



# Turkey: Down with state terrorism!

Svenja Spunck, Gruppe Arbeitermacht, Berlin Tue, 28/07/2015 - 20:43

Svenja Spunck, Gruppe Arbeitermacht, Berlin

After the massacre of socialist youth in the Turkish city of Suruc by the Islamic State (IS) on July 20, the Turkish Government has launched a major mobilisation of its security forces. In big cities such as Ankara, Izmir and Istanbul, more than 1,000 people have been arrested so far, and one young woman was shot.

However, very few of these are supporters of the IS; quite the contrary. The wave of repression is aimed primarily at members of the Kurdish Workers' Party PKK, the HDP, which campaigns for equal rights for Kurds, and left-wing organisations like the 'People's Revolutionary Liberation Front' DHKP-C. In Istanbul, there have been several days of raging street battles and even the funeral of the murdered comrade Gülay Özarlan was raided by the police.

Fighting terrorism?

This struggle against the internal enemy of Erdogan's AKP is part of a larger offensive. Since the weekend, Turkish fighter jets have been flying over Syria and northern Iraq. According to the BBC, about 10 missions were flown against the IS but almost 200 against the Kurds in Rojava and in northern Iraq. They are the real target.

It was only in January that the people's defence forces of YPG / YPJ in the Rojava region fought a fierce battle to liberate the city of Kobanê from the IS and gained international recognition. Equally, it was widely known that, through its policy on border control, Turkey had created a catastrophic shortage of supplies of both food and ammunition for the Kurdish fighters, while IS-fighters were treated in Turkish private clinics.

Just recently, Erdogan said clearly that he would not allow a Kurdish autonomous region on the Turkish border. Such a territory, under the control of the PYD, would mean a strengthening of the PKK, which the AKP actually wanted to stop by their "peace talks" with the HDP in recent months.

All this shows the hypocrisy of Turkey's official justification for the intervention in Syria. Even now, they are not fighting the IS, but the enemies of the IS! Thus, on July 26, the General Command of the People's Protection Units (YPG) released a press statement detailing how Turkish tanks had shelled the positions of the Women's and People's Protection Units (YPJ/ YPG) and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) in the village of Zormikhar, west of Kobanê, killing four fighters of the FSA and injuring many villagers.

Yesterday's friend, today's enemy

Since the evening of 26 July, Turkish fighter jets have also bombed the headquarters of the Kurdish guerrillas in the Kandil Mountains in northern Iraq. Not only shelters and training camps have been hit, but also several villagers. This attack lasted for more than 8 hours.

But not all the Kurds are the same! In the northern Iraqi government, under Barzani, the Turkish army has an ally at its side, who is committed to be 'always on the Turkish side in the fight against terrorism'. It seems that he has no problem with military attacks on his "territory" as long as these are directed against "the right people" that is, the common political enemy.

Although the programme of 'Democratic Confederalism', the personality cult around Abdullah 'Apo' Ocalan and the idealisation of the family, have a petty-bourgeois, vaguely anarchist or utopian character, the PKK is a staunch

opponent of the colonisation of the Middle East and the national oppression of the Kurdish people.

Whoever dares to question this system, let alone take up arms against it, will feel the wrath of the Turkish government. It has long hoped to gain the agreement of the US and NATO for military action against the Kurds, but the PYD in particular had been seen as a potential ally in the fight against IS, even if it has been virtually denied real material support and even solidarity campaigns for financial aid were seriously impeded.

However, this policy now seems to have changed. While in Istanbul a peace march organised by the HDP was banned and political activists are arrested, in Rojava, there is the threat of a war on two fronts. The PYD, the heroes in the fight against the IS, has stated that it would regard any attack by the Turkish army as a declaration of war. The PKK believes a deal has been done in which the US approved the assault on the Kurds in return for their own use of air bases in Turkey. Turkish attacks on the PKK and its allies are now permitted, in the language of the US diplomats, in the name of 'self-defence' to which every NATO member has a right.

### Fight on two fronts

However, the actual self-defence of the YPG / YPJ in cities like Sirrin, which is threatened by the IS, must continue. The Turkish government's turn, terminating support for the IS, which was anyway never publicly stated, will not weaken the Islamist gangs overnight.

The Kurds in Rojava face the immediate threat of a war on two fronts, which they can hardly win if a Turkish intervention is backed by NATO. Turkey is bringing together massive military units at the borders to the Kurdish areas in Syria and northern Iraq and is also planning to build a 'security zone' in Syria. Thus, the Kurds in Rojava are surrounded on all sides by powerful opponents; from Turkey and from the IS.

Even the Kurdish movement in Turkey would face defeat if Turkey can enforce its reactionary goals or if Rojava falls. The chairman of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtas, is not sparing with moral accusations against the AKP and he rightly points out that it is provoking a civil war, or at least tacitly takes that into account.

It is obvious that the Turkish government has no interest in any 'peace process' if this is accompanied by a political strengthening of PKK / PYD and HDP and thus the possible creation of a left political force that could unite the nationally oppressed Kurdish masses with the Turkish left and the workers' movement.

The election victory of the HDP forced the ACP to recognise that it could soon become an established political force that can regularly overcome the undemocratic hurdle of 10 percent in the elections and thus make impossible an absolute parliamentary majority for the AKP in the future.

One should not forget that the AKP is still struggling to form a government, because it lost its absolute majority in the elections on 7 June, and now has to look for a coalition. It is certainly not impossible that the ACP is deliberately delaying the formation of a government in order to present themselves in the current chaos as a stabilising factor and again achieve a majority government through new elections. Prohibiting the HDP as a 'terrorist organisation' could also be a step in this direction.

### Liberation struggle

All the same, the stability of a bourgeois party, whose rule is based on fear and state terror, is not unshakeable, if pressure is applied in the right place. This place is the militant organisation of the working class, the peasantry, the urban poor in Turkey and in all Kurdish areas.

The "peace process" is over and cannot be revived. When the Turkish government threatens war against the PKK until their 'definitive disarmament', it is clear that it does not want peace but, rather, the surrender of the Kurds. In this situation, solidarity with the Kurdish people, whether with the fighters in Rojava, with the PKK in northern Iraq or the HDP in Turkey, is the duty of all internationalists, the entire working class of Europe, all leftists and, indeed, of all

democrats.

Progress in Turkey will certainly not mean a return to the guerrilla strategy, but rather the mass struggle of the Kurds, in a Sirhaldin, in mass actions in cities throughout Turkey, in a political strike against repression and in the agitation for soldiers' committees in the army, who oppose Erdogan's dirty war.

In Europe, it is necessary to build a movement of solidarity with political prisoners, calling for their immediate release and the end of the ban on the PKK and other leftist organisations. At the same time, this movement must oppose any intervention by Turkey, or by NATO, the US or EU, in the Middle East.

### Beyond borders

The liberation of the Kurdish people is clearly impossible without a political perspective for the entire Middle East. The self-determination of the Kurdish people (whether in the form of an independent state or substantial autonomy) cannot be realised without putting in question not only the balance of power in at least four countries, which claim the Kurdish territory, but also the imperialist domination of the whole region. Moreover, a Kurdish territory (such as Rojava) could not be economically self-sufficient even under 'peaceful' conditions but would have to rely on cooperation with its neighbours.

The boundaries in the region, laid down in the Treaty of Lausanne, are now called into question. This applies not only to the "Islamic state", Israel and US imperialism, but also to the actions of Turkey. To achieve its objectives; expansion of geo-strategic influence and preventing a Kurdish, de facto self-governing, territory in Rojava, it cannot stop at the existing borders. Hence its attacks on other territories in 'self-defence'.

The Kurdish question shows, like no other, that a progressive, revolutionary change could also not be made within existing state borders. The cross-border solidarity of all progressive forces and, above all, the workers' movement, is the need of the hour. This applies particularly to the Kurdish movement and the remaining forces of the Syrian democratic revolution who continue to fight against both Assad and the Islamists of the IS.

This requires a political organisation which itself extends over the existing nation-state boundaries and is equipped with the perspective of the revolutionary overthrow of the reactionary regimes and the establishment of workers' and peasants' governments. Only in this way is an expropriation of the big capitalists and the establishment of a democratic, planned economy, the implementation of an agrarian revolution in favour of the rural workers and small farmers, the realisation of self-determination of all peoples, liberation from imperialist domination, the replacement of the bourgeois state and repressive apparatus by councils and militias possible. The United Socialist States of the Middle East must be the goal for which an internationally coordinated party fights.

---

**Source URL:** <https://fifthinternational.org/content/turkey-down-state-terrorism>