

PEACE AND DEMOCRACY PARTY

INTERNATIONAL E-BULLETIN

JANUARY 2013



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24 December, 2012

This is a sacred day where feelings of brotherhood, peace, tolerance and celebration are embraced.

A true celebration is possible only with an end to war and tragedy, with the establishment of an honorable peace, and with the securing of a true embrace among peoples.

With the heartfelt wish for this December 25th to be the last Christmas without pain and tears, we celebrate this day with the Christian citizens of our country and with the entire Christian world in the hope that it brings peace and brotherhood to our nation and to the world.

Co-Chair Gultan Kisanak

Co-Chair Selahattin Demirtas

BDP'S PANORAMA 2012

1- Roboski Massacre:

34 young Kurdish civilians killed by Turkish aircrafts in Roboski Village on 28 December 2011. Contrary to west part of Turkey, Kurds didn't celebrate the New Year in Kurdish cities. Unfortunately, AKP Government protected the killers and rewarded the Chief of the Air Staff for his "services".

No military staff questioned by the prosecutor until now. Incomprehensibly, relatives of the victims and protestors from several cities have been arrested. Kurdish People regards PM Erdogan as the first responsible of the massacre. BDP continues to unveil AKP Government's bloody and irresponsible approaches.



2- Scandal: Systematic Torture against Kurdish Children in Pozanti Prison / Adana - 24th February 2012

7 children in Pozanti Prison sent a letter to the Human Rights Association about the rape and torture by the guardians. Unfortunately, history repeats itself as we witness similar issues occurring many times in different places. Many Kurdish children, women and men have lost their lives; have been deported from their villages and have had to migrate to another city and even to another country since 1980. In reality, the inhuman acts of brutality, discrimination, social inequalities and the forced assimilation policies of the state began many years ago. Human rights have been violated under 'Kurdish issue' and 'Anti-terror Law' since 1980s. Therefore, living in Turkey became more difficult for many Kurds. BDP demanded to establish a commission in the Assembly for the event. But AKP didn't accept the suggestion.



3- Sivas Massacre (1993) Trial Prescribed by the High Court (13 March 2012)

The case against four people accused in connection with an infamous 1993 massacre in Turkey was dropped on 13 March 2012 amid protests outside Ankara's 11th High Criminal Court. The court agreed with defense lawyers that the statute of limitations meant the case had expired. The Sivas massacre took place on July 2, 1993 when a mob of radical Islamists burned down a hotel where those attending a cultural festival for the country's Alevi community had gathered. Some 37 people died, most of them Alevi intellectuals. Alevi Community organizes annual ceremony for the victims of the massacre every year. BDP continues to solidarity and share their pain of Alevi Community. AKP Government made some amendments in the name of the "harmonization process" with the EU that release all the radical Islamists who attend violence against civilians.



4- AKP Government Used Violence for Preventing Newroz Celebrations in Kurdish Cities

After weeks of preparation, BDP Headquarters and provincial branches announced to public and government institutions in both the Kurdish region and Turkey's western cities that 2012 Newroz celebrations would be held between March 18 and the 25 each day in different provinces. Although Kurds in Turkey have been celebrating Newroz during the third week of March for years, the Interior Minister decided at the last minute to ban Newroz celebrations and declared all public gatherings illegal except for March 21, 2012.



While several millions of Kurds living in Istanbul and Amed (in Turkish named Diyarbakir) gathered together in squares to celebrate Newroz on Sunday March 18th, police forces attacked people marching with BDP Member of Parliaments (MPs) and politicians. Attacks were carried out in extremely violent ways: people were bombarded with tear-gas bombs and highly-pressurized water. Hundreds of people were wounded and hospitalized. BDP Arnavutköy District chair of Istanbul, Mr. Hacı Zengin, 57, was killed after being beaten and hit by a tear gas canister thrown by police. In addition, BDP MPs, such as Mr. Ozdal Ucer (MP-Van), Ms. Mulkiye Birtane (MP-Kars), as well as Mr. Ertugrul Kurkcu (MP-Mersin) all incurred severe injuries by police.

Furthermore, Mr. Ahmet Turk, 69, a prominent Kurdish MP and co-chair of the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), an umbrella organization of Kurdish NGOs and political parties, was



beaten by police and hospitalized during the Newroz celebrations in Batman on March 20th. While the Turkish government presents itself as a 'successful democracy' and has been at the forefront of efforts to curb the on-going repression in the Middle East, its own repressive record against Kurdish people shows that Turkey is becoming an illiberal and authoritarian country.



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5- BDP attended to the SI Congress in Cape Town (30 August - 1 September)

BDP attended to the Socialist International Congress in Cape Town on 30 August and 1 September. Co-chair Mrs. Gültan Kışanak, Vice Co-Chair, Mr. Nazmi Gür and BDP's Europe Representative, Mr. Eyyüp Doru represented BDP in South Africa. BDP's statue upgraded to advisory member from observer member. Mrs. Kışanak made a speech in the congress. BDP suggested critical draft articles about the Kurdish Issue and the Middle East for the declaration. According to the declaration;

"The Kurdish question, like that of Israel and Palestine, is one that requires a multilateral answer. Parties representing Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria and the Kurdish people with the assistance of the UN and other supranational institutions must work within a multilateral framework. The Congress of the Socialist International has decided to re-establish a Special Working Group on the Kurdish Question with the aim to advance and protect in accordance with international law the rights, the security and the improvement of the living conditions of the Kurdish people."

"In Turkey, elected members of parliament are being obstructed from performing their duties by arbitrary court decisions. This is contrary to the stipulations of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, bringing into question the independence of the judiciary which is a fundamental condition of democracy. The situation is a violation of human rights; along with the prolonged detention of journalists, students and public servants amongst others in Turkey, it is a cause for concern."

6- The 2nd Extraordinary Congress of BDP was held in Ankara On 14 October 2012

Thousands of BDP supporters came together in Ahmet Taner Kışlalı Sports Hall on 14 October 2012. More than 120 international guests attended to the congress.

Especially high level party representatives from 4 parts of Kurdistan show their solidarity. Besides, parliamentarians, NGO representatives and party members participated to our congress from Sweden, Germany, Basque Country and Cyprus.



The congress is broadcasted by TV Channels. More than 400 journalists accredited. Co-chairs Mrs. Gültan Kışanak and Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş were re-elected. The new party assembly has founded by the congress.

7- Political Massacre Against Kurds: "KCK Operations" Continued in 2012

Many police raids and centralized operations have continued in 2012. It is known that the political massacre against Kurdish Politicians have been continuing since 14 April 2009. More than 8000 Kurds including 6 parliamentarians, 32 mayors and hundreds of elected members of city councils and municipal assemblies. While AKP carries out "reforms" for harmonization process with the EU, implementations are worse than totalitarian regimes.



About 100 journalists, more than 40 advocates and hundreds of NGO and Trade Union members are imprisoned because of the democratic opposition against ruling party, AKP. According to Anti-terror Law which amended in 2006 every speech or meetings should be perceived as "terrorist activity" by the prosecutors. Politicians or civilians faces with the imprisonments for many years without any concrete evidence.

8- Hunger Strikes in Prisons of Turkey was one of the stressful process in Turkey (12 September - 20 November)

63 Kurdish prisoners started to an indefinite and irreversible hunger strike in order to enforce AKP Government to accept defence in mother tongue, education in mother tongue and removing isolation for Kurdish Leader Mr. Abdullah Öcalan who imprisoned in İmrali Prison since 1999. The number of hunger strikers reached 600 in three weeks.



Arrested MPs and mayors attended to the hunger strike. But, AKP Government tried to ignore them. Because of the Kurdish People's and international public opinion's sensitivity and reaction, AKP had to consider the hunger strikers. But, unfortunately, AKP was slowing down the process. AKP declared that defence in mother tongue will be provided. While the hunger strike arrives 60s days, Mr. Öcalan's constructive and sensitive message caused to end the hunger strike. Mr. Öcalan prevented the possible deaths in prisons and conflicts. But, the many strikers' health problems are continuing.

"Great Closure" Meral DANIŞ BEŞTAŞ



AKP Democracy and the Big Enclosure on the 64th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The result of Turkish democracy in terms of human rights and freedoms once again became clear two days ago.

Two days ago, a number of BDP politicians and officers of various NGOs, a total of 87 people were arrested in Batman, Siirt and Mardin as part of the 'KCK' operations that are essentially part of a Political Genocide. Though the only crime of those detained was to enjoy their basic human rights within the framework of freedom of thought and expression, it again became apparent just how much those arrested can actually benefit from the justice of AKP.

Today is the 64th anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and still there are tens of thousands of people that are being held in jail because of their thoughts, because of doing politics, because of being in the opposition, and because of being Kurd.

On this 64th anniversary, the political participation of a community is being obstructed by keeping its mayors, CEB members, Parliament members, municipal employees, and provincial and municipal council members in prison.

In this 64th year, the number of prisoners and convicts has doubled since the AKP came to power.



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In this 64th year, in the first 11 months of 2012 alone, 6529 people were taken under custody in Turkey because they wanted to take part in demonstrations and make use of the right to be organized. 1831 of them were arrested.

In the 64th year, in the first 11 months of 2012 in Turkey, 34 people fell victim to extra-judicial executions. 19 people have been murdered by unresolved assassination.

In this 64th year, every day in Turkey women are being murdered and the number of murders of women is increasing. In fact, the number has increased 1400 percent between the years of 2002-2009 under AKP rule.

In this 64th year, in Turkey, 34 Kurdish villagers were bombed by the AKP's army. Though one year has passed since the massacre, the investigation has not moved an inch, and all institutions have been mobilized to cover up the massacre and make sure those responsible do not go before a judge.

In this 64th year, in Turkey, individual rights and freedoms do not exist when it comes to Mr. OCALAN who has been held in solitary confinement for 500 days. Isolation is being perpetuated by an order coming from the Prime Minister without regard to any principle of law

In this 64th year, Turkey ranks 106 in the ranking of World Press Freedom.

In this 64th year, in an attack on the right of defense 33 lawyers have been arrested and their trials are still continuing.

In this 64th year, Turkey still is the record holder when it comes to violating the rules of European Human Rights Agreement.

In this 64th year, Turkey has still not eliminated the barriers blocking a child's right to get education in his or her mother tongue.

In this 64th year, Turkey still does not provide occupational health and safety to workers. The minimum wage remains below the food poverty line while annuity holders keep adding to their wealth despite the fact that the workers are dying everyday.

The above facts are a summary of the AKP's report card on human rights. The government's mask is off now, that government which gave hope to the public with the referendum on September 12.

This government presented individual application to the Constitutional Court as a reform, while at the same time removing applications to the European Court of Human Rights regarding long jail terms by our own citizens unjustly imprisoned for years. With this commission that has essentially rendered the path to individual application to the European



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Court of Human Rights nonfunctional, it is being said 'We will commit violations. Fine. We can simply pay the reparations later.'

The Human Rights Authority, another revolutionary initiative by the AKP, is no different. It is not really hard to predict now independently this authority can carry on human rights functions given that relevant criticism was ignored in the course of its lawmaking, that it provides no security for its members, and that it has no independent budget.

The 3rd Judicial Package, ostensibly brought out to accelerate justice, did not affect the situation of those who are imprisoned due to their thoughts and political work. As a great gift of this 3rd Judicial Packet, special courts for the Kurds have been established to assume their role on the judiciary stage.

For this reason, in this year in which junta-like acts carried out by the AKP in defiance of human rights and freedoms have peaked, human rights week has become more important ever. Is very clear that the AKP government, together with its police, army and judiciary system, sees every opponent as the enemy. Turkey, with this psychology and approach of hostility, unfortunately, is going through the "Great Closure"

Our report card of vio, on the day of Human Rights, is enough to reveal the gravity of the situation .The way to reverse this report card is to protect human dignity, the law and the passion for a just world. The prerequisite for building a Turkish Democracy where there is a real sense of peace and tranquility, where human rights and freedoms are respected and protected, is for the demands of Kurds and other opponents to be met through dialogue and negotiation.

Meral Daniş Beştaş (Vice Co-chair of BDP in Charge of Human Rights and Law Commission, Lawyer)

Questions by Imprisoned MP, Mr. Faysal Sarıyıldız about the fake memberships of the Ruling Party AKP.

Prime Minister Being Questioned on Fake Membership Records of the Ruling Party AKP

After news came up about citizens being made AKP members without their consent, our imprisoned Şırnak MP Faysal Sarıyıldız has given a written question to the parliament for the prime minister to answer:

"Party membership, one of the most important elements of a political party, can only be with the approval of one's own. Registering people to any party without their consent is also a crime according to the law of political parties.



As reflected in the press recently, thousands of people from all around Turkey, has been made members to the ruling party AKP, without their knowledge. These memberships have been recorded using fake signatures of these citizens.

According to the news headline of Dicle News Agency (DIHA) on 11/26/2012, the agency's editor Abdurrahman Gök and Diyarbakır employee Yıldız Özcan have also been made members to AKP without their consent. Ramazan Serim, member of Local Agenda 21 Disabilities Council, has also applied to the Diyarbakır branch of the Human Rights Association (İHD) to express his realization that he has been member of AKP since 5 years ago without his knowledge. It was exposed by a document sent by the Supreme Court to CHP headquarters that only in Mersin, 1,381 people have had membership records to both CHP and AKP without their knowledge or acceptance.

The resulting scandal is against to the establishment and expansion logic of a political party, presented as an indispensable element of democracy.

We are asking the honorable prime minister:

- What is the reason of making citizens member to a political party without their consent or acceptance?
- Has there been any inspection or investigation regarding the people or parties that made these membership operations?
- Is it true that the membership operations were generated by taking citizen data from civil registration offices of cities and towns? If this claim is incorrect, how were these people's data obtained? Have your ministry initiated any investigation concerning the claim in question?

Faysal Sarıyıldız - Imprisoned BDP Şırnak MP



Erdogan's Troubling Shift Toward Repression

Mehmet Yuksel*

Many U.S. officials still consider Turkey a model for the Middle East, crediting Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with ushering in reforms that have excised the presence of the Turkish military from the political sphere. They are wrong. Erdoğan's recent treatment of political opposition suggest that rather than democratize Turkey, he is instead following the model employed by Vladimir Putin in Russia or Mohamed Morsy in Egypt.



Erdoğan entered office promising a new approach on the Kurdish issue, a topic which the predominantly Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party [BDP] holds dear. But his outreach was insincere. On September 5, 2012, he demanded the judiciary investigate BDP members of parliament, and called for the AKP to use its supermajority to strip parliamentary immunity from 10 BDP members of the parliament. Security forces and Erdoğan's backers interpreted his remarks as open season on the BDP. Even sitting BDP members of parliament faced police abuse and attacks. The irony is that all cases against the BDP boil down to political dissent, whereas the several dozen cases pending against not only AKP deputies but also Erdoğan himself are over corruption and fraud.

Erdoğan's call to strip immunity is not mere posturing. Already in Turkey, five BDP deputies, two Republican Peoples Party [CHP] deputies and a Nationalist Movement Party [MHP] deputy are in jail. To stand up to Erdoğan and demand true debate on his dictates now appears to be a criminal offense.

Erdoğan's move against opposition MPs simply brings into parliament what is already a reality throughout Turkey. In 2009, Erdoğan and security forces under his control launched a massive repressive operation against both the BDP rank-and-file and the Kurdish Communities Union (KCK). More than 8,000 Kurdish activists are reportedly in prison, including elected municipal administrators and high level party members. The repression has increased along with BDP success. In 2009 elections, the BDP doubled the towns and cities it administers, sometimes achieving more than 80 percent of the vote. The BDP also dominates Diyarbakir, the largest city in Turkey's Kurdistan.

In response to Erdoğan's efforts to constrain both democracy and a political outlet for Turkey's Kurds, senior BDP leaders and several hundred Kurdish prisoners staged a 68-day hunger strike, demanding justice as well as the right of Kurdish prisoners to defend themselves in their mother tongue. While Erdoğan's drive faltered in the face of widespread non-violent protest, should he continue his vendetta against the BDP and their efforts to win Turkey's Kurds basic human rights, the results could be grave.



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The BDP represents many disillusioned Kurds who otherwise might abandon the political process altogether. Already, most Kurds consider the Turkish parliament to be a house for Turks only, and not citizens of Turkey who are not ethnic Turks. Should the BDP abandon Ankara for Diyarbakir, Kurds will have no other option than to demand the international community recognize the self-determination of the Kurdish people, just as they have for Palestine.

Erdoğan's dictatorial tendencies increasingly ensure Kurds have no internal democratic recourse to win their fundamental rights within Turkey.

***Mehmet Yuksel is the BDP representative in Washington, DC.**

2 January 2013

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION

CALL TO OBSERVE THE TRIAL IN VAN CITY ON 21-22 JANUARY

Since April 14, 2009 there have been many operations carried out under the name of "anti-terror operations" but mainly these operations are directed against elected representatives, managers, and members of Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi* or BDP). As a result of arrests and detentions, lawsuits have been filed all over Turkey and proceedings are ongoing. One of these cases includes the trial of Mr. Bekir Kaya, mayor of Van. His trial will occur on January 21-22, 2013 in Van City.

In the local elections held on March 29, 2009, our party won the Van Municipality by a large margin in spite of all the efforts of the ruling party AKP and its media. After the election, BDP Van Municipality headed by Mr. Bekir Kaya documented that 190 Million TL (Turkish Lira) of debt was incurred by fake invoices during AKP governance. Due to fraud, the Municipality of Van took more than 100 files to court to punish those responsible.

On October 23, 2011 and on November 9, 2011, the province was hit by two earthquakes of magnitudes 7.2 and 5.6, followed by thousands of aftershocks. Tragically, 638 citizens lost their lives in these incidents. Despite all the efforts made to declare Van a disaster area, the government failed to act and the people of Van were forced to live in tents during the middle of winter. Representatives of the government did not provide sufficient support or help heal the wounds caused by the earthquakes. Moreover, the government rejected international aid based on a non-humanitarian reason, 'to see (test) their own potential,' as declared by one of its ministers. The government after trying every means to prevent our Van Municipality to heal the wounds of earthquake decided to employ judicial means to this end. Realizing that they cannot win Van after it was listed as to-be metropolitan municipality, that Prime Minister Erdoğan said 'I want Van' was a precursor to this operation.

Instead of following the corruption files, the judiciary has expanded its political genocide operations over Van municipality and Kurdish institutions with the government's instructions. Duties



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of those who are put on trial with the operation that took place on June 7, 2012 clearly reveal this reality:

- Van City Mayor, Lawyer Bekir KAYA,
- Bostaniçi District Mayor Nezahat ERGÜNEŞ,
- Baskale Former District Mayor İhsan GÜLER,
- Başkale District Mayor Hecer SARIHAN,
- Edremit District Mayor Abdülkerim SAYAN,
- Özalp Mayor Murat DURMAZ,
- Former BDP Chairman of Van Cüneyt CANIŞ,
- BDP Chairman of Ercis District Veli AVCI,
- BDP Chairman of Muradiye District M.Şirin YILDIZ
- BDP Co-Chair of Van Mihriban SAH,
- BDP Chairman of Van Central District Halis ÇAKIR,
- BDP Chairman of Baskale District Derviş POLAT,
- BDP Chairman of Çaldıran District Metin ADUGIT,

In the 710-page long indictment, all activities organized and attended by 13 elected Politicians were re-classified as crimes. These include civilian Friday prayers (weekly Islamic prayers not organized by government's official religious leaders) and even press statements (such as the one from Newroz on the 8th of March honoring International Women Workers Day).

The state of the indictment and the evidence clearly shows that this lawsuit is not filed due any violent action on the part of the defendants. The actions undertaken by the elected mayors and politicians in their official capacity should not be the subject of criminal proceedings. Yet these leaders have been imprisoned for months without seeing any indictment. Politicians were arrested and prosecuted for participating in politics, and mayors for engaging in municipal work and for implementing the policies of their party.

We, as the Peace and Democracy Party, invite the public to take a stand on this case, to say "no" to the reckless disregard for law and to stand by the political prisoners whose only crime has been to express their opposing beliefs and ideals.

We invite all individuals, intellectuals, non-Governmental Institutions, bar associations and press members from around the world who are troubled with the unlawful acts of the judicial branch and corresponding government policies, to attend the hearing that will take place on 21-22 January 2013 at the Van 5th High Criminal Court.

Date of hearing: 21-22 January 2013

Location: Van 5th High Criminal Court Van Courthouse, Center, VAN

Best Regards,

Meral Danış Beştaş - Vice Co-chair of BDP in charge of Human Rights and Law

Nazmi Gür - Vice Co-chair of BDP in charge of Foreign Affairs