simultaneously protest the attack against our MP Ömer Öcalan all over Turkey.

We call on everyone to stand up against these abuses."

Beştaş said that the detention of MP Ömer Öcalan was an attempt to kidnap and added: “Our MP was dragged away by masked soldiers, and then taken to the police station. This was a kidnapping attempt. What is done here is unacceptable. Such an attack on a deputy is not something that can be accepted. Urfa has long been a torture center.”

## Background

A memorial for political prisoner Bazo Yılmaz in Urfa was attacked by Turkish soldiers. Three members of the Green Left Party were taken into custody.

Those taken into custody were the co-spokeswoman of the provincial branch of the Green Left Party, Senem Eriş, activist Enes Rakım from the party’s youth council, and Nuh Mert Turan, who works for MP Ömer Öcalan.

MP Ömer Öcalan was dragged into the vehicle by the soldiers and taken to the police station.



## Former co-mayor of Şemdinli says he fears another attack is being planned against him

ANF | HAKKARİ | 23 AUGUST 2023

Former co-mayor of Şemdinli (Şemzînan) Seferi Yılmaz, suffered a serious attack when his bookstore “Umut” was bombed in 2005. Now, he said he fears another attack is planned against him. As he told the Mesopotamia Agency, on 15 August, an unknown person was seen checking out the area around his home. Camera footage showed the man observing the home from a nearby wooded area and disappearing after being noticed.

Yılmaz said: “My nephew told me about a man he spotted checking out my house. He called the police at the same time. But the police didn’t come to look that day. Presumably, preparations are being made for a new attack.”

Yılmaz, recalling the attack on his bookshop, said that, at that time, too, he was being observed by the assassins, a three-man death squad commissioned by the state. A floor plan of his shop was drawn up by the squad. The former co-mayor said: “I am not safe and nothing is being done to protect me. I will not give up and prevent the incidents from the past from repeating themselves. The person spying on me can be seen on the camera recordings. It will turn out who he is. We informed the police that he was preparing something in the area, but still no investigation has taken place. We can’t check it ourselves because it’s too dangerous. There is obviously something sinister about the incident. It is very clear that he was planning an attack.”

## Who is Seferi Yılmaz?

Seferi Yılmaz comes from Şemdinli and is said to have been there when the guerrilla commander Mahsum Korkmaz (Nom de Guerre: Egîd) fired the PKK's "first bullet" in the city of Dih (Eruh) on 15 August 1984, thus starting the armed liberation struggle against the Turkish occupation forces.

For this, Yılmaz was imprisoned for 15 years. After his release in 2000, he opened the bookshop "Umut" (Hope), the first bookshop ever in Şemdinli. In 2005, the shop was attacked.

In 2006, he was arrested again for supporting the PKK and was imprisoned for over a year. In 2014, he was elected co-mayor of Şemdinli and arrested again in 2016. In his place, a trustee was appointed by the Turkish Ministry of the Interior. After almost two years, Yılmaz was released again. In 2020, while carrying out spring cleaning, he discovered a bug in his kitchen.

## Bomb attack on bookstore commissioned by the state

On 9 November 2005, when Yılmaz was in his bookshop and about to sit down to eat with his two employees, a three-man special commando unit from the Turkish military special forces carried out an attack.

Yılmaz took a few steps towards the door when the first hand grenade was thrown into the store. He was just able to shout "bomb" to warn his colleagues. Then he ran out and started chasing the perpetrators. His employees were at the back of the bookstore at the time. One was killed by shrapnel and another seriously injured. Seferi Yılmaz survived.

The people of Şemdinli saw everything, and angrily pursued and caught the perpetrators, stopping their gateway car. The people secured a large amount of documents such as death lists, assassination plans, hand grenades made in Germany and a large number of other weapons. Then they handed the men over to the police. The perpetrators were named as Ali Kaya and Özcan İlideniz, both members of the Turkish military with the rank of sergeant, and Veysel Ateş, a member of the counter-guerrillas. Another incident occurred when the crime scene was inspected: security forces shot into a crowd from a moving car, killing one Kurd and wounding 20 others.

Since it was clear that the attacks had been carried out by state forces, the population of Şemdinli was in turmoil for weeks. Three other people were shot dead by police during the protests.

## The trial ended with the perpetrators being acquitted

The perpetrators were arrested. A civil court sentenced them to long prison terms, but the trial was then referred to a military court. The then Chief of Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt set the course of the case, praising the killers as "good guys". The trial was delayed and the murderers released. A newly rolled out trial ended in December 2021 with acquittals for all the accused. The verdict has now been confirmed by the highest court.

## A young man tortured to death, five others brutally beaten by the Turkish gendarmerie at border

ANF | 21 AUGUST 2023

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that a young man died under brutal torture by members of the Turkish gendarmerie (military police) after crossing the border via smuggling routes in Shamarin in northern Aleppo countryside. The Turkish forces dumped his body in Syrian territory and the body was found.

Moreover, according to SOHR, five civilians were beaten and tortured by the Turkish gendarmerie and left inside Syrian territory after they were forced to kiss the boots of members of the gendarmerie and insulted in a horrible manner.

According to the observatory, the number of civilians killed by Turkish border guards (Jandarma) since early 2023 in different areas near the Syria-Turkey border has increased to 19. In addition, 28 civilians, including a child and three women, were injured in gunfire by Turkish Jandarma in the same period.

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## 19 young people from Van died in work accidents on construction sites

ANF | 22 AUGUST 2023

Kurdish young people are forced to work in construction sites where there is no occupational safety and control. They continue to be victims of work murders. The economic embargo imposed by the AKP in Kurdistan results in unemployment and poverty that are costing the lives of Kurdish young people. In particular, in Kurdistan cities such as Van, Muş, Ağı and İdir, tens of thousands of young people go to the metropolitan cities of Turkey to work in construction sites every year.

Van is one of the cities under the AKP's special economic embargo. Due to the embargo, border trade was banned in Van, and livestock and agriculture were brought to the point of extinction. Following the state's appointment of trustees in district municipalities, including Van Metropolitan Municipality, thousands of people were dismissed. The AKP's economic practices caused unemployment and poverty to reach 80 percent.

The economic crisis caused the collapse of the economy and unemployment and poverty grew exponentially. Because of this, thousands of young people were forced to migrate.

In 2022, at least 56 workers from Van who migrated to Turkish cities and worked in the construction sector lost their lives as a result of accidents in the sites. Most of the workers were killed as a result of falling from heights.

In the first seven months of 2023, at least 19 workers lost their lives in occupational homicides.

Some of the workers who lost their lives are as follows:

\* On 14 August, 2023, Ayhan Gürbüz (35), registered to the population of the neighbourhood of Hevirzong in Erdiş, fell from a height in the construction site he was working in Istanbul and lost his life.

\* Yunus Tam, a construction worker from Van working in Malatya, died on 31 July when the scaffolding collapsed at the construction site he was working on.

\* Veli Çelik died in Istanbul on 3 July, after falling from the scaffolding of the construction site he was working on.

\* On 28 June, Mirkan Bingöl, who was working in a construction site in Tekirdağ Çorlu district, fell from the 9th floor and died.

\* Father of three, Şakir Yılmaz (42) registered in the Anzaf population of Van's Bêgir (Muradiye) district, died on 26 June after falling from a construction site in Antalya's Manavgat district.

## Background

According to ISIG, the Health and Safety Labour Observatory, at least 1843 work murders were registered in 2022.

Some of the highlights of the ISIG report are as follows:

### Agriculture, construction, service and industry sectors

There are the sectors where work-related murders are concentrated (953 worker deaths). Construction, agriculture and transportation, where "precarious work" prevails. In these sectors, where long working hours, intensive work, uninsured work and all kinds of irregularities prevail, union organization is either non-existent or weak and clustered in certain professions.

In construction, falls from heights such as exterior scaffolding, roofs, elevator shafts, etc. account for more than half of the deaths, while the other two main causes are crushing and electric shocks.

On the other hand, the main causes of deaths are the use of inappropriate means of transportation -especially during the journey of seasonal agricultural workers to the regions where they work or to the fields-, worn-out tractors, inadequate shelter-resting-cleaning areas, tick bites, etc.

The third sector with the highest number of worker deaths is transportation. Intense work, mobbing, long working hours, unsuitable roads and vehicles, irregular nutrition and sleep, etc. invite work-related mur-

ders. While traffic accidents account for 75 percent of deaths, another important cause is heart attacks due to stressful working conditions.

In 2022, deaths of riders stand out in our reports as a profession where deaths have increased for these reasons. The clearest result in terms of worker health in the sector, which is gradually expanding with the pandemic and where the worker profile is mostly in their early 20s, is obvious: In 2022, at least 55 moto couriers lost their lives in occupational murders.

Another station for death is near the solid waste workers. There is an urgent need to intensify organizing activities in this sector, where uninsured, unhealthy conditions and child, migrant and elderly labor are intense, and where workers work indefinite hours for a pittance.

On the other hand, although the deaths in the industrial sectors are not in the top three, it is necessary to underline the fact that there are many different sectors of industry (mining, metal, energy, textile, chemistry, food, etc.). In fact, when we take the sum of these sectors, "the highest number of deaths by sector" occurs in industry. The consequences of de-unionization are especially evident and the deaths of young workers are increasing.

Let us remind you lastly while mentioning the sectors of labor: On October 14, 2022, forty-two miners lost their lives in a firedamp explosion at the Amasra TIM of the Turkish Hard Coal Corporation in Amasra, Bartın due to the lack of occupational health and safety measures. A new one was added to the Karadon, Elbistan, Kozlu, Soma, Ermenek, Şırnak mine massacres.

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## Woman who attacked HDP office in Adana released

ANF | ADANA | 22 AUGUST 2023

A woman with the initials A.C. organised an attack with incendiary devices against the HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) and Green Left Party in Adana on 20 August. The woman, who could be identified through footage from a surveillance camera, was referred to court on Tuesday and released from custody.

### Background

Several incendiary devices were found in front of an office of the HDP and Green Left Party in the southern Turkish city of Adana on 20 August. A woman placed three bottles of a flammable liquid in front of the office in the morning, according to HDP politician Mehmet Karakış. The incendiary devices did not ignite, so no fire broke out.

The attempted attack occurred at a residential and commercial building in the central Seyhan district, where the provincial branches of the HDP and Green Left Party operate a joint office. According to Karakış, who is co-chair of the HDP organization in Adana, the perpetrator attempted to gain access to the branch by ringing the doorbell at around 10:30 am. As the woman was unknown to the staff member present, he did not open the door to her. Before she left the building after about a quarter of an hour, she

left three bottles with an unknown substance in front of the entrance door. The employee then informed the police.

The office had been the target of an attack by ISIS on 18 May 2015, which injured seven people.



## HRW: Tens of thousands of IDPs live in dire conditions in North-East Syria

ANF | 23 AUGUST 2023

Tens of thousands of internally displaced people in overstretched camps and shelters in northeast Syria are not receiving sustained or adequate aid, thereby negatively impacting their basic rights, Human Rights Watch (HRW) [said](#) on Tuesday. There is an urgent need for weather-appropriate shelter, sufficient sanitation, and adequate access to food, clean drinking water, health care, and education.

HRW pointed out that the assistance provided by United Nations agencies to camps and shelters in territories governed by the Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria is inconsistent, leaving some camps and shelters, especially the “informal” ones, without sufficient or sustained aid. Although international nongovernmental organizations provide limited assistance, multiple gaps have led to health and hygiene breakdowns and shortages in essential materials during extremely hot and cold weather, raising concerns as to whether the current level of aid ensures the economic and social rights of the displaced people and meets the universal minimum standards for humanitarian assistance.

“Almost four years have passed since hundreds of thousands of people arrived in Kurdish-controlled north-east Syria seeking shelter and support after Turkey’s invasion of their hometowns,” said Adam Google, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. “But the lack of adequate help has created a precarious situation.”

The UN, other aid agencies, and the autonomous administration should urgently turn their attention to the precarious humanitarian situation unfolding in informal camps and collective shelters by prioritizing a rights-based approach, Human Rights Watch said.

The underserved camps are at capacity and forced to turn newly displaced Syrians away. Three of the informal camps were established following Turkey’s 2019 military incursion into the region that drove hundreds of thousands of people from their homes, and displacement continues, especially from villages on the frontlines between territory controlled by the autonomous administration and territory occupied by Turkey due to ongoing hostilities. The use of schools as shelters has disrupted education for the host and displaced populations alike.

“The Syrian government has been weaponizing aid for years, seeking to dictate where the aid flows, and has co-opted and obstructed it from crossing front lines from government-held parts of the country. Even though UN-led aid operations are a lifeline to millions of civilians in northern Syria, in January 2020,



Russia forced the Security Council to shut down three of four previously authorized border crossings, entirely cutting off UN-led cross-border aid for the northeast, leaving UN agencies at the mercy of often arbitrary and unjustified government-imposed conditions,” HRW stated.

Aid workers said the region has 12 camps, 5 of which, including Washokani and Serekaniye, largely do not receive sustained service delivery by UN agencies but rely on the autonomous administration and international groups for some services. Camp administrators said that until January, the UN classified these camps as “informal” – that is, not established by humanitarian organizations. Two other camps in Manbij, also described as “informal,” had no presence of local officials, did not receive any UN support, and very little support from international groups, aid workers said. Some “informal” camps receive food baskets, intermittently, from the World Food Programme. Five other camps – al-Hol, Roj, Areesha, Nowruz, and Mahmoudli – were considered “formal” and received sustained services although they, too, were affected by disruptions.

Humanitarian workers said that as of January, the UN no longer categorized the camps in northeast Syria as formal and informal. It is unclear how that has translated on the ground, since “informal” camps were still without sustained UN aid.

Another 95 shelters host displaced people across northeast Syria, the majority in school buildings. They also do not receive sustained UN support and only get meager aid from nongovernmental groups and charities.

Both camp administrators and aid workers said that UN agencies needed Syrian government approval to access and provide aid to these camps and shelters.

Parties to the conflict using schools in northeast Syria as military bases or as prisons should vacate the schools and provide alternative options for education in the meantime, Human Rights Watch said.

The Syrian government and other conflict parties should urgently remove any impediment to aid delivery to areas not under their control in northeast Syria, and the autonomous administration should scale up support where possible to communities that do not receive sustained UN support.

HRW stressed that: “UN agencies should speak out on the need for the protection of economic and social rights, including the rights to health, food, and water of everyone in the “informal” camps and shelters, conduct an assessment to ensure that the universal minimum standards for humanitarian response in these sites are being met, and expand service delivery to include the people living there. If a lack of approval from the Syrian authorities is preventing consistent access to these “previously informal” camps, collective centers, and informal settlements, the UN resident coordinator should prioritize negotiating access with Syrian authorities and coordinate their response more effectively with local humanitarian actors.”

HRW also called for international donors to increase funding to respond to the protracted nature of displacement in northeast Syria.

“Given ongoing displacement, the dire and overlooked conditions in northeast Syria’s camps and shelters are a stark reminder of the urgent need for concerted humanitarian efforts to ensure the well-being and dignity of all displaced people,” Coogle said.

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## Peri Municipality co-mayor Çelebi sent to prison again

ANF | EDİRNE | 24 AUGUST 2023

Peri Municipality (in the province of Dersim) co-mayor Orhan Çelebi was sent to prison. He was taken into custody in Edirne on 13 July and released from Edirne F Type Prison on 11 August as a result of an objection to his detention.

Çelebi, who was taken into custody after coming out from a visit with prisoner Fadime Çelebi in Edirne F Type Prison, was arrested again and sent to the same prison.

The prosecutor's office objected to Çelebi's release, and the upper court accepted the objection.

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## N/E Syria Autonomous Administration condemns Turkish state’s attack on journalists

ANF | QAMISHLO | 24 AUGUST 2023

The Northern and Eastern Syria Press Office condemned the Turkish state’s drone attack that targeted a vehicle belonging to Jin Tv on Wednesday. The vehicle was traveling on the Amude-Qamishlo road.

The statement said that “the Turkish state and its mercenaries continue their massacres against the people in Northern and Eastern Syria, violating all standards and international agreements that stipulate the protection of civilians in conflicts.”

The statement added that “the invading Turkish state uses the pretext of fighting terrorism as evidence against journalists in most of the condemnations and trials,” and underlined that “according to the 2022 world press freedom index of Reporters Without Borders, Turkey ranks 149th out of 180 countries, when it comes to press freedom.”

### 6 journalists killed in the region

The statement underlined that 6 journalists were killed in different regions of Syria in 2023, and continued: “An unmanned armed plane belonging to the invading Turkish state targeted a vehicle belonging to

the press in Northern and Eastern Syria in front of the UN, the Security Council and human rights associations.

We call on the international community, legal and relevant parties to intervene and hold accountable the crimes committed by the occupying Turkish state against the region."

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## ISIG: At least 427 work-related murders in Antep in last 10 years

ANF | ANTEP | 24 AUGUST 2023

The Occupational Health and Safety Council (ISIG) has published a report on work-related murders in Antep (Dilok) in the last 10 years.

The report is titled "Occupational Murders in Antep" and underlined that workers were exposed to all kinds of pressure and mobbing.

According to the report, at least 427 work-related murders have been registered in Antep since 2013. In particular: 29 in 2013, 29 in 2014, 33 in 2015, 34 in 2016, 34 in 2017, 50 in 2018, 49 in 2019, 58 in 2020, 55 in 2021. In 2022, 41 and 15 in the first seven months of 2023.

At least 20 women, out of the total, lost their lives. The business line with the highest number of deaths was the construction and road industry with 92 deaths.

The report underlined that the deaths of textile workers in Beşpınar Organized Industrial Zone were 12 percent, 5 times the national average, and added that the majority of worker deaths were caused by negligence.

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## Free Press Association calls on everyone "not to remain silent"

ANF | QAMISHLO | 24 AUGUST 2023,

The Free Press Association (YRA) made a statement to condemn the attack that killed a Jin TV journalist and injured another on the Amude-Qamishlo road on Wednesday.

The statement said: "The invading Turkish state, which has been targeting the Northern and Eastern Syria regions uninterruptedly since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, has been using ISIS to implement its dirty policies towards the region."

### ‘Turkish state fears free press’

Emphasizing that the Turkish state is afraid of the free press, the statement continued: “Fearing the camera and pen of the free press, which has been constantly on the move to reveal the plans and dirty policies developed by the invading Turkish state and other opponents of the revolution, since the beginning of the revolution, the invading Turkish state has been targeting press workers.”

The statement added: “Our journalist friends, Seed Ehemed, Mihemed Reşo, Welat, and Îsam Ebdullah, who have documented moments of atrocities against civilians in Serêkaniye and Dêrik, were killed in the air strikes carried out by the invading Turkish state in the past months, and many journalists were injured.”

The statement said: “The Turkish state, which commits inhumane crimes in front of the whole world, violates international human rights conventions and laws. Unfortunately, all human rights organizations, including the International Coalition, Russia, the United Nations and the International Union of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, are silently watching these crimes.

YRA, which is responsible for documenting crimes and activities against journalists and media workers, first of all extends its condolences to the family of Necimedî Feysel Hec Sînan, and wishes a speedy recovery to the other journalist who was injured in the attack.

At the same time, we demand that human rights institutions and organizations, especially those responsible for the protection of journalists, fulfil their responsibilities and do not remain silent against the Turkish state's targeting of journalists and civilians in the region.”



## Kobanê Case postponed until 4 September

ANF | ANKARA | 25 AUGUST 2023

The Court in Ankara decided to set the next hearing in the Kobanê Case for 4 September.

The Kobanê Cas was filed in 2020 against 108 people, including the HDP's former co-chairs, Mr Selahattin Demirtaş and Ms Figen Yüksekdağ, current co-chair Ms Pervin Buldan, several current and former HDP deputies and mayors, and all the members of the HDP's Central Executive Board of 2014.

This case was launched as a counter move by the Turkish government just two weeks after the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights made its final judgment demanding the immediate release of Selahattin Demirtaş. The indictment in the Kobanê Case is based on a Twitter message posted by the HDP on 6 October 2014. This called for democratic protests in solidarity with the people of Kobanê, the Kurdish town in Northern Syria that was fighting against the attacks of ISIS, and also against Turkey's embargo on the town. The prosecutor is calling for all the defendants to be given aggravated life sentences (without parole) 38 times for the crimes of “destroying the unity of the state and the integrity of the coun-

try” and “premeditated murder” of the people who lost their lives in the Kobanê protests. Seventeen politicians are currently being held in pre-trial detention for this case.

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## 250 refugees held in a sports hall Antalya for two days

ANF | ANTALYA | 25 AUGUST 2023

On 22 August, 250 people, including Rojhilat citizens, were taken into custody in Antalya and accused of allegedly “wanting to enter another country illegally”. While it is stated that most of the detainees still have a valid visa, a total of 250 people, including children, have been held in a sports hall in Manavgat for two days.

A young man from Pave in Rojhilat, spoke to the Mesopotamia Agency (MA) and said that they were detained while walking on the street.

### ‘We can’t breathe’

Stating that the sports hall they are held in as a hot and uninhabitable place, the young man said: “For two days, they gave us nothing but a small piece of cucumber and old bread. We have a woman and a 2-year-old child with us. They treat us like we are their enemies. They do not have a single piece of evidence that we will cross over to another country, but they accuse us of it. We have no one helping us. Please help us. Help these babies and women. At the moment, almost 300 people are in the sport hall. The toilets and cleanliness here are non-existent. As the windows are closed, we and the children cannot breathe.”

### ‘We were taken into custody while walking on the street’

Noting that they were detained on the street, the young man said: “Everyone knows that these people did not commit any crime. We were taken into custody while walking on the street. Yet, immediately fake news was published saying that “refugees were caught on their way to Italy”. We seek help from human rights institutions. We do not know what will happen to us.”

More information could not be obtained because the phones of the refugees were confiscated.

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## MSD expresses solidarity with popular demonstrations in Syria, calls for a political solution

ANF | 25 AUGUST 2023

The Syrian Democratic Council (MSD) released a statement regarding the peaceful popular demonstrations in various Syrian cities.

The statement on Friday pointed out that the MSD was closely following the latest developments in various Syrian cities that erupted as a result of the deterioration of the Syrian peoples' living conditions and lack of economic and political stability, which have caused anger among the people, saying the following:

“Syrian society is experiencing the bitterness of the war that has split the country and displaced more than half of the population who live in the worst humanitarian conditions throughout its modern history. The government in Damascus produces no solutions in the face of this dangerous situation at a time of widespread poverty, corruption, and economic crisis.

MSD stands in solidarity with all the demonstrations where the people of Syria express their discontent and rejection of the policies of the Damascus government and voice their demands. MSD condemns the suppression of demonstrations and the use of violence against citizens. It calls on the government to respect the right to peaceful protest in accordance with international laws, to release the arbitrarily arrested and detained persons, and to start a new, transparent process that will end the conflict, build a democratic system and achieve justice for all.

MSD condemns in the strongest terms the armed attacks directed against demonstrators and affirms its support for peaceful demonstrations.

The people organizing peaceful demonstrations in the coastal cities of Aleppo, Al-Suwayda and Daraa not to fall into the conflicts sparked by the government and its security institutions on one hand, and by Turkey and the pro-ikhwan movement on the other, so that these groups and organizations do not cause the Syrians to suffer as they once did.

MSD stresses the importance of a political solution and a national stand representing Syrians in the face of the seriousness of the situation in the country. There is a need for a joint effort to bring the war and humanitarian crisis to an end. We once again affirm our support for these protests and the rightful demands of the protesters, and we call on all Syrians to show solidarity with them.”

## 292 Yazidis voluntarily return to Shengal from Duhok camps

ANF | SHENGAL | 26 AUGUST 2023

292 Yazidis living in refugee camps in Duhok returned to Shengal.

The Iraqi Minister of Immigration, Ivan Faye, said that they gave instructions to all parties to meet the vital needs of those families who returned to their homes voluntarily.

Faye said that the return to Shengal is ensured in coordination with the ministry, security forces and local administrations, and that they continue their efforts to register the refugees who want to return to their homes.

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## Clashes in Yüksekova between police and young people

ANF | HAKKARI | 26 AUGUST 2023

Young people in Yüksekova (Gever) held protest actions for the Peace Mothers Adalet Safalı and Perşan Akçelik, who lost their lives in a traffic accident after their deposition in court.

The police attacked the youth with rubber bullets and tear gas bombs, closing the roads to traffic.

Clashes between the police and the youth continued until late on Friday night.

Towards the morning hours, the police toured the neighbourhood by playing the Mehter March from cars. Neighbourhood residents said that the police kept shouting from their cars, "Let's shoot them."

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## ESP denounces intimidation attempts against party members

ANF | ISTANBUL | 26 AUGUST 2023

The Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) and the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (SGDF) held a press conference at the Human Rights Association IHD in Istanbul about the long-lasting repression against politicians and activists. The press conference on Friday was also attended by the Green Left Party MP Çiçek Otlı and lawyer Vedat Çağırtekin from the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD).

Deniz Aktaş from the ESP Executive Committee said that revolutionary and socialist people in Turkey are systematically persecuted under the AKP/MHP government. In the last five months, countless detention operations have been carried out, party members are being pressured by the police with threats regarding

their lives, their work, their school and their family. “Within the last week, ten comrades have been called by the police in connection with so-called information and precautionary measures. In these calls, they are told that they should be informed about the ongoing cases against them and that they must come to an appointment in order to avoid punishment. In addition, their families are also summoned to the police by phone. A few weeks ago, the Marmara Closed Prison administration tried to get Kalender Polat, an SGDF member who was imprisoned in May, to talk to the MIT (intelligence service). By doing so, the prison administration committed an open offence.”

Aktaş stressed that her party will not remain silent to threats and attempted spy recruitment and will not be deterred from its struggle. “Attempts are being made to put the youth in an obedient state of hopelessness. Living revolutionary and defending one's values means dignity. We are proud to fight for revolution and socialism in an organised way. No attack can stop us.”

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## opinion

### Özaraz: Isolation is the biggest problem in prisons

ANF | VAN | 24 AUGUST 2023

The prisons in Kurdistan and Turkey are the scene of serious human rights violations. There has been no news for 29 months from Kurdish people's leader Abdullah Öcalan, who is held in total isolation in İmralı. And the isolation system implemented in the prison island is spreading to prisons across the country. Ill prisoners die, the release of people after 30 years of imprisonment is refused on flimsy pretexts. Van Bar Association President Sinan Özaraz spoke to Mezopotamya News Agency about the situation in the detention centers.

#### “Universal rights are being violated”

Özaraz underlined that universal principles of law actually apply to detention centers and said: “There are many such rights, such as the right not to be tortured and ill-treated, the right to health, communication, and receiving visits. And, of course, there is the prohibition of isolation. If we look at prisons in Turkey, we see that many of these rights are constantly being violated. This situation is quickly developing into systematic rights violations.”

Özaraz said that the Van Bar Association are carrying out investigations in prisons at the request of prisoners and their families and will present the results as a report.



## **Forensic medicine as an instrument of torture**

Noting that torture and ill-treatment are prohibited by national and international conventions, Özaraz said: “The execution in prison must comply with these basic principles. But when we look at the reports, we see that these rights are being violated. There are many problems with accessing health care. It has been reported that detainees have received no response to their requests for access to medical care, that their requests have been delayed or that they have been subjected to inhumane treatment while being transferred to hospital. Prisoners are forced to have an oral examination. Such a thing has no place in the law. And then, of course, there is the violation of the rights of ill prisoners. There are people who cannot survive in prison. These people shouldn’t be held in prison in the first place, but they are. There are hundreds of ill prisoners in Turkey’s jails. One of the problems we are faced with is the obstacles created by the reports of the Forensic Medicine Institute (ATK). While a person is being given a certificate stating that he cannot stay in prison at the hospital, the ATK is giving the same patient a report saying that in fact he can. This violates the right to life of ill prisoners.”

### **“Prisoners are left to die”**

Özaraz explained that prison regulations prohibit discrimination, but political prisoners are punished twice because they are simply not released in the event of serious illness. He added: “The number of deaths in prisons has risen sharply. This is also due to ATK’s approach. People don’t get released when they should. They will only be released when they are dying or when they make it onto Turkey’s main agenda. But there are many people who are not on the agenda. Unfortunately, these people are left in prison to die. It was claimed that a settlement would be made but no action was taken.”

The Bar Association President pointed out the double standard of the current prison reform and said: “The only regulation it contains relates to general crimes, but those serving time for political and opinion offenses have been exempted. This arrangement has evolved into an amnesty for many, and offenders see it as a license to commit crimes.”

## **Letters are not handed out**

Isolation, said Özaraz, is also a way to sever the connection between prisoners and society, adding: “There are violations such as the censorship imposed on entire publishing houses, television stations and newspapers. Letters written or received in Kurdish are not being sent or delivered on the grounds that there is ‘no interpreter’. We do know, however, that some detainees were under investigation over the content of letters that allegedly were not given because there was no interpreter. It is clear there are interpreters, but the letters are arbitrarily withheld. And even if there were no interpreter, one would have to be provided.”

### **“Isolation is the biggest problem”**

Özaraz underlined that one of the biggest problems in Turkey is indeed the isolation system. “Isolation has become systematic in all prisons. Political prisoners in particular are kept in solitary confinement, although they receive no disciplinary punishment. Isolation also affects health, because health is not only something physical, it also has a social and psychological dimension. In this respect, we are witnessing a serious violation of the law, which unfortunately is now widespread in all prisons in Turkey.”



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