

AVAŞÎN

newsletter

JANUARY 2024



PEOPLE'S BRIDGE



TKŞ STATEMENT

2024 will be a year of glory and freedom

We are following another year in which the working class and all oppressed people have spent the struggle for freedom under the attacks of the capitalist-imperialist, patriarchal, fascist regime.

The year 2023 was a difficult year for all oppressed people in the world, especially in the Middle East. It was full of labor exploitation, hunger and poverty, invasion attacks, wars and conflicts. Sexual assaults and massacres against women increased. The world is heading towards an ecological catastrophe. The struggle for survival has become even more difficult for billions of poor people. The repressive fascist Turkish state continued its invasion attacks on the territory of Rojava and South Kurdistan with the approval of the imperialist forces. Due to the betrayal of the PDK-Barzanî line, there were new attacks on the Medya defense areas. Dozens of villages were evacuated and attacked with heavy weapons. They carried out thousands of bombings and airstrikes. Powerfully from the silence of the world, crimes against humanity were committed with chemical weapons and tactical nuclear bombs. Dozens of air strikes by drones led to new massacres in Makhmur, Şengal and Sulaimani. The guerrilla forces showed great determination in the resistance areas, especially in Zap and Khakurk, and confronted the invaders. In Afrin, Girê Spî and Serekaniyê, the occupied cities of Rojava, and in Bakur and Eastern Syria, crimes against humanity have increased. The Turkish state, which brought about a demographic change in the region, resettled the families of the gangs that had brought them to the region.

Indiscriminate attacks continued in the form of crimes against humanity, such as ransom extortion, looting and confiscation of property. In 2023, as in previous years, the bombings of our cities continued without interruption. The economic embargo and the border blockade against the revolutionary area continued. While MİT tried to establish a spy network, SIHA attacked and assassinated leading cadres of the revolution. They tried to organize internal attacks through DAESH remnants and some tribes. In the months of October and December, the Turkish government carried out yet another wave of destructive attacks on the infrastructure and service buildings of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. Residential areas and workplaces were bombed, dozens of patriots were killed. When the fascist government tried to liquidate our system of self-government, it forced the people of Rojava to migrate, rendering their lives more difficult day by day. When the Damascus regime imposed an embargo on our people in Shehba, it tried to create unrest on the border of Deir ez-Zor. But the imperialist forces and their partners could not overcome the people's will to resist. Our Kurdish, Arab, Assyrian, Syrian, Armenian, Yazidi and Turkmen people did not give in to the attacks. They took a stand for the revolution and declared that they would never leave their country. With their actions against the invading Turkish state and its mercenaries, the revolutionary forces sent the message that the struggle will continue until all invaders are eliminated. The year 2024 will be characterized by major confrontations with the experiences of the previous year. It will open the door to a new resistance for the people of the Middle East and the world, especially our people in North and East Syria and Palestine. The resistance of the people of Palestine and Kurdistan has proven once again that honor and freedom are only possible if you pay the price.

The resistance of the oppressed increases the hope of people around the world. New challenges await us in the new year. We will resist the capitalist-imperialist system, oppression and patriarchy. We will not bow to any attack. We will pay the price for freedom and not give in. In 2024, we will engage in struggles that will elevate and win the dignity of humanity.

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NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

A step forward

On December 12, the new social contract drawn up by the self-administration in North and East Syria came into force. The social contract, which has a constitution-like character, is intended to regulate coexistence within the self-administration. The new social contract replaces the social contract from 2014, which was amended in 2016.

The 2014 social contract covered the regions of Efrîn, Cizîrê and Kobanê. In other words, it covered the regions that are largely inhabited by the Kurdish population. This shows the character of the pioneer of the Kurdish people in the revolution in Rojava, but other peoples were also included in the social contract. Due to the invasion of Turkey and the subsequent occupation of Efrîn, the establishment of the structures of self-government could not be fully implemented. The structures of self-government were established, but at the same time a council system also exists in many places. In addition, since the introduction of the social contract, self-administration has expanded to areas such as Tabqa, Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor and Minbic in the fight against the fascist gangs of the so-called Islamic State. Self-government was also extended to areas with a majority Arab population. These areas were governed by civil councils. As a result, Cizîrê, Efrîn and the Euphrates region were organized as a self-administration system, while Raqqa, Tabqa and Minbic were organized as civil councils. In 2021, a new attempt was made to address the problems of self-government and to draw up a new social contract, following a public consultation in 2020, which revealed the need for a new social contract. A committee of 158 members was established to draft the social contract, which included representatives of various ethnic, religious and denominational groups as well as youth and women.

The proposals for the social contract were discussed together with various institutions and organizations.

The drafting of the social contract provides an answer to the most pressing questions of self-administration, in particular how self-administration can develop in relation to the new, predominantly Arab regions and guarantee all peoples in North and East Syria the right to equal participation in self-administration, but also how self-administration can be managed in the face of constant Turkish attacks and the existing crisis in the economy and healthcare. At the same time, the drafting of the new social contract also shows that the democratic participation of all residents of North and East Syria is a central aspect of self-government, as became clear through the process, where care was taken to enter into discussion with the broadest possible sections of society and thus involve them in the drafting of the social contract.

Based on the new situation of self-administration, the new social contract has the task of consolidating and further developing the existing principles of self-administration. First of all, the social contract changes the name of the self-government from the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria to the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES). This is primarily intended to embody the self-administration's claim to be part of a democratic and federal Syria, the Syrian Democratic Republic, as it is called in the agreement, and to develop unity between the peoples of Syria. On basis of this, the territories integrated in 2014 were declared new cantons alongside the existing ones. In addition, the social contract defined the political institutions, which were based on councils composed at different levels, starting from the grassroots democratic unit of the municipality to the democratic council of North and East Syria. Councils are also defined for various aspects of public life, such as law, health and the economy. Furthermore, the new social contract establishes equal rights for all peoples and religious groups. The rights of women are also enshrined and the tasks of the Women's Council are defined.

The social contract is the result of the developments that the self-government has made since 2014, since the first social contract. It aims to take further steps to guarantee equal coexistence between the different peoples, especially with regard to the Kurdish and Arab peoples.

In addition, the democratic council structures are to be consolidated, as are the rights of women. The social contract thus consolidates the progress that has been made, but also strives to expand it further. It takes a step forward at a time when self-government is under constant siege and represents a beacon of democratic and free coexistence for the region.

ANOTHER WAVE OF ATTACKS

North East Syria is once again under attack. The current wave of airstrikes by the Turkish state, which began on the night of December 24th and is still ongoing, mainly involves attacks on civilian infrastructure. The towns of Kobanê, Amûdê, Dirbêsiyê, Qamişlo, Til Temir and Girkê Legê are affected, and over 2,600 places have no access to electricity. According to the self-administration, there were 40 strikes on the aforementioned cities within one day alone. The latest figures indicate that a total of eight people were killed and 18 injured in the bombings. All of the victims and injured were civilians.

The airstrikes focused on important locations for the functioning and survival of the self-administration. Among other things, the medical infrastructure in Qamişlo was targeted: a dialysis center and a bottling plant for medical oxygen were bombed, both facilities are located on the grounds of the Covid-19 hospital, one caught fire. The consequences of this are already showing; a 65-year-old patient has died due to the lack of care caused by the bombing.

As so often, the justification for these widespread airstrikes is retaliation for the deaths of several Turkish army soldiers who were killed by Kurdish guerrillas in Iraq. The Turkish state justifies its war crimes with reference to the UN Charter, which regulates a country's right to self-defense. During this current period of attacks on Rojava, Erdoğan has once again commented, ever so cynically, on the Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, emphasizing that the bombing of civilian infrastructure such as hospitals is a taboo, even during war.

While most of the international community remains silent about the ongoing Turkish war crimes, the people of North East Syria in particular are standing up against them. In Raqqa and Qamişlo, there have been increasing protests against the airstrikes. Yet the outcry in Europe is waiting to raise its voice.



ECOLOGICAL WARFARE

Turkey's attempt to dry out the revolution

On December 11, the irrigation office of Raqqa announced, that it is uncertain whether they will be able to secure enough water for the coming year, 2024. The reason: Turkey's systematic manipulation of the Euphrates River. As Erdogan's bombs continue to burn its soil and diminish infrastructure, North East Syria is heading into a year of drought scarcity and crisis. A humanitarian catastrophe is imminent.

The systematic destruction of the environment has long established itself as a key practice of Turkey and its cohorts. A fundamental resource, essential in maintaining life itself, water has been at the center of warfare. At the cross-section of Turkey, Syria and Iraq,

across Kurdish territories, the Euphrates has historically been nourishing the region.

By constructing dams on its own side of the state border, Turkey withholds several hundred cubic meters of water. In an agreement with the Syrian government in 1987, Turkey committed to ensuring that at least 500 cubic meters of water from the Euphrates pass on into Syria—today, not even half this amount reaches the area.

The violation of the agreement coincides with the establishment of the Autonomous Administration. The regulation of water evidently serves the purpose of weakening it on several fronts.

The consequences, which affect around five million people in Syria, are just as much societal, economical and political as they are ecological.

Droughts, attributed to the lack of water, not only transform what were once lush green landscapes into dry, yellow patches devoid of foliage, but also negatively impact the agrarian sector. Farmers across North East Syria are experiencing grave difficulties cultivating land and growing crops. Agriculture constitutes a decisive component of self-administration's economy.

The man-made water crisis affects the health sector as well. On the one hand, it causes sanitary problems, as many living in North East Syria do not have secure and regular access to clean water. Not only does this render drinking water a limited good, it also makes maintenance of personal hygiene an obstacle. This causes illness and infections. Those living around the banks of the Euphrates are additionally exposed to diseases, such as Cholera, transmitted by mosquitoes that breed in the river's still waters. Local hospitals, on the other hand, need water to be able to operate properly, in order to care for a growing number of patients. A lack of water, means a lack of electricity, as generating stations need water to run. The weaponization of natural resources, however, is not

limited to water. So-called *slash-and-burn* techniques have long become a method used by Turkish military, often in cooperation with allied militia, to deface land. Olive groves are especially subjected to this, as they are also a source of income and substantial to longstanding olive producers.

The colonial, fascist force Turkey aims to estrange Kurdish people from their lands, their surroundings, the nature among which they have resided for hundreds and thousands of years. The destruction of nature in North East Syria, specifically in Rojava cannot be unlinked from the Turkish motive of expulsion from the region, as well as expansion.

The foundation for the occupation of Serêkaniyê was laid by structural and ecological destruction. What followed was the displacement of 85% of the region's Kurdish population, several hundred thousand people. The Turkish government subsequently settled 2.500 refugee families in the region, among them supposedly 55 DAESH-affiliated.

In response to the ecological warfare, many initiatives were founded to counteract the resulting humanitarian crisis and support the Autonomous Administration in persevering against Erdoğan's attempt to dissolve and disperse the region's social integrity. Water for Rojava is one such initiative, which organizes fundraisers and delegations to support water projects in North East Syria.

Though weakening the blow against Rojava's ecology is certainly a necessity, long-term solutions are needed. The climate crisis continues to ravage globally and the Levant is one of the regions in which its effects, in parts irreversible, will realize soonest. As long as imperialist interests control developments in the Middle East, the region will continue to burn. As long as the Turkish state, under fascist leadership remains a regional power, it will continue weaponizing natural resources and diminishing ecosystems. What it needs is international recognition of Turkey's crimes, and more importantly, consequences. What it needs is support and solidarity for the Autonomous

Administration in its entirety. The recognition of and the struggle for the right to self-determination of the Kurdish peoples is also essential to this cause. Turkey's attacks on nature are not limited to Rojava. Forests fires caused by arson, systematic droughts or floodings and subsequent displacement are common practice in Bakûr as well. Rojhîlat and Başur are affected by similar assaults at hand of the Iranian and Iraqi government, respectively. Systematic destruction of native land and ecosystems are embedded in colonial practices. As long as the four parts of Kurdistan remain under control of colonialist powers and exploited at behest of imperialist interests, its flowers will continue to wither, its soil will dry out, its rivers will cease to flow.



INTERNATIONAL DAESH TRIBUNAL

Over 10,000 imprisoned DAESH jihadists are currently being held in the prisons of the self-administration of North and East Syria— at least 2,000 of them hail from Western countries.

Apart from the jihadists themselves, the self-administration run camps house tens of thousands of Islamists.

Considering that the self-administration is being subjected to renewed, intensive attacks by the Turkish state, it does not have the necessary capacity to handle the legal proceedings against the jihadists on its own.

The liberation of the jihadists would play into the hands of regional players such as Turkey.

In addition to the attacks by Turkey, the self-administration would therefore have to take up the fight against DAESH internally, which is bound to lead to considerable problems. Last year, Turkey supported the DAESH attacks on the Sina prison in order to free high-ranking jihadists. These attacks could not possibly have taken place on this scale without Turkey's planning, logistical support and intelligence.

The Autonomous Administration itself has thus been seeking support from the jihadists' countries of origin.

Their governments, however, are shirking their duties and not cooperating.

Even if DAESH has been defeated militarily for the time being, the family camps harbor the danger of a renewed strengthening of fundamentalist forces through the ideological indoctrination of the younger generations within the camps.

Political Islam serves as a lightning rod for the surrounding states to glorify the misery of the workers internally as God-given and to have an enemy image externally that always and everywhere puts obstacles in the way and is against Muslim tradition and customs.

The German state, which has always murdered Kurds together with Turkey, is once again siding with its NATO partner.

It would be convenient for the imperialist states if the popular revolution in northern and eastern Syria were to be reversed in order to seize the region's oil wells. Therefore, the progressive forces in Germany must also engage in this political struggle to protect the revolution.

The revolution has many needs at the moment and the return of the jihadists to their home countries to prevent a resurgence of DAESH is one of these acute needs.

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