Stop Turkey's Assault on Rojava - Solidarity with Kurdish Resistance!

Martin Suchanek, Berlin, 28 November 2022

On the night of 19-20 November, Turkish armed forces started a full scale bombardment of Rojava, the Kurdish region of Syria. From the air, war planes and drones and, on the ground, howitzers, tanks and mortars opened fire. In addition, mercenaries in the service of Turkey began raiding Kurdish settlements.

The attacks on the Kurdish self-governing region have claimed dozens of lives - with the number of fighters and civilians killed rising daily. Yet this could well be just a prelude to a ground offensive and a de facto occupation of further parts of the Kurdish regions by Turkey.

The Erdogan regime has been threatening and planning an attack for a long time but, hitherto, it had met with opposition not only from the despotic Syrian regime, but also from the rival imperialist powers operating there, Russia and the USA. The former has been propping up the Syrian army whilst the latter exercises de facto control over Rojava's airspace.

Pretext

The 13 November bomb explosion on Istiklal Caddesi, Istanbul's famous shopping street, which killed six and injured 81, gave Erdogan the pretext he was looking for. Without the slightest proof, he placed responsibility for the killings on the PKK and the Kurdish autonomous government in Rojava, despite the fact that all the Kurdish forces immediately and unequivocally condemned it.

After all, such an attack in no way benefits the Kurdish liberation struggle and the Turkish government did not hesitate to attack Rojava. Also the USA and its allies - including the Germans - immediately swallowed Erdogan's anti-terrorism claims in order to keep NATO ally Turkey onside over the war in Ukraine. Indeed, the US is effectively ceding Erdogan Rojava's airspace.

Russia and the Assad regime have criticised Turkey's action but effectively washed their hands of it. Since they too wish to put an end to Kurdish self-government, it is better if Erdogan does the dirty work for them. Assad, too, is busy stabilising his own dictatorship and Putin is fully occupied with his murderous bombing of Ukrainian cities and power stations.

This is a warning, not only to the Rojava Kurds but to all the oppressed peoples worldwide, not to put their trust in either imperialist camps or in the regional powers like Iran or Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf monarchies, now meddling in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen etc, etc.

At the same time, parts of the Arab media are reporting on negotiations taking place between Turkey and Syria. It seems Erdogan might be willing to halt his operations if the Assad regime would take control of Rojava. Such a deal would mean the beginning of the end of Rojava's de facto autonomy. Just as Kurdish self-determination cannot be realised under the rule of Turkey and the NATO powers, neither can it survive under the dictatorship of the butcher Bashar al-Assad.
In this situation, the West is not only giving Turkey a free hand. The NATO countries of Western Europe and the new candidates for admission, Sweden and Finland, are not just silent on the attacks on Rojava, they are also taking action against Kurdish organisations in their own countries. Meanwhile, in Germany and across the EU, the PKK and other Kurdish organisations have long been banned as "terrorist organisations". In early November, Sweden's new Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson (of the conservative neoliberal Moderate Party) promised to implement the conditions attached by Erdogan for not vetoing NATO membership. Finland, too, generously attests to Erdogan's "progress" in blocking Kurdish political refugees getting to Europe.

Attack on several fronts

Intensified attacks on the Kurdish people have not been restricted to Rojava. Since mid-November, Erdogan's security forces have been attacking the Kurdish civilian population, and activists in his own country on an almost daily basis. House searches and raids are taking place in numerous cities. Hundreds of people have been arrested for allegedly being members of the PKK. The police are also brutally cracking down on demonstrations calling for an end to such searches and arrests.

It is all the more important that we in Germany and across Europe, express our solidarity with the Kurdish people. In Turkey, thousands regularly take to the streets despite harsh repression. In Germany, too, solidarity demonstrations have taken place in cities like Berlin, Frankfurt am Main and Hanover. More are planned over coming days. But this solidarity must not be limited to the Kurdish migrant population, their organisations, plus far left activists and groups. The trade unions of the DGB and the Left Party (Die Linke) should also mobilise their members and supporters in solidarity. The same goes for all Social Democrats and Greens who do not share the foreign policies of "their" government

We say -

- Stop the attacks on Rojava! Solidarity with the resistance of the Kurdish people!
- No to all deportations to Turkey! End all prosecutions against Kurdish activists!
- Lift the EU's so-called anti-terror list! End the bans on the PKK and other Kurdish associations!

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