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**IRAN:
FIERCE SUPPRESSION OF PROTESTS AGAINST THE TRIPLING OF PETROL
PRICES CLAIMS NEARLY 400 LIVES**

The month of November was marked in Iran by **m a s s i v e** demonstrations, which were fiercely repressed. Triggered on the 15th by the announcement of the tripling of the price of petrol, the protests quickly turned into a global challenge to the regime, with demonstrators beginning to call for the dismissal of the main leaders. This is the most

significant unrest in the country since the contested rigged election of Ahmadinejad in 2009, and perhaps even since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The protests began the day after the announcement, on the evening of the 14th, of the increase in the price of petrol from 10.000 to 30.000 rials per litre, with the introduction of a monthly "quota" per vehicle of

60 litres maximum for 15.000 rials. According to the government, the \$2,55 billion recovered annually will fund additional subsidies for 18 million poor families. But given the level of corruption rampant in the country, this declaration did not convince anyone... The way in which a decision with such an impact on all Iranians was taken also aroused anger: in a meeting of the Heads of the

three branches of government, the judiciary, the executive and the legislature, bypassing Parliament!

Calling protesters “thugs” linked to exiled opponents and the United States, Israel or Saudi Arabia, the regime drowned the protests in blood. The day after the first movements, on the 16th, the Supreme Council of National Security ordered the closure of the Internet in most of the country, even if this meant cutting off electricity. The government hoped to prevent the protesters from coordinating and to conceal the repression, but people smuggled videos out of Iran, and death reports soon emerged. At the end of the month, *Amnesty International* counted at least 143 people killed by security forces, a number later revised to 161, but these were only those the organization was able to confirm. *Radio Farda* for its part estimated on the 21st that at least 138 protesters had been killed in six days by the security forces, but the *Kurdistan Human Rights Association* KMMK estimated that there had been 300 dead and more than 4.000 wounded, and on the 28th, the news site *Kalameh*, close to former presidential candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi, reported that at least 366 people, including a nine-year-old child, had been shot dead since the 15th. According to the *Entekhab* news website, a member of the parliamentary committee on national security, Hossein Naqavi-Hosseini, has put the number of arrests at seven thousand at the end of the month...

The videos that have arrived on social networks despite censorship, testifying to the ferocity of the repression, unfortunately make likely the

highest estimates. The security forces, including the *Bassidji*, belonging to the Revolutionary Guards, are seen firing live ammunition directly at demonstrators, facts confirmed to foreign media by relatives of several victims. Tweets mentioned the deaths of children or teenagers, including a fourteen-year-old girl. In addition, the Centre for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) expressed concern about the lack of information about people who have disappeared, been injured, killed, or imprisoned and held incommunicado. On the 17th, the government had acknowledged the death of only three people.

Demonstrations began peacefully on the 16th in more than 50 cities, including Tehran, Mashhad, Shiraz, Isfahan, Tabriz, Qazvin, Kermanshah, Ummiyeh, Marivan, Sanandaj, Saveh, Behbahan and Sirjan. But the violent repression, far from stopping the movement, has on the contrary radicalized it and provoked its extension. Shots were heard in Shiraz, Bushehr and Tehran where security forces reportedly opened fire at the Azari intersection in the south-western part of the city. Clashes were reported in at least three cities, Mashhad, Ahvaz (Khuzistan) and Sirjan (Kerman). In the latter city, where the security forces repelled an attack by demonstrators against a fuel depot, according to the *IRNA* agency, social networks reported one death among the protesters (*Radio Farda*). On the 17th, the authorities announced hundreds of arrests in Yazd, while the Tehran bazaar went on strike and disturbances were reported at Tabriz University. On the 18th, forty-eight towns were affected by the protests, including in Kurdistan Ilam, Sanandaj, Mariwan and Urmiyah. In

Sanandaj, the demonstration turned violent, with videos appearing to show police using tear gas on protesters and crowds trying to set fire to official buildings.

On the 19th, the CHRI called for an end to State violence, an independent investigation into it, and respect for the rights of defense of those arrested. It also called for the families of those killed, injured and arrested to be informed of their fate, and urged the international community to condemn both excessive state force and the information blackout. The United States, the United Nations, Germany and France have expressed their condemnation.

Faced with the impossibility of concealing the scale of the demonstrations, the regime's political leaders chose to report them, or even exaggerate their violence to justify their repression. On the evening of the 26th on the state-run *Channel One*, minister of Interior Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli said that up to 200.000 people had taken part in the attacks across the country and that some 731 banks, 70 petrol stations and 140 government sites had been burned and more than 50 security force bases attacked (*Radio Farda*). On the 16th, *Fars News* had already announced the burning of 100 banks and 57 supermarkets: at least some of these fires, particularly on Tuesday 19 morning, seem to have been set by members of the security services in civilian clothes infiltrated among the demonstrators to provide a pretext for repression. Rahmani-Fazli also said that most of the demonstrations took place “in the suburbs and poor areas of the cities”, and that particularly the cities of Khuzistan had experienced

major unrest, as well as the cities near the west of Tehran, Baharestan, Malard, Shahriar and Shahr-i Qods. Rahmani-Fazli's statements partly corroborate the information broadcast on the 20th by *Radio Farda*, which had reported receiving reports from listeners that armed clashes had occurred between demonstrators and security forces in several towns in Khuzistan, in particular Mahshahr and Behbahan, and that in Mashhad, protesters had attempted to attack the office of conservative Ayatollah Ahmad Alamolhoda, the local representative of the Supreme Leader. A video of the protests at Shiraz University shows *pasdaran* opening fire on demonstrators with machine guns, another shot elsewhere shows snipers shooting at demonstrators from the roofs of public buildings. According to these reports, after five days of repression, the protesters started going out at night to attack the security forces. In Mahshahr, there were reports of armed citizens confronting tanks. Government spokesman Ali Rabiei acknowledged the use of "illegal weapons" by demonstrators.

The clashes are said to have been the most violent and the victims of repression the most numerous in Khuzistan and the province of Kurdistan (capital Sanandaj). *Amnesty* reported on the 26th that, after Khuzistan (40 killed), the province of Kermanshah, south of Kurdistan, had the highest number of deaths (34 killed), and that in Western Azerbaijan (where Mahabad is located), there were four deaths. According to a Mariwan journalist, Adnan Hasanpour, in Javanrud security forces fired on the crowd, killing at least seven people. In Sanandaj, one person was killed and several others

injured (*Bianet*). It seems that the provinces making up Iran's Kurdistan have been particularly affected by violence. Many people were reportedly killed as soon as the demonstrations began. Additional forces of repression were deployed early on in Marivan and Kermanshah, towns placed under curfew while the Internet was disconnected. Marivan had 10 dead and 10 wounded, Kermanshah had 15 dead and an unknown number of wounded, and according to the chief of police, a major was killed there on the 16th in clashes with the demonstrators. In Bokeran, three Kurds were killed. On the 19th, several dozen residents of Marivan staged a strike to protest against the excessive use of force by the regime.

After the crushing of the protests, the forces of repression arrested their so-called "organisers" and participants in a series of raids, arresting hundreds of people in Kurdistan, including in Javanrud, Kermanshah, Marivan, Sanandaj, Saqqez and Salas-e Bawajani. In Bokeran, the *Etelaat* (Intelligence Service) arrested the Kurdish activist Azad Mahmodian. In Kelardasht (Mazandaran), the Kurdish writer Mozghan Kawasi was arrested on charges of "supporting protests". In Sarpol-e Zahab, journalist Fereshta Chraghy, a member of the Yarsan Kurdish religious minority, was also arrested... (WKI)

Even more shockingly, the CHRI learned on the 25th that, even before the announcement of the price rise that triggered the protests, the Ministry of Intelligence had warned journalists to respect the official description of the events on pain of being charged. Thus the

regime, foreseeing the protests, had prepared its repression in advance. As stated by the Director of CHRI, Mr. Ghaemi: "State violence is not the product of unforeseen chaos, but a planned decision by the state to crush the unrest violently and mercilessly"... The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Orientation has also made some journalists sign an undertaking not to broadcast reports on the protests or the Internet blackout on pain of being charged with aiding foreign enemies... The CHRI was able to obtain the text sent to the media by the ministry and reproduced it in full on its website.

Amnesty has also criticized the international community's inadequate response as the numerous video footage analyzed by the NGO's *Digital Verification Corps* provides clear evidence that Iranian security forces intentionally used firearms against unarmed demonstrators who represented no life-threatening menace. *Amnesty* also reports that the Iranian authorities have harassed the victims' families, refused to hand over the bodies of their loved ones, imprisoned hospitalised protesters, refused to provide prisoners with medical care, and in some cases demanded payment from the families for the bullets that killed their relatives or for the destruction caused by the protests.

Even more worrying for the future, Rahmani-Fazli said those arrested should "confess" to their wrongdoings, despite the fact that it is known how Iranian repressive forces use torture to obtain "confessions" from suspects. On the 27th, about 50 people were arrested in a new wave of police raids. The police said they had obtained several

“confessions” from inmates, which the authorities could use to “prove” the existence of a foreign conspiracy. Already, several people accused of sending photographs of the demonstrations to the United States have been arrested...

In addition to the demonstrations and their repression, Iranian border guards have this month continued the killings of *kolbars*, the cross-border Kurdish porters, 64 of whom have been killed and 129 wounded since the beginning of 2019. On 31 October, a Sewlawar farmer working in his field, Jamal Mohammidi, was shot dead because he had been mistaken for a *kolbar*. Another *kolbar*, Peyman Yousifi, injured at the end of October near Sardasht, died in hospital earlier this month. Near Saqqez, a young shepherd lost a leg on a mine. In the Hewraman region, further south, another Kurdish porter was shot dead by border guards while trying to enter Iraqi Kurdistan. In the Khoy countryside, another man with serious gunshot wounds had to be hospitalized. On the 9th, two others were injured near Sardasht and, due to the severity of their condition, transferred to the hospital in Qala Diza on the Iraqi side. On the 10th, yet another was injured in the same area. On the 26th, the Kurdish Institute in Washington reported three more such incidents in the previous week: a 23-year-old *kolbar* killed near the Hadji Omran border post, another 33-year-old near Baneh, and finally a group ambushed in the Hewraman, whose loads were confiscated. At the end of the month, border guards wounded another *kolbar* near Saqqez, and ambushed a group in Sardasht, injuring one of its members. In addition, a *kolbar* died of a heart attack near Marivan (WKI).

At the same time, several Kurdish activists arrested after

protesting in October against the Turkish invasion of the Rojava were still imprisoned at the beginning of the month (according to the Kurdistan Human Rights Association KMMK, they are said to be eighteen). For some who were put in solitary confinement, on the 6th there were still no news of them. Political prisoner Iqbal Zerai, sentenced in 2015 to five years in prison for “membership in a Kurdish opposition party”, and who should have been released after serving his sentence, has started a hunger strike to protest against *Etelaat*’s decision to keep him in detention. On the 10th, Urumieh Revolutionary Court sentenced Celal Tahiri to five years in prison for “belonging to a Kurdish opposition party” (WKI). On the same day, according to the human rights association HRANA, a prisoner convicted of murder died of illness in Urumieh prison after the administration refused to transfer him to hospital. On the 11th, at least two inmates of the same prison, sentenced to death for murder, were transferred to solitary confinement cells in preparation for their execution. On the 12th, HRANA announced the execution of at least four prisoners convicted of murders in Tabriz, Shiraz, Ardabil and Borujerd, as well as the sentencing to death and whipping of three prisoners, two accused of drug trafficking in Esfahan and the third of sexual assault in Tehran.

The Baha’is, whose religion is not recognized in Iran, continue to be victims of repression. HRANA reported several cases this month, indicating on the 15th that Baha’is in Semnan had had their temporary releases suspended and were incarcerated with a ban on visits. Sentenced for imaginary

offences related to so-called “activities against national security”, they will have to serve five to ten years in prison. On the 16th, a Baha’i resident of Karaj was arrested. On the 25th, HRANA announced seven others had had their sentences of three years in prison each confirmed by the Bushehr Court of Appeal. At the end of the month, nine other Baha’is were arrested in Esfahan, then another eleven in Esfahan and Omidyeh (Khuzistan), some of whom were then held incommunicado. In several cases, the homes of those arrested were searched and objects (computers, smartphones...) confiscated, probably in search of “evidence”.

In addition, on the 20th, it was learned that six of the eight wildlife advocates detained in Iran since January 2018 had been sentenced to between six and ten years’ imprisonment. After spending nearly two years in Tehran’s Evin prison, with long periods of isolation and often without access to lawyers, they were convicted of espionage or “contacts with the enemy state of the United States”. The court has not yet announced its verdict for the last two defendants. One of the condemned, Nilufar Bayani, sentenced to ten years, will also have to repay years of salaries received from the United Nations. As is often the case in political trials in Iran, the convicts, who were informed orally of the sentences handed down against them, did not receive a written copy of the verdict. One of the defense lawyers indicated that he was not allowed to attend the trial (CHRI).

On the 21st, Iran’s two oldest political prisoners, Osman Mostafapour and Mohammad

Nazari, were released on parole. They had been incarcerated in Tabriz since 1991 and in Urumieh since 1994. Mostafapur was first convicted of "participation in a murder" and then of "cooperation with a Kurdish opposition group", a charge also brought against Nazari. They were reportedly

released following the pardon granted by the Supreme Leader on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday, along with 32 "security prisoners".

Finally, the *Hengaw* Association for Human Rights reported on 6 November that the suicide rate in

Iranian Kurdistan continues to rise as a result of poor living conditions and political oppression: seven people have committed suicide in Sanandaj in recent weeks; a 28-year-old committed suicide in Dehghan and in Mahabad, a 63-year-old inhabitant has taken his own life...

ROJAVA: EVIDENCE IS ACCUMULATING FOR TURKEY'S AND ITS DJIHADISTS PROXIES' WAR CRIMES

The record of war crimes perpetrated in the Rojava since 9 October by Turkish forces and their Syrian Jihadist auxiliaries continues to thicken. Already in Afrin, after the invasion by exactly the same forces a year ago, they quickly acquired quite a reputation for their massive exactions against Kurdish civilians. At the start of the operation last October, the assassination of Hevrin Khalaf, the young secretary general of the Future of Syria Party and her driver, after her vehicle was intercepted, was carried out by the same pro-Turkish jihadists, *Ahrar al-Sharqiya*, who had confronted other groups a few months before in Afrin in a dispute over the olives stolen from the Kurds. At the same time, the first testimonies of civilians injured by phosphorus munitions had emerged.

On 1st November, a new account of Turkish war crimes in Rojava was published on the website *Peace in Kurdistan Campaign (PIKC)*, that of an Iranian-Swedish doctor, Dr. Abbas Mansouran. He came to Rojava as a volunteer and examined hundreds of wounded, mostly civilians. Having extensive experience with chemical weapons, Dr. Mansouran concluded from his examinations that about 30 of his patients had been victims of

white phosphorus munitions and other chemical weapons of a nature unknown to him used by the Turkish army: "On 13 October 2019 [writes the doctor], I joined the medical staff of the main hospital in Hassakeh to help the wounded [...]. During my stay there, I met many patients suffering from severe burns that, based on my experience as founder and head of the Committee for Nosocomial Infection Control at Shiraz University Hospital in southern Iran, I would consider abnormal. [...] The shape and appearance of the burns I have treated here in Rojava are clearly very different from the usual burns [...]. They show that the Turkish armed forces used chemical munitions. I can point out that white phosphorus and other unknown chemicals such as *DIME (Dense Inert Metal Explosive)* munitions were used in October in Rojava. [...] These tungsten alloy bombs are made of microfibers containing 1 to 2 mm micro-fragments of heavy metals such as cobalt, tungsten and nickel powder. The characteristics of the wounds caused by these *DIMES* are very similar to those of white phosphorus ammunition and are often fatal".

All patients involved reported being victims of ammunition dropped or fired by drones in different locations and during

different attacks. Turkey, which now produces its own drones, is clearly making massive use of them, since it also regularly uses them in its operations in Iraqi Kurdistan, and it appears that it has now armed them, and with ammunition of the type described by witnesses, the indiscriminate use of which against civilians constitutes war crimes. In 2009, a group of Italian scientists affiliated with the *New Weapons Research Committee (NWRC)* monitoring group characterized injuries caused by *DIME* ammunition as "incurable", because the tungsten powder that these munitions instil in them cannot be removed surgically.

On 26 October, the *Guardian* mentioned the numerous videos circulating on social networks highlighting "potential war crimes" committed by Syrian auxiliaries to the Turkish army, filmed torturing their prisoners or mutilating the bodies of Kurdish fighters. The British newspaper quoted Elizabeth Tsurkov's declarations, of the *Foreign Policy Research Institute (Philadelphia)*, who stated that since 2016, when Turkey had given up on bringing down Assad's regime, those who had joined the pro-Turkish militias were mostly "individuals ready to fight, for a fee, for Turkish interests". In addition to these abuses, the indiscriminate nature

of the Turkish strikes was demonstrated by the death on the 3rd of a Burmese rescuer from the medical organization *Free Burma Rangers*, killed by shellfire near Tall Tamr (AFP). SDF commander Mazloum Abdi, indicating that a Kurdish family in Kobane had been massacred on the 21st in a drone strike, while Turkey declared that it had eliminated seven terrorists, again called on the United States and Russia to fulfil their role as guarantors of the ceasefire.

In addition, the humanitarian situation in the areas affected by the Turkish invasion is a matter of growing concern, as the cold winter weather is rapidly threatening to make conditions more difficult for the IDPs. The Kurdish Red Crescent (*Heyva Sor*, KRC), published a report on 30 October, also on PIKC. In Hassakeh alone there were nearly 3.000 displaced families and about 11.500 individuals, including more than 5.000 children under the age of 13, and more than 400 pregnant or nursing women. But the number of displaced people around Raqqa, Tabqa, Qamishli etc, is much larger. Whereas a thousand Kurds from Rojava has arrived on the Iraqi side, the autonomous administration has started the construction of a new camp near Hassakeh that could accommodate 40-50.000 people. Another camp for the Yezidis, "Newrouz" is expected to receive 10-15.000 people. The lack of camps has forced hundreds of displaced people to stay in schools, especially near Tell Tamr, where classes have had to be interrupted. Concerning civilian victims of the invasion, the KRC counted 87 dead, including 6 under 18 years of age and 9 women, and 2.472 wounded (or shocked), 43 under 18 years of age and 61

women. Much of the civilian casualties are due to the massive use of armed drones by the Turkish army, about which the Syrian Kurds have repeatedly asked the Pentagon to block the US-controlled airspace. Ilham Ahmed, the female co-president of the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), said the Kurds would hold the Pentagon responsible for Turkish war crimes if they did nothing to guarantee their air protection. Contradicting US statements that the ceasefire in Syria was respected, she said that Turkish-backed drone, artillery and militia attacks continued, and that since the beginning of the invasion, 509 civilians and 412 SDF fighters had been killed. Ahmed also said that deploying troops to the oilfields near Deir Ezzor would do nothing to protect her people...

As of 10 November, the United Nations had counted more than 200.000 displaced persons, whose testimonies poured in on the brutalities, summary executions of "blasphemers", kidnappings and looting perpetrated by the jihadists. One (albeit Turkish-speaking) resident of Ras al-Ain described the fighters of the "Syrian National Army" as "full of hatred and bloodlust". Another civilian said the invasion reminded him of the ISIS invasion of 2014: "[They] destroyed a stone lion at the entrance to our building, thinking it was idolatry..." (*Washington Post*). The accumulating testimonies did not prevent the Turkish President from defending his proxies in front of journalists, declaring that they were not terrorists at all but "sacred Islamic warriors [...] defending their land over there, hand in hand, arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder with our soldiers"...

In fact, while the dissemination of these videos of abuses clearly damaged Turkey's image, it also contributed to Turkey's ethnic cleansing plans by deliberately spreading terror among the population, causing all those who feared being murdered for ethnic reasons to flee. According to a local Yezidi leader, 45 Yezidi families have fled in the Ras al-Ain area alone; at least three hundred Christians from several towns in the northeast have left their homes, including dozens of families around Tal Tamr. On the 8th, William Roebuck, the American envoy of the anti-ISIS coalition, castigated in a report quoted by the *New York Times* "the determined efforts of ethnic cleansing" against the Kurds in Syria by Turkey and its allies (AFP). On the 13th, U.S. Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said he was "very concerned" about Turkish war crimes in Syria. On the 19th, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said the United States expects Turkey to hold the Syrian National Army (SNA) accountable for its war crimes (*Bianet*). The question remains as to whether these multiple statements will remain mere wishful thinking?

On the 23rd, according to the *Syrian Observatory for Human Rights* (SOHR), violent fighting was still taking place between the SDF and the invading forces near Ain Issa, which the assailants were trying to conquer. The city, which is located south-east of Kobane, is however outside the so-called "safe zone" on which Turkey has made an agreement with the Americans and Russians... The SDF announced on the 25th that it had taken back several villages in this sector, criticizing the inaction of the Russians, who are supposed to be the guarantors of the cease-fire, in the face of the Turkish advance. In Tall Tamr,

Turkish UAVs struck the Damascus forces, which had replaced the Russian-controlled SDF.

On the 27th, the human rights organization *Human Rights Watch* denounced in a report the “summary executions” and “expropriations” carried out by Turkey in the Syrian territories under its effective control. The NGO also reported that pro-Ankara fighters were unable to clarify the fate of humanitarian workers reported missing in their areas of operation. On the same day, two Turkish soldiers were killed by mortar shells fired at their post on the Syrian border in south-west Turkey. Military sources say there had been retaliation. The attack was blamed on YPG. The next day, Turkey renewed its accusations of “support for terrorism” against French President Emmanuel Macron, for having said that Ankara had put “its allies before a *fait accompli*” and endangered “the coalition’s action against ISIS”. “In any case, he [Macron] is a godfather of the terrorist organization, he receives them regularly at the Elysée Palace”, Turkish chief diplomat Mevlüt Cavusoglu reacted... (AFP)

At the end of the month, another Turkish artillery strike at Tell Rifat killed eight children and two adults in a school, also wounding eight children and two adults.

As regards Russian-Turkish relations, the first joint patrols provided for in the agreement signed on 22 October in Sochi between Mr Erdoğan and Putin took place on 1st November near Derbasiye, after the YPG withdrawal from the area. According to AFP, no vehicle carried a flag, at Moscow’s

request. These joint patrols cover a depth of 10 km in Syrian territory between Tall Abyad and Ras el-Ain. The Syrian president had said the day before that the Russian-Turkish agreement was “temporary” and would allow the regime to “gradually” regain control of these territories, a few days before the Geneva meeting on the future of the country, where representatives of the regime and the opposition met for the first time. A second joint Russian-Turkish patrol, started on the 5th near Kobane, was the target of stone throwing by Kurdish villagers. One of the Kurdish civilians, a young man hit by one of the tanks, later died of internal bleeding in hospital. On the 12th, a second civilian was killed by fire from Turkish forces on patrol with Russian forces during a demonstration in the Kobané region. According to a communiqué from the *Asayish* (Kurdish Security), “Turkish vehicles participating in a joint patrol with the Russian military police targeted unarmed civilians as they passed through the Kobane region”. “Turkish forces used tear gas and in response the demonstrators threw stones at Turkish vehicles. Soldiers of the [Turkish] occupation then fired on the civilians, killing one and wounding six others, some of them seriously” (AFP).

At the same time, the Damascus regime is still trying to exploit the difficulties created for the SDF by the Turkish invasion. Thus the Syrian Ministry of Defense once again called on SDF fighters to join its forces on an individual basis, an approach criticized by Mazloum Abdi. On the 26th, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov called on the SDF to join the Syrian army as soon as possible...

For their part, American troops have redeployed to the east of Derbasiye, in the Deir Ezzor region, near the Iraqi border. A few tanks were seen on 31 October near the village of Qahtaniya, then on 2 November visited several Kurdish bases near Qamishli. Asked about the mission of American troops on the Syrian oil fields, Defense Minister Mark Esper replied without specifying further that it was a question of “forbidding access to the Islamic State Group and other actors in the region”. SDC co-chair Ilham Ahmad said she was opposed to US control of the oil fields. On the 19th, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said oil revenues from the fields would be handed over to the SDF (*Bianet*).

Finally, the region has seen several attacks during this month. On 2 October in Tell Abyad, a town controlled by Turkey since 9 October, a car bomb killed at least 13 people in a market, both civilians and pro-Turkish rebels, and wounded 31 others. Turkey blamed the attack on the YPG, while the SOHR said it could not identify those responsible. “The Turkish army and its auxiliaries are creating chaos in Tall Abyad with explosions targeting civilians” to drive them to flee and replace them with Syrian refugees settled in Turkey, Mustafa Bali reacted on Twitter, an accusation also made by Ilham Ahmad (AFP, WKI). In Qamishli on the 11th, three simultaneous, unclaimed attacks using two cars and a motorcycle bomb killed six people and injured forty-two civilians. These attacks occurred just after ISIS claimed responsibility for the murder of a Catholic priest and his son on the road to Deir Ezzor, where they were on their way to supervise the restoration

work on a church that had precisely been destroyed by ISIS. On the 10th, Tell Abyad was again hit by an explosion that killed eight people, and again on

the 16th when a car bomb killed nine people and injured twenty-two others. On the 26th, a car bomb killed seventeen people in Tell Halaf, a town

under the control of the Syrian auxiliaries of Turkey west of Ras al-Ain, and injured more than twenty. Most of the victims are Syrian fighters (*AFP*).

IRAQ:

MORE THAN 400 PROTESTERS KILLED, PRIME MINISTER RESIGNS

Since the beginning of the protest movement in Iraq, more than 400 people – mostly demonstrators – have lost their lives in the violence. On the 4th, violent clashes took place in Baghdad late into the night between demonstrators and law enforcement agencies, particularly on the bridges over the Tigris River leading to the Iranian Embassy, the seat of government and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice. Law enforcement officers fired live ammunition, killing two people. On the 5th, despite the announcement of the start of the work of a parliamentary committee charged with proposing constitutional amendments, and after the death in 36 hours of at least ten demonstrators, the streets continued to demand the departure of all those responsible and a new political system. Demonstrations or rallies also affected Kerbala, Nassiriya, Kout, Diwaniya, Basra and the port of Umm Qasr. The latter was not able to resume normal operations until the 9th. At the same time, the Baghdad parliament dissolved the Provincial Councils throughout the country except in Kurdistan.

Although the interruption of the Internet from 3 to 17 October had had no impact on the demonstrations, the government again tried to resort to this means, without more success. The movement has taken an

increasingly openly anti-Iranian stance, and General Qassem Soleimani, the country's chief of external operations, has stepped up visits to Iraq to lobby against a change of government. Supreme Guide Ali Khamenei denounced an American and Israeli plot, which only served to exacerbate the anger of the demonstrators (*AFP*).

On the 4th, the human rights organization *Human Rights Watch* (*HRW*) accused the authorities in Al-Anbar province of arresting people who had expressed their support for the demonstrations on social networks, and the Iraqi Human Rights Commission called for an investigation into the abduction of activist and volunteer caregiver Saba al-Madawi in Baghdad on the 2nd (*ISHM*).

Protesters also blocked several oil fields and facilities in the south of the country: Qurna field on the 4th, Nassiriya refinery on the 6th, Shanfiyah refinery (Diwaniya). In response, the government has stepped up repression. The United Nations Mission for Iraq (*UNAMI*) presented in vain a roadmap on the 10th, providing for the release of arrested demonstrators and investigations into disappearances and excessive use of violence by the security forces, but received little attention. On the contrary, on the same day, security forces opened fire on Nassiriya, killing three people and injuring hundreds. In Baghdad, they threw gas ammunition into the crowd,

injuring 20 people. In Dhi-Qar province, 25 police officers were injured in the clashes, while the Iraqi Human Rights Commission reported four deaths, 130 injuries and 34 arbitrary arrests among the demonstrators. On the 12th, dozens of policemen joined the demonstrators in Karbala. On the 13th, security forces continued to use tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition, killing at least four demonstrators and injuring 52. According to medical sources, almost half of the injured had been shot by live ammunition (*Reuters*). On the 14th, *HRW* reported that security directly targeted volunteer doctors and their tents and ambulances with tear gas and live ammunition. As of 14, at least 327 demonstrators had been killed since 1st October. On the 15th, an improvised explosive device killed three demonstrators and wounded 18 in Baghdad, and another injured 18 in a tent in Nassiriya (*ISHM*). Nevertheless, demonstrations and blockades continued. On the 21st, four demonstrators were killed by live ammunition and military gas ammunition in Baghdad, bringing the death toll to at least 330 since the start of the movement.

On the 26th, the same day four demonstrators were killed by live ammunition in Karbala, the *Sayroon* coalition (supporters of Moqtada Sadr and communists) announced its opposition to the electoral bill, which had been under consideration since the 19th, arguing that it would only perpetuate the power of the

current parties. *Sayroon* did not have enough seats to block the adoption of the law on his own. The law, which provides for a reduction in the number of parliamentarians to 251, as opposed to 329 at present, therefore went to a second reading. Another law approved on the 19th had also reduced the financial benefits enjoyed by senior officials.

The 27th marked a decisive escalation in the movement: in Najaf, protesters seized and burned down the Iranian consulate, whose staff had previously been evacuated, replacing the flag there with an Iraqi flag; live ammunition from the police protecting the building killed at least 37 people. In Baghdad, there were two dead and 35 wounded on Rashid Street. The toll compiled by AFP at the time counted more than 390 dead and 15,000 wounded. In Nassiriya, where police killed 25 people and injured more than 250, demonstrators defied the curfew to bury the victims. On the site of the pro-Iranian *Hashd al-Shaabi* militia, their military commander, the Iraqi-Iranian Abu-Mahdi al-Mouhandis, threatened to “cut off the hands” of anyone who would threaten the Shiite clergy of Najaf, in particular Ayatollah Al-Sistani – despite he had appeared to support the protesters from the beginning of the movement...

On 29 November, Moqtada Sadr reiterated his call for the government to resign, and Ayatollah Sistani's representative, in his Friday sermon, called on parliament to withdraw its confidence in him. After a long resistance, Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi then announced that he would submit his resignation to parliament, a decision welcomed by an

explosion of joy in the streets of Baghdad. The death toll then stood, according to *Reuters*, at least 408 since October 1st...

Faced with the deterioration of the political situation in Iraq, the authorities and political parties in Kurdistan were torn between their tendency to preserve an Iraqi Prime Minister with whom negotiations were progressing and the need not to appear to be opposed to the demands of the protesters. On the 4th, the President of the Region, Nechirvan Barzani, warned against any radical changes to the Iraqi Constitution that might have an impact on the rights and interests of Kurdistan and expressed his opposition to early national elections. On the 5th, the leaders of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq held several meetings in which Iraqi President Barham Saleh, himself a Kurd, participated. At the end of the discussions, Nechirvan Barzani stressed the Region's support for the “legitimate demands” of the demonstrators, while indicating that any constitutional changes had to be made in a “stable atmosphere”. On the 11th, the Iraqi Parliament's decision to increase the number of Kurdish members of the Constitutional Amendment Commission from three to six helped reassure the Kurds. On the 13th, Barzani told the Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, Mohammed al-Halbousi, that he would support “any constitutional amendments that contribute to the stability of Iraq and meet the demands of the people”. UN experts should participate in the work of the commission (*ISHM*).

Another matter of satisfaction for the Kurds is the decision taken on the 12th by the Baghdad parliament to postpone *sine die* for “logistical and security reasons” the provincial elections,

originally scheduled for 20 April 2020. This postponement coincides with the Iraqi Supreme Court's decision to allow displaced persons from the disputed territories to vote in their current place of residence rather than in their province of origin if they have not been able to return to it. This decision followed a complaint lodged against the electoral law by several Kurdish MPs: many Kurds from Kirkuk, Shingal (Sindjar) or Khanaqin have still not been able to return since Baghdad took control of these territories in October 2017...

Regarding the dispute between Erbil and Baghdad over the management of Kurdistan's oil, Iraqi Oil Minister Thamir Ghadhban said on the 21st in a TV interview that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) could start delivering to Baghdad in January 2020 the 250,000 daily barrels of oil planned in the budget. The oil would be delivered to the state-owned company SOMO, which would export it through the Turkish port of Ceyhan. This oil, which should have started to be supplied two years ago when the agreement between Baghdad and Erbil on oil supply was concluded, comes in exchange for the payment by Baghdad of the salaries of KRG civil servants. The latter has not started deliveries because of its indebtedness to the oil companies operating in its Region, resulting from Baghdad's failure to pay the financial allocation due to Kurdistan since 2014. On the 25th, after an exchange of visits between delegations of the two governments, the Minister formally announced the agreement at a press conference.

Concerning the internal policy of the Kurdistan Region, the

Vice-President of the Erbil Parliament, Hêmin Hewramî, announced on the 14th that the Parliament would draft a Constitution for the Region during its current term of office, which would be submitted to the deputies. The Region has now been operating for 28 years without a written constitution – as has the United Kingdom, for example. A committee had begun drafting the new constitution during the previous legislature but was unable to complete it because the parliament ceased to function due to disagreements between parties over the method of appointing the President of the Region – an issue that should be addressed by the new constitution (*eKurd*).

In the disputed territories, attacks, ambushes and bombs by the jihadist ISIS organization were on an unprecedented scale throughout the month. This deterioration in security demonstrates that ISIS's territorial defeat and the death of its historic leader in no way signifies the end of the danger. On the 18th, Lieutenant-General Saad al-Allaq, head of Iraqi Intelligence, said on CNN that he had information that jihadist leaders had been able to regroup in Gaziantep in Turkey and were preparing a series of escapes in Iraq and Syria to rebuild their organization...

The Diyala region has been particularly affected, as the *Hashd al-Shaabi* militias that control it are unable to provide security. Jihadists had already abducted one civilian and killed another near Khanaqin in late October; on 3rd October, according to local sources, several terrorized families left the village of Ramadan near Khanaqin. On the 11th, an attack on an Iraqi patrol inspecting the site of an air strike left four people

dead, six injured and four missing. On the same day, another air strike killed four jihadists near Kenaan in the south of the province, and another one the next day killed 10 between Khanaqin and Jalawla. A ground column sent after the strike eliminated four more ISIS militants, and another strike northeast of Baqouba killed another twelve. On 14 November, another air strike eliminated five jihadists and destroyed six caches in the Hamrin region, north-east of Baqubah; the next day, a local chief of ISIS was killed in the same area. On 17 November, 55 new families fled their village of Abu-Karma, in the same area, while 30 families were waiting for vehicles to leave. The exodus is particularly marked in the Khanaqin region. On the 20th, an improvised explosive device detonated without causing casualties near a coffeeshop frequented by the youth of Qara Tapa. In the last week of the month, a series of attacks claimed the lives of civilians, Pechmergas, militiamen and Iraqi security forces.

Attacks have also hit Kirkuk province. On the 10th, an improvised explosive device injured five Italian Special Forces soldiers in a counselling and training mission near the city. Two of them had to be amputated, one leg and one foot. The next day, an air strike killed two jihadists and destroyed two caches in the villages of al-Awashra and Shabija. On the 12th, a joint operation near Hawija between *Hashd* and police killed three jihadists, including a prominent leader, Ali Hashim Mulan. On the same day, a federal policeman was killed by an improvised explosive device in Rashad, south of Kirkuk. At Sargaran, in the village of Palkan, the Pechmergas launched a raid

against ISIS's caches on the 13th with French air support. On the 16th, two jihadi leaders were killed by Iraqi security in Riyadh. On the 20th, three policemen were killed and a fourth injured in an attack on their patrol in Rashad. On the 30th, three improvised explosive devices (IED) wounded 16 people in Kirkuk city, two in a bazaar, the third in the Domiz district. A Kurdish couple was murdered on the 27th in Haftaghar (Daquq). Also at the end of the month, a mortar attack hit a village southeast of Kifri. The *Asayish* (Kurdish security) who came in response were attacked by snipers and an IED; three of them were killed and three others wounded.

In the province of Ninawa (Mosul), seventeen *Katyusha* rockets were fired on the 8th onto the Qayyara base, south of the city, which also houses American soldiers. The retaliation killed three assailants and destroyed the rocket vehicle. On the 9th, an IED targeting an Iraqi patrol near Tal Afar injured two civilians. Three others were injured the same way in Qaraj (south of Mosul) the next day. On the 11th, 14 jihadis were killed by an air strike in the mountains near Makhmur, and the next day another air strike killed two jihadis and destroyed two tunnels used as hiding places in the Badoush Mountains (north-west of Mosul); a new operation on the 20th in the same area killed six jihadis who were preparing an attack in the city. On the 18th, a *moukhtar* (village chief) from West Mosul was shot dead.

In Kirkuk, Kurdish farmers in the province continue to protest against court decisions confiscating parts of their land. These were reallocated to Arab settlers under the previous

regime, who now return to claim, with the support of the interim governor, himself an Arab, the plots of land that had been wrongly allocated to them at the time. In twelve Kurdish villages in the province, the Baathist regime had expelled Kurdish farmers in 1975 on the pretext that they were in forbidden oil zones... before reallocating their land to Arab settlers under Decree No. 949 of the Baathist Supreme Revolutionary Council. A spokesman for the Kirkuk Arabs has even stated in *Rudaw* that there is "official evidence" and documents from the 1940s and 1950s that the area belongs to the Shammar Arab tribe... A

committee set up by the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture following a request from the KRG must examine all these disputes.

At the same time, new arrest warrants were issued earlier this month by the Iraqi Integrity Commission against members of the provincial administration, including its interim governor appointed by Baghdad Rakan Al-Jabouri. He had been released on parole on a first warrant. On the 20th, the Commission announced that it had issued warrants against other officials, including the vice-governor in charge of technical affairs, several university and oil officials, some

of whom were in office between 2015 and 2018, and the former mayor of Doubis (*eKurd*). Finally, after Ankara's October 9 invasion of the Rojava, many Kurds in Iraq are now boycotting Turkish products. "We can't go to the front to fight the Turks with weapons, so our weapon is the boycott of Turkish products", Hamid Banye, a famous Iraqi Kurdish singer who launched the campaign with others, told AFP. The campaign got the support of the SDF: "Every penny spent on Turkish products or tourism is turned into bullets and bombs that kill our children in north-eastern Syria", said Mustafa Bali, their spokesman.

TURKEY:

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: AKP AND MHP REJECT THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY PROPOSED BY THE HDP

In preparation for the "International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women" on 25 November, the HDP MP for Ağrı and spokeswoman of the HDP Women's Assembly Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir filed a petition on 20 November asking that male violence against women be investigated by Parliament. The request was rejected by the ruling AKP and MHP, with the "Good Party" İYİ (far right) abstaining. Taşdemir criticized this rejection and the bans on several events planned by the HDP on this issue. On 21 November, the Women's Assembly of the People's Democratic Congress (HDK) issued a statement expressing concern about the increase in violence, accusing the "misogynistic policies of the government" of being responsible for the murder of Güleda Cankel on 18 November. According to the assessment prepared by *Bianet* from local

and national newspapers, news websites and agencies, men killed at least 302 women and inflicted violence on at least 532 women between 1 January and 20 November 2019; 198 women were killed by their husbands, ex-husbands, boyfriends or ex-boyfriends (http://bianet.org/english/male-violence/216170-men-kill-302-women-inflct-violence-on-532-women-in-324-days?bia_source=mailchimp=t%28RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN++Bianet+English+Daily%29). *Bianet's* monthly balance sheet counted on 2019 21 to 40 feminicides each month (<http://bianet.org/english/gender/134394-bianet-is-monitoring-male-violence>). On the 25th, the human rights association İHD stated that it considered that "the provisions of the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence are not respected" in the country, and called on the State to "abandon its policy of impunity for violence against

women". "The provisions of the Convention Istanbul on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence are not respected", the association said.

On the same day, the Legal Aid Bureau for Assistance against Sexual Harassment and Rape in Custody issued its own statistical report for 2019. The document records 26 cases of sexual harassment in police custody in 2019, in which 11 women stated that they did not dare to take legal action "because they were afraid". Thirty-one women, eleven of whom are still in prison and two of whom are under the age of 18, have applied to the office for assistance. Twenty-four of them are Kurds, five Turks and two Azerbaijanis. Twenty-six were harassed and five were sexually assaulted. The signatories of the report, Human Rights Association (İHD) co-chair Eren Keskin and human rights defender Leman Yurtsever, said

that “the increase in violence against women and femicide is not independent of political violence”. Twenty-four of the perpetrators are police officers, two soldiers or gendarmerie officers, three prison guards, three are other officials and two are members of the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

The district governor of Beyoğlu issued a ban on the women’s march scheduled for 25 November and, after discussions with the organizers’ platform, finally lifted it at the last minute. The rally began on the evening of the 25th in Tünel Square in Taksim, İstanbul, and then the women participants, numbering about 2.000, took to the avenue

İstiklal chanting slogans and holding signs with the names of the women killed. The Women MPs of the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Oya Ersoy and Züleyha Gülüm, the co-president of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) Özlem Gümüştaş and the women’s rights defender of the “78ers Foundation” Nimet Tanrıku were present. The faces of several women who were murdered or died in suspicious circumstances have appeared on numerous signs, such as Şule Cet, Ozgecan Aslan, Aysun Yildirim and Rabia Naz Vatan. Mansur Yavas, the mayor of Ankara, highlighted in a tweet the case of Ceren Ozdemir, a young ballerina

murdered outside her apartment in the port city of Ordu the previous week.

As people began to disperse after the press statement, a small group tried to cross the police barricade, leading the police to use tear gas and rubber bullets against the women, many of whom were hit. Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu denied any police violence during a meeting of gendarmerie commanders, stating that the “allegation” that the police used violence against women is a “huge lie”: “After the end of the press release 50 LGBTI people attacked the police. A little gas was fired. After the gas was fired, the incident ended”...

TURKEY:

AS THE TURKISH ECONOMY CONTINUES TO DEGRADE, THE POWER GOES ON WITH ITS CRACKDOWN...

Internationally, the month got off to a bad start for Ankara, which expressed anger at the U.S. House of Representatives’ formal recognition on October 29 of the Armenian genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire in 1915. The non-binding text was adopted by 405 votes out of 435 and only 11 against, in a rare union between Democrats and Republicans. The intense Turkish lobbying will have been useless...

As regards the economy, the opposition CHP (Republican People’s Party, formerly the Kemalist single party) published on 1st November its *Report on Youth* with the explosive subtitle of: *Unemployed, desperate and with no future*, where it indicates that 26% of university graduates, or 1.34 million, are now unemployed, compared to 97.545 in 2004. According to *TurkStat*’s latest official statistics, the number of unemployed people over 15 years

old now exceeds 4,596 million, an increase of 1,65 million in 12 months (*Bianet*). On the 11th, CHP Vice-President Gamze İlgezdi gave the conclusions of her own report, *Turkey’s Army of Unemployed: The 2018 Report of the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)*. The number of unemployed registered by İŞKUR rose from 587.479 in 2003 to 3.509.603 in 2018, *i.e.* +497% during the AKP power period... İlgezdi also pointed to the exclusion from the labour market affecting women and young people, who together provide 82% of the unemployed. It is in the Kurdish province of Mardin that unemployment among women and young people has increased the most...

One of the scandals of the present situation in Turkey remains the way in which “justice” is done, as the following examples will show: despite the Constitutional Court’s ruling dated 26th July that the freedom of expression of the

academics who signed the “Petition for Peace” had been violated and calling for their acquittal, some courts are continuing the trials. In Mersin, the prosecutor appealed against the acquittal, because the “Declaration of Peace” “presents characteristics of terrorist propaganda” and cannot be included in the decision of the Constitutional Court... At Eskişehir, the criminal court did not acquit the defendants either and set a date for a next hearing... On the 19th, the mathematician and lecturer at the University Claude-Bernard Lyon-1 Tuna Altinel attended the second hearing of his trial at Balıkesir. Arrested in May during a holiday in Turkey, Altinel, a signatory of the Academics for Peace Petition, was first charged with “membership of a terrorist organization”. He was released afterwards, but as his passport had been confiscated, he was unable to return to France. He is now accused of “terrorist

propaganda”, notably for having served as an interpreter for former HDP MP Osman Baydemir during a public meeting of the *Amitiés Kurdes de Lyon* on the civilians killed in the bombing of Cizre by the Turkish army in 2015 and 2016. “This is not terrorist propaganda, but an account of reality”, replied the mathematician, dismissing the accusation. The court has postponed the trial until 24 January 2020 (AFP).

Another shameful example is that of Çağlayan Bozacı: the son of Turan Bozacı, killed with 102 other people in the suicide bombing of Ankara railway station on 10 October 2015, was sentenced on the 14th to 11 months imprisonment for “insulting the president” after his statements in court. His lawyer was outraged: he is being indicted when “none of those responsible for the massacre have yet been accused”. On the 15th, the HDP MP for Siirt MP Meral Danış Beştaş submitted a parliamentary question concerning “the causes and effects of inconsistent and illegal judgments rendered by judicial bodies and the measures to be taken in this regard” (*Bianet*). At the end of the month, seven lawyers’ organisations, including the *Association of Contemporary Lawyers* (ÇHD) of Turkey, in a joint statement called on the European Union to stop all police and judicial cooperation with Turkey, and demanded an end to the 2016 refugee agreement with Ankara.

In another example of inconsistency and political manipulation, while the Court of Cassation had quashed the convictions of all former *Cumhuriyet* journalists, the court upheld them again on the 21st, except for Kadri Gürsel. The case will come back in cassation before the criminal court...

The latest example of inconsistency and manifest illegality is the continued detention of former HDP co-president Selahattin Demirtaş: while the 26th Criminal Court in Istanbul ordered his release, the 1st Criminal Court in Ankara conveniently ordered his arrest in another case. The previous time, his release had not taken place because he had already been sentenced by... the 26th Istanbul Criminal Court. One of his lawyers, Neşet Giresun, commented on Twitter: “When a release order is given in a case where [Demirtaş] has been arrested, he cannot be released because he is convicted. When a release order is given in the case where he has been convicted, he cannot be released because he is arrested...”. On the 25th, the lawyers of Demirtaş submitted to the Constitutional Court a sixth request for his release.

Many other HDP members, including several elected officials, were targeted throughout the month by arrests or convictions. On 1st November, fifteen people were incarcerated early in the morning in house raids. Among them, the HDP co-mayor of Saray (Van), Caziye Duman, elected on March 31 with 61% of the votes, a “Saturday Mother”, Pervin Özgür, a BDP executive, and several members of the “free women’s movement” TJA. According to Van’s security, all are suspected of “participation in the activities of the women’s structure of the terrorist organization”. On the same day, Abubekir Erkmen, who was also elected HDP co-Mayor of Dağpınar (Kars) with 55% of the votes, but had been refused his election certificate for being removed from office by an emergency decree of the President Erdoğan in 2016, was arrested early in the morning without charges being brought against him. On the 4th, it was the

co-mayor of Kızıltepe (Mardin), Nilüfer Elik Yılmaz, elected with 70.45%, who was dismissed on suspicion of “belonging to a terrorist organization” and replaced by the district governor. On the 6th, the indictment against the Metropolitan Mayor of Diyarbakir, Dr. Adnan Selçuk Mızraklı, dismissed and then arrested on 22 October on suspicion of “propaganda for a terrorist organization” and “membership of a terrorist organization”, was accepted by the court. This scandalous indictment considers several of his political activities, such as the demonstrations he attended for Leyla Güven or his Newrouz speeches, as incriminating elements. On the 13th, the prosecutor demanded 15 years of detention, while the lawyer for Mızraklı discovered that one of the prosecution witnesses had lied about working with the accused in hospital and attending his pro-PKK activities (this woman accused Mızraklı of operating on a PKK member and then letting him go without turning him over to the police). In fact, the accuser doesn’t even appear to have worked in this hospital during the period indicated...

On the 8th, the court accepted an even more outrageous indictment against Kocaköy’s co-mayor, Rojda Nazlier, which includes several anonymous testimonies – a sure way of preventing her lawyers from proving them false. On the same day, Ipekyolu (Van)’s two co-mayors, Azim Yacan and Sehsade Kurt, elected in March by 54.47% of the vote, were taken into police custody early in the morning on charges of “terrorist propaganda” and “belonging to a terrorist organization”, while police raided the town hall. Charged on the 12th, they were replaced by administrators appointed by Ankara and imprisoned. The co-spokesman of

the People's Democratic Congress (HDK), Sedat Şenoğlu, was also arrested at his home at Diyarbakır. On the same day, the Constitutional Court overturned Ahmet Urhan's conviction for "membership of a terrorist organization". As the "Young Socialist Association" (SGD) of which he was a member was perfectly legal, it considered this verdict a violation of freedom of association and requested a retrial.

At İstanbul, four students belonging to the "Revolutionary Youth Associations" (DGD) who had hung a banner on the 11th on the Demirören shopping mall bearing: "The AKP system kills, the boss's media hide the truth", and distributed leaflets accusing: "It's not depression that kills, it's the AKP system", were incarcerated and then accused of "terrorist propaganda". They were released on the evening of the 12th with a ban on leaving the country.

On the 13th, four new HDP Co-Mayors were dismissed and replaced by administrators. At Diyarbakır, they are Belgin Diken (Yenişehir district) and Ahmet Çevik (Hazro), and in Dersim, Orhan Çelebi, co-Mayor of the city of Akpazar. At Şırnak, it is the co-mayor of the district of İdil, Songül Erden (*Ahval*). Ipekyolu's co-mayors, Azim Yacan and Şehsade Kurt, were also arrested. The İstanbul prosecutor has also opened investigations against HDP co-chairs Sezai Temelli and Pervin Buldan for "propaganda for a terrorist organization".

On the 15th, one of the four HDP co-mayors incarcerated on 15 October, Semire Nergiz, co-mayor of Nusaybin, was dismissed from her post and released on parole with a ban on leaving the country. But four female HDP co-mayors detained in Mardin, Gülistan Öncü (co-mayor of Savur district), Nalan Özaydın (Mazıdağı),

Mülkiye Esmez (Derik), and Hatice Çevik (Suruç) were imprisoned. Çevik was charged on the 20th with "membership of a terrorist organization" and "propaganda for a terrorist organization", the other three co-Mayors were arrested on the 27th. The town halls concerned have been blocked by the police, and several municipal officials have also been imprisoned. On the 18th, the investigation opened against the deputy mayor of Cizre, Mehmet Zırığ, dismissed because of a speech by Newroz, ended in dismissal. This investigation is one of two investigations used as pretexts for his removal from office. The prosecutor's office objected to the verdict. The authorities also requested the lifting of the immunity of five HDP MPs, including its co-president Sezai Temelli. On the 20th, the HDP indicated in a report published online

(<https://www.hdp.org.tr/images/UserFiles/Documents/Editor/12%20Trustee%20report%202019.pdf>) that 24 of its elected mayors had been dismissed and replaced by administrators, and called for early municipal elections to end unelected control. On the 22nd, the HDP spokesman, Mr. Kubilay, called on the opposition to unite in support of this request.

On the 27th, the police launched new raids in the provinces of Ankara, Antep, Urfa, Diyarbakır, Batman, Ağrı and Adıyaman, imprisoning more than 70 people, including members of the HDP and DBP parties and the human rights association İHD. Eleven people were imprisoned in Ankara, twenty-three in Kocaeli; in Adıyaman, the former HDP deputy Behçet Yıldırım and the reporter Hacı Yusuf Topaloğlu, from DIHA, who was closed down by presidential emergency decree, were incarcerated. At Diyarbakır, also detained were,

among others, the DBP Co-Vice-President Mehmet Şirin Tunç, a DBP executive for the district of Bağlar, Tahir Gül, an HDP city councillor from Kayapınar, Songül Dağ Kapanıcı, and the Co-President of Branch No. 1 of *Eğitim Sen* (Science and Education Union) Hatice Efe; three people in Siirt, at least twenty-five people in Batman and several HDP members in Ağrı.

As regards journalists, the month began with several releases: firstly that of *NetNews* journalist Emre Orman, who was released on the evening of 31 October after his lawyers objected. He had been arrested on 24 October on charges of "propaganda for a terrorist organization" following his coverage of the "Saturday Mothers" demonstrations in İstanbul and his messages on social networks. Then, those of the two journalists and writers Ahmet Altan and Nazlı Ilıcak, on the decision of the 26th İstanbul Criminal Court following the Court of Cassation's annulment verdict. They had been incarcerated on 1st September 2016 after the attempted coup of 15 July. Ms. Ilıcak spent 1.197 days and Altan 1.138 days in detention. The chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP, far-right, allied to the AKP), Devlet Bahçeli, issued a statement that their release "wounds the conscience of the Nation". Ahmet Altan's freedom was short-lived, as he was re-arrested on the 12th after the prosecutor's office contested the release... Tried again despite the verdict of annulment by the Court of Cassation, he was sentenced to 10 years and 6 months in prison for "knowingly aiding and abetting a terrorist organization as a non-member". On the 20th, the German PEN Centre declared him in support an honorary member, and on the 26th, *Amnesty International* called for "urgent action" on his behalf,

asking its members to write to the Turkish Minister of Justice Abdülhamit Gül (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/1474/2019/fr/>).

Forty-five journalists recently fired by the daily *Hürriyet* held a press conference at the Journalists' Union of Turkey (TGS) on the 6th to express their will to continue fighting for their rights. They were supported by union officials and colleagues, including journalists from the daily *Sözcü*, also dismissed for having joined a union. On the 10th, Hakan Demir, head of digital services for the news website *BirGün*, was jailed for his criticism of the Turkish invasion of the Rojava. Accused of "inciting enmity and hatred" for a tweet sent from *BirGün's* official account, he was released on parole on the 11th with a ban on leaving the country. The Court finally decided on the 14th not to prosecute him. *JinNews* journalist Kibriye Evren was released under judicial supervision at her eighth hearing on the 12th with a foreign travel ban. Accused of "membership of a terrorist organization" and "propaganda for a terrorist organization", she had been in pre-trial detention for more than a year and still faces 20 years in prison. On the same day, Ruken Demir, a reporter for the *Mezopotamya* Agency, was arrested during a raid on her home in Izmir in the early hours of the morning. The police seized her computer and mobile phone and some of her equipment from her home.

On the 18th, eight international press freedom and journalism organisations published a report on the situation in Turkey, *Turkish Journalists in the dock: how the judiciary has silenced the Fourth Estate*, which was presented publicly in Brussels. This report is the result of a joint mission to Turkey in September, during

which the Turkish Constitutional Court, Court of Cassation and Ministry of Justice, as well as journalists and civil society organisations were met (<https://freeturkeyjournalists.ipi.media/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Turkey-Mission-Report-IPI-FINAL4PRINT.pdf>). The report denounces the "continued imprisonment of more than 120 journalists" and the fact that "dozens of journalists are being held on the most serious terrorism-related charges for months, sometimes years, on the basis of the slightest evidence in which critical journalism is confused with terrorist propaganda, all as part of a campaign to silence opposition voices and suppress freedom of expression".

Ahmet Takan, a columnist for the daily *Korkusuz*, was attacked outside his home in Ankara with a baseball bat on 21 October. He had just been publicly denounced by the president and general secretary of the MHP. Briefly hospitalized, Takan filed a complaint. On the 28th, İdris Sayılğan, a journalist with the *Dicle* agency (DİHA), closed by decree in 2016, was released on appeal from the closed Trabzon Type-E prison after 1.137 days in prison. He had been sentenced to 8 years and 3 months in prison for "membership of an illegal organization" and "propaganda for an illegal organization". On the 29th, Doğan Akın, founder and editor-in-chief of the news portal *T24*, was prosecuted for "assisting a terrorist organization without being a member" after he rebroadcast 108 tweets from an account called "Fuat Avni", which the judiciary considers to be Gulenist. Akın is facing 5 to 15 years in prison.

Besides, the situation in Turkish prisons is still as worrying as ever: abuses, illegal punishments,

beatings... *Bianet* reported on 1st November the story of Ülkü Şeyda Başaraner, who, while visiting a hunger-striking detainee, Musa Karakaş, in Izmir prison on 18 October, said hello to his cellmate. Forbidden to speak to him by the guards, she simply waved to him. On the 21st, she was informed that she had been banned from visiting for four months by the prison management for "endangering the security of the institution". On the 4th, four inmates of Van prison denounced in a letter to *Bianet* the illegal punishment to which they had been subjected: having started a hunger strike in support of the members of *Grup Yorum*, they were deprived of their paid work in prison for one month. In Ankara, Erdinç Tulay (63), a prisoner in Sinjan prison, has been refused the six months' release that would have allowed him to undergo the necessary chemotherapy for his metastatic cancer: the five applications filed by his lawyer have still not been examined. According to the Ankara branch of the Human Rights Association İHD, thirty-nine sick inmates died in prison between early 2017 and August 2019. On the 12th, lawyer Mustafa Vefa, a member of the Human Rights Commission of the Urfa Bar Association, reported the beating of two detainees by four guards in a room without surveillance cameras. The prison doctor had to insist that the two men be sent to hospital. The lawyer intends to file a complaint. In Istanbul, thirty-six members of the HDP Youth Assembly arrested for chanting anti-war slogans at the 3rd HDP Congress, detained for six days at the Security Directorate, were tortured, "strip-searched and beaten". On the same day, the inmates of Osmaniye T-type Prison No. 2 went on hunger strike to protest against beatings by their guards (one of the prisoners had his arm broken), arbitrary punishments

such as banning visits or banning newspapers or books etc. On the 21st, the HDP MP from Şırnak, Hüseyin Kaçmaz, addressed a parliamentary question to the Minister of Justice regarding this hunger strike.

Finally, the construction site for the new Istanbul airport continues to be characterised by poor working and safety conditions. On 31 October, an 18-year-old worker from Gürpınar (Van) killed himself when he fell down an unprotected elevator shaft. Three hundred workers on the site went on strike on the 1st to denounce their working conditions: excessive daily working hours, insufficient lighting requiring the use of their telephone lamps, empty lift shafts that were neither signaled nor blocked, and a lack of warm clothing adapted to the sometimes bitter cold. Judging by the figures

published on the 9th by the Committee for the Supervision of Accidents at Work (İSiG), this construction site unfortunately seems to be in line with the norm: at least 155 deaths in October, and 145 in September, for a total of 1.477 over the first ten months of 2019...

In addition to its military operations in Rojava, Turkey also continued its anti-PKK operation "Claws" in Kurdistan and northern Iraq. On the 4th, air strikes targeted the predominantly Yezidi region of Xana Sor, north-western Sinjar (*Shengal*), Nineveh province, targeting a base of the Sinjar Resistance Units (*Yekîneyên Berxwedana Şengalê*, YBŞ), killing three members and wounding two others. Other YBŞ bases were hit the next day in Bara, northern Sindjar, and three people were wounded, while armed drones

killed five PKK fighters in the Avashin region. On the 12th, further strikes in the Qandil and Metina areas killed six PKK fighters, and on the 19th, further strikes again hit Xana Sor, wounding between five and twenty YBŞ fighters, figures differing according to sources. On the 20th, it was the Hwakurk region that was targeted, where ten PKK fighters were reportedly killed. The Turkish Air Force also bombed the area of Haji Omran, Smelan, and the Halgurd Mountains in the Balakayati district, apparently without causing any casualties (*ISHM*).

On the Turkish side, the governor of Şırnak announced on the 11th, due to a military operation on Mount Cudi, the designation of sixteen zones in the Silopi district as "special temporary security zones" forbidden to civilians from the 10th to the 17th.

En solidarité avec la Syrie, les Kurdes d'Irak n'achètent plus turc

En solidarité avec les Kurdes de Syrie menacés de la reprise d'une offensive d'Ankara et de ses supplétifs syriens, de nombreux Kurdes d'Irak boycottent désormais les produits venus de Turquie, premier exportateur dans le pays.

Fruits, seaux en plastique, yaourts ou produits cosmétiques, l'Irak importe chaque année pour huit milliards de dollars de biens turcs, qui transitent tous par le Kurdistan autonome.

Mais depuis le lancement le 9 octobre d'une opération militaire turque dans le nord de la Syrie, plus de 12.000 Kurdes ont quitté cette zone pour se réfugier dans des camps du Kurdistan irakien, laissant derrière eux des dizaines de morts.

«On ne peut pas aller au front combattre les Turcs avec des armes, alors notre arme à nous c'est le boycott des produits turcs», explique à l'AFP Hamid Banye, célèbre chanteur kurde irakien qui a lancé avec d'autres cette campagne.

«On va toucher un maximum de monde et comme ça on portera le coup de grâce à l'économie turque», veut croire celui qui appelle aussi à ne plus regarder de films turcs ou écouter des chansons venus du pays du Bosphore.

Convaincu, Hogir Ali, 31 ans et père de trois enfants, a déjà chamboulé une tradition familiale: les biscuits qu'on a toujours mangés chez lui avec le thé étaient turcs.

Mais aujourd'hui, «je dois faire ma part», dit cet habitant d'Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan irakien, en scrutant à la loupe les code-barres des produits, dans les rayons du supermarché du coin.

«Je ne vais plus soutenir par aucun moyen l'économie turque parce que la Turquie ne croit pas aux droits des Kurdes ni même à leur existence», assène-t-il en s'emparant finalement d'un paquet, des biscuits qui viennent d'Espagne.

Gains iraniens

Zana Ahmed, 28 ans, a, lui, toujours vendu des crèmes pour le visage, des gels pour cheveux et autres crayons à maquillage venus de Turquie.



En solidarité avec la Syrie, les Kurdes d'Irak n'achètent plus turc © AFP/Archives / SAFIN HAMED

Mais aujourd'hui, «après l'offensive turque, nous cherchons des alternatives», assure à l'AFP ce commerçant de Souleimaniyeh, dans le nord-est de l'Irak.

Et la nouvelle est déjà arrivée de l'autre côté de la frontière. La campagne de boycott a reçu le soutien des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS) qui ont instauré une semi-autonomie kurde dans le nord-est de la Syrie, en guerre depuis 2011.

«Chaque centime dépensé pour acheter des produits turcs ou alimenter le tourisme se transforme en balles et en bombes qui tuent nos enfants dans le nord-est syrien», a récemment lancé Mustafa Bali, un porte-parole des forces kurdes.

Au niveau politique, le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) au pouvoir à Erbil entretient de forts liens économiques et politiques avec Ankara alors que son rival l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK), dont Souleimaniyeh est le bastion, s'oppose à la Turquie.

Au Kurdistan irakien autonome, qui partage 350 km de frontière avec la Turquie au nord et 500 autres avec l'Iran à l'est, la très grande majorité des produits disponibles sur le marché viennent de ces deux pays.

Et les pertes turques sont déjà en train de se transformer en gains pour l'Iran, si l'on en croit Karwan Jamal, 45 ans.

Ce conducteur dans une compagnie de transport a récemment découvert que la solidarité avait un coût. La dernière fois qu'il a dû acheter de l'huile de cuisine, il a préféré opter pour une marque iranienne plutôt que turque.

«J'ai payé la bouteille 10.500 dinars irakiens, alors que la bouteille turque est à 6.000 dinars», raconte-t-il à l'AFP, soit une différence d'environ 3,50 euros.

Si ce n'est qu'une histoire de prix, il se dit prêt à le payer. En revanche, pour les vêtements, «ceux faits en Iran ne sont pas aussi beaux et il y en a moins sur le marché que des habits turcs», affirme-t-il.

«Toucher les consciences»

Nasreddine Mahmoud, lui, vend biscuits et produits laitiers en gros, et il a déjà vu la différence.

«La demande a été divisée par deux, les commerçants refusent d'acheter turc, ils demandent des produits iraniens à la place ou cherchent des alternatives sur le marché local», affirme-t-il à l'AFP.

Chaque jour, Sirwan Mohammed reçoit à la Chambre de commerce de Souleimaniyeh des hommes d'affaires inquiets.

«Je pense que cette campagne va avoir un impact négatif sur les entreprises turques et les entreprises locales qui importent depuis la Turquie», assure-t-il à l'AFP.

«Mais les consommateurs, eux, ne seront pas touchés parce qu'il y a aussi sur le marché des produits du Golfe, d'Iran et d'Europe —en plus de ceux du Kurdistan et du reste de l'Irak», ajoute-t-il.

Mais au-delà de toucher au portefeuille, cette campagne va surtout «toucher les consciences», espère-t-il.

ahramonline 2 november, 2019

US military meets with Kurdish officials in northeast Syria

US military vehicles Saturday entered a Kurdish-held area in northeastern Syria and met with officials, AFP correspondents and a local source said. The visit is the second since the US announced its pullout from the Turkish border area.

Beige-coloured armoured vehicles flying the American flag pulled up at the headquarters of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces outside the city of Qamishli.

They also passed by the People's Protection Units (YPG) who have spearheaded the SDF, and Kurdish security forces in the area.

Two days earlier, a similar US convoy was seen further east along the border, outside the town of Qahtaniyah, in an area they used to operate in before Washington announced a military pullout last month.

A US-led coalition has for years backed the SDF in fighting the Islamic State group, but the announcement of an American withdrawal triggered a deadly Turkish invasion against the Kurds on October 9.

A source who took part in one of the Kurdish-US meetings on Saturday said the Americans wanted to return to Qamishli.

"They're coming to set up a major military post



A fighter with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) stands on the side of a road as a convoy of US troops drives by in the Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli, in Syria's northeastern Hasakeh province on November 2, 2019. (Photo: AFP)

in Qamishli," the source told AFP.

The coalition declined to comment specifically on Saturday's visit, but said the alliance continued to withdraw forces from northern Syria.

It would relocate some troops to oil-rich eastern Syria to help stamp out remaining IS fighters.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor, says Washington also still has forces in a base near Rmeilan, a town further east along the border.

Under a ceasefire deal signed last week, joint Turkish-Russian patrols started on Friday in the area.

Syrian regime forces have also made a major comeback in the northeast for the first time in years, after they were called in by the Kurds to fill the void left by US troops.

Syria's war has spiralled into a complex conflict involving world powers since it started in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests.



2 november, 2019

Riot police intervene as pro-Kurdish HDP members distribute leaflets for annual congress

Turkish police on Saturday intervened on a group of pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) members in Istanbul as they attempted to hand out leaflets for the party's upcoming annual congress.

Istanbul anti-riot police prevented a group of HDP members, including lawmakers Garo Paylan, İmam Taşçier, Zeynel Özen, Erol Katircioğlu and Ali Kenanoğlu, from entering Is-

tanbul's Istiklal Street to distribute information on HDP's annual congress set to take place on Sunday, independent news site T24 reported.

Police told the group that only lawmakers could hand out information leaflets and accused the group of also verbally inviting the public to attend Sunday's event, which they said was not permitted.

Police encircled the group with riot shields when they refused to comply, it said.

HDP Istanbul lawmaker Zeynep Özen addressed the public from behind the police shields.

"You see for yourself what is happening today. This only shows how afraid they are of our rightfulness. They are even trying to prevent us from calls for our party's congress," Özen said.

"We invite all of you to our party's congress in Küçükçekmece [district] on Sunday," she said.

HDP's annual congress on Sunday arrives as the Turkish government continues a wave of dismissals against Kurdish mayors in the country's Kurdish-dominated eastern and southeastern provinces.

A total of 14 mayors from the pro-Kurdish HDP have been replaced by government-appointed mayors since the March local elections.



BBC

2 november, 2019

Tal Abyad car bomb: At least 13 killed in Syrian border town

At least 13 people were killed by a car bomb in the northern Syrian border town of Tal Abyad, Turkish authorities said.

Turkey's defence ministry said at least 20 others were wounded by the blast.

Turkish troops and Turkey-backed rebels last month took control of Tal Abyad and other border towns from Kurdish forces, after US troops - who were protecting the Kurds - pulled out.

Pro-Turkey fighters and civilians were among the dead on Saturday, according to a UK-based monitoring group.

The monitor, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said more than 30 people were also injured in the blast. Turkey's defence ministry accused a Syrian Kurdish militia group, the People's Protection Units (YPG), of planting the bomb. No group immediately claimed responsibility.

The blast happened near to a marketplace and petrol station - AFP

What is Turkey doing in northern Syria?

Turkey's military invaded the Kurdish-held border areas in northern Syria immediately after US forces were withdrawn. Turkey has a longstanding enmity with the Kurds and wants to push back the YPG from its border.

Turkey claims the YPG is a "terrorist" offshoot of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has fought an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984.

Turkish forces have created a 120-kilometre (75-



Turkey-backed Syrian fighters at the site of the blast in Tal Abyad.

mile) "safe zone" between Tal Abyad and the town of Ras al-Ain, pushing the YPG out of the area. Turkish troops on Friday began joint patrols with Russian forces.

US President Donald Trump faced widespread international criticism for his decision to remove American troops from the area, leaving Kurdish forces - which allied with the US in the fight against the Islamic State (IS) group, suffering heavy losses - outgunned by the Turkish military.

Tens of thousands of people fled their homes in October in border towns in northern Syria, including Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ain, as Turkish forces pushed into the area.

What about the IS members Turkey has detained?

Turkey says it will send members of IS that it has

so far detained back to their home countries.

Tens of thousands of IS fighters and their family members were taken captive by Western-backed forces in north-eastern Syria.

Turkey is now holding a number of those who have escaped, including British and Dutch nationals, after launching its incursion into northern Syria.

The country's interior minister criticised the reluctance of European countries to repatriate nationals who had been taken prisoner while fighting for IS in Syria.

"We are not a hotel," Suleyman Soylu said. "That is not acceptable to us. It's also irresponsible."

He vowed to ensure they were sent back to their home nations.



02 novembre 2019
By Wladimir van Wilgenburg

German Kurds could face arrest in Turkey, Germany warns

The German government on Friday changed its travel advice for visitors to Turkey, warning its citizens, especially Kurds, that they risk being arrested for anti-government statements on social media.

The updated Foreign Ministry travel advisory said there had been a recent "rise in detentions of German nationals who are or have been active in Kurdish organizations."

It also said that many German citizens, especially with Kurdish backgrounds or Turkish-Alevi backgrounds, were banned from entering the country.

The German government warned its citizens that anti-government statements on social media, even in the past, could lead to arrests. This could also include the sharing or "liking" of articles from foreign news outlets.

Furthermore, it also said anonymous persons could report comments to Turkish law enforcement agencies.



Protesters wave flags as they take part in a rally in Berlin in support of the Kurdish cause as Turkey continues its offensive in northeastern Syria. (Photo: AFP)

Turkey launched an offensive in northern Syria on Oct. 9, leading to mass displacements and deaths of civilians.

Der Spiegel reported that at least 14 German Kurds had been arrested since the start of October.

Since then, 10 of them have been released, but several are forbidden to leave the country pending trial while others face added restrictions.

Nebahat Yildirim, a member of the Kurdish Community in Germany (KGD), was arrested on Oct. 3. Yildirim was eventually released, but not allowed to leave the country pending trial.

The Turkish unilateral attacks on positions of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) led to massive outrage and protests among European Kurds but also Kurds living in the region.

Several protests are expected to be held on Saturday in European capitals in solidarity with the Kurds in Syria.

LE FIGARO

02 novembre 2019

Manifestation de Kurdes à Paris

Un millier de Kurdes et sympathisants, selon la police, ont défilé ce samedi à Paris pour soutenir les Kurdes de Syrie et exhorter les Etats européens à prendre des «sanctions concrètes» contre la Turquie pour qu'elle renonce à son action dans le nord-est de la Syrie.

Accompagnés d'un concert de musique traditionnelle, les manifestants - 5.000 selon les organisateurs - se sont d'abord rassemblés dans le calme sur la place de la République dans le centre de Paris. Parmi les pancartes brandies par les participants on pouvait lire «Laisser la Turquie massacrer les Kurdes, est-ce une manière de les remercier d'avoir vaincu Daesh ?», ou «Après Baghdadi viendra le tour d'Erdogan». Ils ont ensuite défilé jusqu'à la place du Châtelet, où des prises de parole ont eu lieu.

Interrogé par l'AFP, le porte-parole du Conseil démocratique kurde en France (CDK-F, qui dit fédérer 24 associations de la diaspora en France), Agit Polat, a affirmé que «les Turcs ne respectent pas» les accords conclus avec Russes et Américains «et continuent d'envahir et d'élargir leur présence dans le nord de la Syrie». Le CDK-F insiste sur la «nécessité d'établir une force d'interposition internationale pour maintenir la sécurité de la frontière. (...) Il faut à tout prix cette force sur la frontière car on sait très bien que la Turquie ne va pas se limiter à quelques dizaines de km», a martelé M. Polat.

«Épuration ethnique»

«Il y a une opération d'épuration ethnique et de répression politique qui est menée à l'encontre de la population kurde. (...) La Turquie sera jugée pour ses actes criminels, et particulière-

ment Erdogan», a-t-il ajouté. «Si aujourd'hui il y a une telle crise, c'est aussi dû à l'inaction des Etats européens; le seul moyen de paralyser la Turquie pour qu'elle puisse renoncer à son opération, c'est de lui appliquer des sanctions concrètes en particulier économiques, (...) la faire sortir de l'Otan, lui appliquer des taxes douanières», a-t-il poursuivi.

M. Polat a remercié au nom du CDK-F les rescapés des attentats en France en 2015 qui ont publié vendredi une lettre ouverte dans un journal en soutien aux Kurdes de Syrie, envers qui les Français ont «une dette inestimable», selon ces rescapés réunis en collectif. «C'était des propos très précis et clairs qui nous ont réchauffé le cœur dans ces moments difficiles», a-t-il commenté.

Syrie: visite militaire américaine de bases des forces kurdes

Des blindés militaires américains se sont rendus samedi sur plusieurs bases des forces kurdes près de Qamichli, dans le nord-est de la Syrie, a constaté une équipe de l'AFP, malgré la volonté affichée par Washington de se désengager de cette région.

Un photographe et un vidéaste de l'AFP ont pu voir quatre blindés arborant le drapeau américain entrer dans la principale base à Qamichli des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), dans une base de la milice kurde des Unités de protection du peuple (YPG), et dans une position de la police kurde des Assayech.

Dominées par la milice des YPG, les FDS ont été les partenaires de Washington dans la lutte contre les jihadistes du groupe Etat islamique (EI) en Syrie.

Jeudi, des forces américaines avaient patrouillé dans le village d'al-Qahtaniyah, dans le nord-est syrien, près de la frontière turque. Cette patrouille, la première depuis



Syrie: visite militaire américaine de bases des forces kurdes (AFP) © AFP / Delil SOULEIMAN

que le président Donald Trump a ordonné le 6 octobre le retrait des troupes américaines stationnées dans le nord du pays, était accompagnée de combattants des FDS.

Une source militaire des FDS qui a participé à une réunion samedi entre Américains et forces kurdes a assuré sous le couvert de l'anonymat que les forces américaines voulaient installer une base militaire à Qamichli.

Interrogé samedi par l'AFP, un porte-parole de la coalition internationale antijihadiste emmenée par les Etats-Unis et engagée au côté des forces kurdes, a réitéré la ligne officielle de Washington. "La coalition poursuit son retrait délibéré de forces du nord syrien", a-t-il dit, rapportant un redéploiement dans la province orientale de Deir Ezzor.

Selon l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'Homme (OSDH), les

forces américaines disposent encore d'une base importante près de Rmeilane, une ville à l'est de Qamichli.

Avec le retrait des troupes américaines, les forces kurdes ont accusé Washington de les avoir abandonnées face à une offensive lancée le 9 octobre par la Turquie voisine dans le nord syrien.

Pour empêcher la progression de l'armée turque et de supplétifs syriens, les forces kurdes ont été contraintes d'amorcer un rapprochement inédit avec le régime syrien et son allié russe.

L'armée du régime a ainsi été déployée dans plusieurs secteurs du nord de la Syrie qui lui échappaient depuis plusieurs années. Des troupes russes sont également présentes, profitant du vide créé par le retrait américain.



3 november, 2019
By Sirwan Kajjo

Medical Worker of a US-Based Group Killed in Northeast Syria

WASHINGTON - A U.S.-based medical relief group operating in northeast Syria was targeted Sunday in a mortar attack allegedly by Turkish-backed Syrian militia fighters near the town of Tal Tamr, killing one medical worker and wounding at least one other.

David Eubank, founder of the Free Burma Rangers (FBR), said the attack targeted his team as they were trying to enter the embattled town.

"Zau Seng was from Burma," Eubank told local media after the attack, referring to a member of his team.

"He was hit in the head by shrapnel and in the back. He died right



away," Eubank said. The wounded volunteer is an Iraqi national, he added.

The attack occurred outside the northeastern Syrian town of Tal Tamr, where Kurdish-led Syrian Demo-

cratic Forces have been fighting Turkish-backed Syrian militia fighters

FBR, which is active in several conflict zones, has been involved in

humanitarian work in northeast Syria since the beginning of Turkey's military incursion in the region on October 9.

"Yesterday we took out two wounded [civilians] and today we were there. The Free Syrian Army [Syrian rebels] and the Turks were mortaring in front of us... this mortar came behind us and hit this vehicle," Eubank, a U.S. Special Forces veteran, said on Sunday.

He noted that the wounded medics were immediately taken to a nearby hospital run by the Kurdish Red Crescent.

An official at the Kurdish Red Crescent confirmed the news to VOA.

“Unfortunately, we couldn’t save one of them. His wounds were too deep,” said Kemal Dirbas of the Kurdish Red Crescent, adding that they “don’t have the right medical supplies and equipment for such cases.”

Dirbas added that FBR has done a “unique job to save civilians lives in this conflict.”

“The FBR has been doing a brave work in our region,” he said. “Its volunteers go to very dangerous places

to rescue civilians caught in the fighting. They go to frontlines to carry out their humanitarian mission. They face death every day.”

Medical workers have been targeted since the beginning of the Turkish offensive into northeast Syria.

On October 14, a doctor with the Kurdish Red Crescent was reportedly killed in a Turkish airstrike near the town of Tel Abyad.

On the same day, at least four other

medical workers were kidnapped by Turkish-backed fighters as they were on way to rescue wounded people, local news reported at the time.

Turkey defends its military operation in Syria and charges that its objective from the ongoing incursion is to remove Syrian Kurdish forces, considered as terrorists by Ankara, from the Turkey-Syria border area.

The United Nations says the Turkish offensive has forced more than

180,000 Syrian civilians to flee the border areas, including into neighboring Iraq.

Local doctors in northeast Syria say at least 206 civilians have died in the fighting, with another 1,086 people injured.

Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict in 2011, more than 850 medical workers have been killed throughout the country, medical groups estimate.



04 novembre 2019

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani meets with US Congress delegation

Prim Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Masrour Barzani meets with a United States Congress Delegation, Nov.4,2019. (Photo: Kurdistan 24)

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) – A US house of representatives delegation, headed by congressman Adam Smith, met with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister, Masrour Barzani, on Monday to discuss ties between Erbil and Washington as well as recent developments in the area.

In a press conference following the meeting, Representative Adam Smith (D) said the two officials had “discussed how to work together with the Kurds in resolving a lot of tensions in Iraq and Syria.”

“The big point is we are strong allies, and we will continue to be strong allies,” stated Smith, adding that “the Unites States Congress did not stand with Trump’s decision to retreat from Syria as we are standing with the Kurds,” in reference to a decision last month by US President Donald Trump to withdraw troops from northeastern Syria and allowing Turkey to launch an incursion in the area against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).



Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Masrour Barzani meets with a United States Congress Delegation, Nov.4,2019. (Photo: Kurdistan 24)

Smith also noted that although the US administration had now caused “great damages, the decision is being revised, and we are going to keep troops in Syria, and will absolutely begin to rebuild that credibility,” which he warned “might take time.”

“We are not in Syria to get the oil,” argued Smith, saying that “the president is absolutely wrong in saying that.” Trump’s latest statement about the US’ presence in Syria claimed the aims was primarily to protect the oil, but Smith did affirm the extent of the US’ focus on the oil was “to make sure that it does not fall at the hands of ISIS.”

“The United States of America doesn’t have that oil, never going to have that oil as it’s not

our oil and that is not what we are doing here. We are protecting the oil from the terrorist group ISIS, not to claim them for ourselves.”

The congressman assured that US forces were at the moment still working “stop ISIS from re-surfing and working with our (SDF) partners to ensure that.” He explained the US mission in Syria would also make sure there is a place for the Kurds in Syria now that the Syrian regime is coming back to the border areas and “looking to rebuild policy relationships with the Kurds that has fallen in the last month.”

Prime Minister Barzani welcomed the comments made by Smith, adding that “the US has been with us in the fight against

terrorism” from the beginning, “helping us greatly.” At the same time, Barzani warned, the threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria is “very much alive” and added that the KRG “would like to see that commitment continue,” referring to the US-led coalition’s ongoing support to the Kurdistan Region in the fight against terror.

“They are still out there, and they are not only threat to the region but to the rest of the world, so that would require much closer cooperation with the coalition. We have seen a 300 percent increase of ISIS activity since last spring,” added Barzani.

Barzani also expressed his concerns regarding other recent developments in Syria, notably in the northeast, saying, “we hope that decision is revised and taking into consideration the Kurdish people and the rest of the population living in that area.”

Prime Minister Barzani and Representative Smith affirmed the strong bond between the Kurdistan Region and the US, reacknowledging their support to the stabilization and security of the region. Smith also met with President Nechirvan Barzani on Monday.

Kurdistan Political Parties Support Demands of Iraqi Protesters

Main political parties in the Kurdistan Region announced on Tuesday their full support for the demands of Iraqi protesters and the reforms announced by the Baghdad government following demonstrations that have intensified in the past two weeks in the capital and the southern provinces.

The announcement was made during the closing session of an emergency meeting of Kurdish political parties, which convened Tuesday at the invitation of President of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Nechirvan Barzani, and in the presence of Iraqi President Barham Salih.

Salih had arrived in Erbil Monday to meet with Kurdish leaders and discuss prospective amendments to Iraq's constitution amid ongoing demonstrations across many of the country's central and southern cities.

During their meeting, the leaders of Kurdish parties and forces expressed their readiness to ease tension in Iraq.

A statement, the participants said the Kurdish parties and forces took a joint position regarding



Iraqi protester in Baghdad on November 5. (AFP)

the latest developments in Iraq and decided to support the legitimate demands of the protesters, who are calling for better services, transparency and fighting corruption.

"We also said that Kurdistan Region must have a united position. By this, we mean supporting all other Iraqi [political] forces as we all have a responsibility in the issues Iraq is today suffering from," said Barzani, who read out the statement.

The Kurdish forces agreed to offer the needed support for the Iraqi parties and forces in their efforts to save Iraq from the current tense situation.

"We fully support the reform steps taken by Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi and the need to quickly implement them on the ground," Barzani announced.

The Kurdish parties also said they were ready to contribute in the drafting of the Iraqi constitution as a step to move Iraq to a better phase of stability and harmony.

"The Kurdistan Region supports any constitutional amendment on condition that it serves the interests of the Iraqi people and move Iraq to a better phase," the statement said.



06 novembre 2019

Middle-east Arab News Opinion

Main political parties in the Kurdistan Region announced on Tuesday their full support for the demands of Iraqi protesters and the reforms announced by the Baghdad government following demonstrations that have intensified in the past two weeks in the capital and the southern provinces.

The announcement was made during the closing session of an emergency meeting of Kurdish political parties, which convened Tuesday at the invitation of President of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Nechirvan Barzani, and in the presence of Iraqi President Barham Salih.

Salih had arrived in Erbil Monday to meet with Kurdish leaders and discuss prospective amendments to Iraq's constitution amid ongoing de-



Iraqi protester in Baghdad on November 5. (AFP)

monstrations across many of the country's central and southern cities.

During their meeting, the leaders of Kurdish parties and forces expressed their readiness to ease tension in Iraq.

A statement, the participants said the Kurdish parties and forces took a joint position regarding the latest develop-

ments in Iraq and decided to support the legitimate demands of the protesters, who are calling for better services, transparency and fighting corruption.

"We also said that Kurdistan Region must have a united position. By this, we mean supporting all other Iraqi [political] forces as we all have a res-

possibility in the issues Iraq is today suffering from," said Barzani, who read out the statement.

The Kurdish forces agreed to offer the needed support for the Iraqi parties and forces in their efforts to save Iraq from the current tense situation.

"We fully support the reform steps taken by Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi and the need to quickly implement them on the ground," Barzani announced.

The Kurdish parties also said they were ready to contribute in the drafting of the Iraqi constitution as a step to move Iraq to a better phase of stability and harmony.

"The Kurdistan Region supports any constitutional amendment on condition that it serves the interests of the Iraqi people and move Iraq to a better phase," the statement said.

Jailed ex-mayor calls on int'l community to stand against seizure of Kurdish municipalities

The jailed former mayor of Turkey's southeastern province of Diyarbakir has penned a letter to the international community, calling for their support against the seizure of pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) municipalities at the hands of Turkey's ruling Islamist party.

Selçuk Mızraklı, who was removed from office on Aug. 19 and arrested on Aug. 22 over terror charges, said the unlawful seizure of municipalities in Turkey's Kurdish-majority provinces was an "open declaration by the government that Kurds cannot choose the leaders of the towns they live in."

"There is a massacre of the legal system taking place in Turkey..." Mızraklı wrote. "I was arrested for participating in the activities of the party that I am a member of."

Mızraklı was dismissed alongside Mardin Mayor Ahmet Türk and Van Mayor Bedia Özgökçe Ertan. The government's decision to remove the HDP mayors of predominantly Kurdish cities just months after they were voted in with large



majorities sparked widespread condemnation, with the EU sending ambassadors to meet the ousted mayors.

The former mayor of Diyarbakir is accused of alleged membership of a terrorist group, a charge that carries a prison sentence of between seven-and-a-half and 15 years.

"A government appointed official replaced us just four months after we regained Diyarbakir in the March 31 local elections, following the appointment of state officials in 95 HDP-run pro-

vinces since 2016," left-wing news site Artı Gerçek quoted the former mayor of Diyarbakir as saying.

Turkey's AKP government has aggressively pursued HDP politicians for alleged links to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has fought for Kurdish self-rule in Turkey since 1984.

A total of 16 government-appointed trustees have replaced mayors elected from the HDP since the March local elections.

"The international community and human rights organisations must take solid steps against the seizure of the right of Turkey's Kurds to vote and stand for election," Mızraklı said.

The principle of presumption of innocence is violated in Turkey every day, the former mayor of Diyarbakir said, calling for global resistance against the oppression faced by opposition voices in the country.

the **algemeiner** 7 november, 2019
By Ben Cohen

A Kurdish Campaign to Boycott Turkey

JNS.org – It is a story that strikes a chord with anyone familiar with the struggle for civil rights in the American South. Jwnaid Murad, a businessman in Iraqi Kurdistan, has decided that he will no longer sell Turkish products in his supermarket in the town of New Erbil in response to growing calls among Iraqi Kurds for a boycott of Turkey because of Ankara's onslaught against fellow Kurds in Syria.

Even though goods from Turkey make up 60 percent of the inventory in his supermarket, Murad gathered his employees to pack up the remaining Turkish stock on his shelves over the weekend. In an interview with the American journalist Lindsey Snell, he said that some of the stock would be returned to the original vendors, while the rest, including dozens of boxes of baby formula, would be distributed in refugee camps in Iraqi Kurdistan. "Of course, this will affect my business. But after watching Turkey commit the war crimes they have in Rojava [the Kurdish region of Syria], I don't care," said Murad. "If I



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

had to choose between starving to death and eating food produced by Turkey, I would starve."

Fouad Kurdistanî, a shopper interviewed at Murad's Las Market outlet, made it clear that

some Kurds would rather fork out more money if that meant avoiding transactions with Turkish companies. "I went to Europe last week, and paid twice as much for my ticket to avoid going through Turkey," he said. "They're monsters, killing our children.

We cannot give them our money.” Another interviewee in the same piece, a university professor named Kamaran Mentk, spoke of his conviction that the Kurdish boycott would actually hurt the Turkish economy, which exports \$8 billion worth of goods annually to Iraqi Kurdistan. “This is nothing new for Kurdistan, we had a boycott of Iranian goods in 2009, for example,” said Dr. Mentk. “But I believe this to be the biggest. Our people are united against Turkey by refusing to buy their products.”

After enduring a century of betrayal on the part of Western leaders — among whom Donald Trump is the latest, but probably not the last, example — the Kurds are justifiably wary of placing too much hope in international solidarity. Media coverage of their boycott of Turkey has focused on what the Kurds themselves plan to do in their own region, where they exercise significant economic power. There does not seem to be an expectation that the rest of the world will follow suit

It is true that calls for a boycott of Turkey are growing on social media, particularly among left-wing activists who admire the blend of anarchism and Marxism adopted by the Kurdish YPG in Syria. One web site even helpfully lists those Turkish companies — about half of them in the arms industry — that Western consumers might wish to think twice about. But this nascent campaign has nothing like the profile of a certain other boycott movement that comes readily to mind.

This raises the question of whether the Kurds should be concerned by the failure of their cause to animate Western progressives in the manner that the BDS campaign

against Israel has done. Certainly, there is an enormous slice of hypocrisy visible here. At its annual conference in September, to cite one example, the British Labour Party adopted a pro-BDS platform as delegates chanted “Free Palestine!” No similar call has been heard in the name of Kurdistan. Or, to cite another example, at a campaign stop this week, Democratic Party presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts happily indulged a questioner who asked her about US support for “genocide” in “Palestine and Yemen” with a Trumpian response about the need to end “endless wars” and withdraw all US combat troops from foreign operations. Even the spectacle of Trump, her *bête noire*, kowtowing to the Turkish autocrat Recep Tayyip Erdogan was not enough to bring Warren to the utter the word “Kurds.”

Yet as distasteful as these double standards are, perhaps more relevant is the failure of the BDS campaign to deliver a meaningful blow against Israel in the nearly 20 years of its existence. Of course, BDS has made life miserable for Jewish students on campuses around the world; it has defamed Zionism — the national liberation movement of the Jewish people — through an association with racism; and it has provided a convenient platform for tyrannical states like Iran and Turkey to claim the mantle of human-rights advocacy. But it has not dented Israel’s national security; nor has it immiserated the Israeli people into surrendering their independence. Most importantly, the BDS movement hasn’t delivered a single tangible benefit to the Palestinians themselves — not a hospital, nor a university, nor a sustainable water supply, nor anything that is actually needed.

So the Kurds might well be better off without this kind of solidarity, according to which, like the Palestinians, they would be regarded as mere victims with little or no independent agency. More fundamentally, however, the Kurdish attitude towards Turkey is the polar opposite of the majority Palestinian stance towards Israel.

The Kurds don’t challenge Turkey’s right to exist as a sovereign state, only the oppressive and discriminatory policies imposed on the Kurdish minority in Turkey and now over the border in Syria. The Kurds don’t promote generic hatred towards the Turkish people who live in Turkey, nor do they seek to punish the large Turkish diaspora communities who live outside. Critically, the Kurds don’t believe that depriving their current adversaries of their freedom and independence is a necessary condition for their own liberation.

I am not, therefore, going to argue here that Jews in America, Israel, and elsewhere should internationalize the Kurdish boycott of Turkey as a riposte to the BDS movement. All that the two have in common is their method; their moral foundations are radically different, and the danger of bracketing them together is that we lose sight of that basic fact.

Sure, as a community, we can flex our consumer muscle by not purchasing Turkish products or flying on Turkish airlines when alternatives are available. But far more meaningful is our political muscle; specifically, telling our legislators to ramp up the pressure on Erdogan’s regime politically, diplomatically, and financially.

HERALD
Malaysia On It

7 november, 2019

Fighting to get the Yazidi genocide recognised after surviving the horrors of the Islamic State

Eman Abdulla was kidnapped in the summer of 2014 and was held by jihadis for nine months. The young woman was raped, sold and enslaved. Today she works for an association that is fighting to save young victims of violence. Winner of the 2019 Mother Teresa Award, the group is fighting for the international recognition of the tragedy that befell her people.

By Eman Abdulla

Eman Abdulla is an 18-year-old Yazidi woman. Kidnapped in 2014, she was freed after spending nine months in the hands of the Islamic State (IS) group. In her story, she describes violence, rape and torture, and calls on the world to listen to the true experiences of so many girls and women still captive. She is hoping to see “truth and justice” prevail, pushing the international community to follow

Kurdistan’s parliament, which on 3 August voted to recognise the genocide of the Yazidi people.

“I was raped, beaten, forced to convert to



Islam and reduced to a sex slave," Eman said. Today she works for an NGO based in Dohuk, Iraqi Kurdistan, which cares for Yazidis who escaped the Islamic State. In total, some 3,515 people captured in 2014 have been freed and cared for: 1,983 children, 1,193 women and 339 men.

The association is one of the winners of 2019 Mother Teresa Award. Eman was present at the official ceremony handing out the coveted award last Sunday, where she spoke about her own experience and issued an appeal for the recognition of the genocide her people endured in the past few years. Here is her story (edited for clarity):

I am the voice of a Yazidi girl enslaved by Isis (Islamic State group).

I am a Yazidi girl from Sinjar. I have been living in a tent in the Sharya camp for displaced war-affected populations, in Duhok province in Kurdistan Region, for five years.

I was only 13 when I was kidnapped with six members of my family, including my mother, 12-year-old

sister and my baby brother. I have been enslaved, put up for sale in public markets, spent 12 months in captivity and sold three times. I was raped, beaten, forced to convert to Islam and reduced to a sex slave. I was ransomed back through the office of former Kurdistan's PM who is the current president and after a three-day walk in a desert, I was rescued in Nineveh province. I was taken to hospital in Duhok and then sent to the Sharya camp, where my family and I reunited and were given a canvas tent to shelter us.

In the last four years, we have lived in the camp near a military base in our area. We can't go back home. I'm overwhelmed by constant fear: fear of being attacked again, of being kidnapped, tortured, enslaved; I am still woken up regularly by nightmares, screaming and calling for help.

As a young person, during the day, I work in the office that rescues Yazidis to help others who are still in captivity. In addition, I can't forget what I experienced with the Islamic State. About 2,902 people are still in captivity, going through what I

went through. I am sure they are in a situation that is even worse now.

On 4 August, at a gathering in Duhok to mark the 5th anniversary of the Yazidi genocide, I addressed an audience of a thousand, including the President of the Kurdistan Region, Nechirvan Barzani, Yazidi Spiritual leader Meer Hazim Beg, as well as UN officers and foreign diplomats, calling on them to put an end to the Yazidi genocide and work towards rebuilding Sinjar and ensuring the safe return of displaced people to their hometown.

I called on the international community to help resolve the outstanding political disputes between Iraq's central government and the Kurdistan regional government and to determine the status of Sinjar according to Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, which stipulates a referendum to decide its fate.

I said that the Peshmerga forces were of great help and, together with the Iraqi army, they should be able to guarantee the safe return of Yazidis to their holy land.

I dream of going back home, of living in a proper house, having a room to myself. I dream of going out on holidays, like any normal teenage girl. Above all, I dream of being able to laugh again, since, after such disasters, I've forgotten what it means to be happy and to laugh.

The Kurdistan Region's parliamentary vote on 3 August is an important step towards recognising the Yazidi genocide. The international community should follow the lead of the Kurdistan Region and recognise what happened to us Yazidis as a genocide and designate 3 August as Yazidi Genocide Remembrance Day. Such a step is important so that what happened to the Yazidi community is not forgotten.

I might be a powerless teenage in a refugee camp, but I decided to share my story and speak out so that you readers could hear the untold real-life experiences of so many girls and women still trapped in the camps, with the hope of establishing truth and justice.--Asia News



7 november, 2019

"Nous avons envoyé de l'aide humanitaire aux Kurdes" (Vice-ministre israélienne des AE)

Israël a reçu de nombreuses demandes d'aide en matière diplomatique et humanitaire"

"Israël aide et continuera d'aider les Kurdes autant que possible", a déclaré mercredi à la Knesset la vice-ministre des Affaires étrangères Tzipi Hotovely.

Hotovely a toutefois précisé qu'elle ne pouvait pas entrer dans les détails sur la manière dont Israël aide les Kurdes en Syrie, car cela pourrait nuire à leur cause.

"Israël a reçu de nombreuses demandes d'aide en matière diplomatique et humanitaire. Nous les aidons de plusieurs façons", a dé-



In this Monday, Oct. 14, 2019 photo, Turkish troops deploy in Syria's northern region of Manbij. Syrian state media said Tuesday that government forces have entered the center of the once Kurdish-held northern town of Manbij and raised the national flag

claré Hotovely.

En outre, le ministère des Affaires étrangères a aidé des organisations non gouvernementales à pourvoir de l'aide humanitaire aux Kurdes. "Le soutien d'Israël envers les Kurdes repose sur des liens historiques... [et] des intérêts partagés", a-t-elle ajouté. "Il y a beaucoup de Juifs kurdes en Israël qui ont maintenu des liens avec leur lieu d'origine."

Le député de Bleu Blanc, Zvi Hauser a introduit la motion à l'ordre du jour, accusant le gouvernement de ne pas avoir anticipé la crise des Kurdes.



7 november, 2019
By Wladimir van Wilgenburg

UK FM says UN should investigate white phosphorus allegations

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab on Tuesday expressed concern about reports of the alleged use of white phosphorus in Syria in Turkish-backed operations against the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

"We are very concerned by the reports—which have not yet been fully verified, as we have said—and we want to see a swift and thorough investigation by the UN Commission of Investigation. That is what we are pressing for."

Conservative MP Crispin Blunt asked the British Foreign Secretary if the UK would hold Turkey and its local allies to account. "There is now pretty incontrovertible evidence that white phosphorus has been used as a weapon against civilians, if not other chemical weapons, either by the Turks or by their Syrian auxiliary allies. This is a matter of immense seriousness," he argued.

Earlier concerns have been raised over Britain's sales of phosphorus products to Turkey amid evidence the incendiary chemical has been used against Kurds in northeastern Syria, *The Times* reported.

The UK earlier stopped further export licenses for items that could be used in military operations in Syria after Turkey launched its attack on SDF forces on Oct. 9.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) head, Fernando Arias, told reporters on Tuesday that white phosphorus cannot be used as a chemical weapon and is used as a conventional armament to produce smoke as incendiary weapon or light. He stated that it therefore "doesn't fall under the chemical weapons treaty."

However, Kurdish activists are concerned the OPCW doesn't want to investigate the case after the organization on Oct. 17 received €30,000 from Turkey for the Future OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology.



Mohammed Hamid, 13, suffered significant burns to half of his body during a Turkish assault on the northern Kurdish town of Serekaniye on Oct. 18, 2019. (Photo: Kurdistan 24)

A leading British chemicals expert, Hamish de Bretton Gordon, a former commander of the UK's chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear regiment, told Kurdistan 24 that the UN could investigate the incident, even if the OPCW does not wish to pursue it.

"White phosphorus is legal as illumination or a smoke screen," he told Kurdistan 24. "But it is illegal under Protocol 111 of the Geneva Convention to use as an incendiary device against civilians as appears in the case here."

He added that there is "there is plenty of evidence that this is white phosphorus, but very little evidence of who is responsible."

"No NATO countries appear to be keen to investigate, which again as this is in Syria would be extremely difficult," he added.

The Syrian Kurdish Red Crescent so far has provided evidence to human rights organizations and others who are interested.

According to a report, Abbas Mansouran, a Swedish-national doctor in northeastern Syria, has seen around 30 cases of "burn types very different to those I would expect to have been caused by anything other

than a chemical incendiary weapons like white phosphorus."

One example is Mohammed Hamid, 13, who suffered significant burns to half of his body during a Turkish assault on the northern Kurdish town of Serekaniye on Oct. 18. He was transported from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to France to be treated for his significant wounds.

The Turkish Defense Ministry has denied it used white phosphorus. However, it is also possible that Turkey's rebel allies could have used the weapon.

Hamish de Bretton Gordon confirmed white phosphorus could be used in artillery and mortar attacks.

In a 2016 Amnesty report, Aleppo-based rebel groups used chemical weapons as well as hell cannon gas canister munitions against Kurdish armed groups in Aleppo.

One of the groups, the Army of Islam, admitted in 2016 that one of its leaders used an "unauthorized weapon". The group now participates in the Turkish-backed operation in the

Un médecin bénévole chrétien meurt en Syrie

L'homme était membre de l'organisation chrétienne Free Burma Rangers, que le Figaro Magazine avait accompagné en juin dernier.

Le 3 novembre dernier, à quatre kilomètres au nord de Tel Tamer, dans le nord-est de la Syrie, une frappe de mortier a coûté la vie à Zau Seng, un ranger chrétien originaire de l'État Kachin, en Birmanie. Engagé depuis 2006 avec l'organisation Free Burma Rangers (FBR), l'homme en était à son 9^e déplacement dans la région. «Nous sommes tristes d'annoncer que notre cameraman et médecin a été tué aujourd'hui par une frappe de mortier opérée par l'Armée Syrienne Libre / l'armée turque qui a touché l'endroit où nous étions installés pour traiter des blessés, a commenté David Eubank, le fondateur du FBR. Notre coordinateur et interprète irakien a été également touché, mais ses jours ne sont pas en danger.» Et d'ajouter : «Zau Seng laisse derrière lui une femme et une fille d'un an.»

L'ONG qui vient en aide aux peuples chrétiens de Birmanie depuis 1997 a décidé, en 2016, de déporter son action en Irak et en Syrie pour



Lau Seng (à gauche) FBR

combattre l'État Islamique. Dans un reportage publié dans le Figaro Magazine en juin dernier, nous avons accompagné ces rangers qui, animés

par leur foi chrétienne, s'engageaient aux côtés des soldats irakiens et des combattants kurdes. De l'entrelacs meurtrier des venelles de Mossoul jusqu'aux camps de réfugiés d'Al Hol et de Roj, les Free Burma Rangers ont pris durablement part aux combats et aux opérations humanitaires. Ces derniers jours, le FBR est en opération près de Tel Tamer, point de passage vers le front de Ras Al-Aïn, où les combattants kurdes subissent les bombardements de l'armée turque depuis le retrait des troupes américaines décidé par Donald Trump.

«Chaque voyage là-bas dure un ou deux mois, racontait le défunt Zau Seng dans une vidéo de l'ONG datée de 2018. Mais je veux continuer de retourner en Syrie, car le combat n'est pas encore fini. Les civils continuent de fuir, et nous leurs procurons des vivres, des soins et du matériel médical. Je veux continuer de les aider jusqu'à la fin. Si j'ai l'opportunité d'y retourner, je le ferai.» Le 2 novembre, la veille de sa mort, Zau Seng documentait l'intervention du FBR près de la frontière turque de la Syrie, sous le feu nourri des combats.

Salut militaire turc des footballeurs : pour Erdogan, l'UEFA a eu "une attitude discriminatoire"

Le président Recep Tayyip Erdogan a accusé ce jeudi l'UEFA d'avoir adopté une "attitude discriminatoire" contre la Turquie pour avoir ouvert une enquête disciplinaire après les saluts militaires effectués par ses joueurs lors de matchs disputés en pleine offensive turque dans le nord de la Syrie.

"Les athlètes qui représentent notre pays à l'étranger sont victimes d'une campagne de lynchage depuis le début de l'opération", a déclaré Erdogan lors d'une conférence de presse à Ankara. "Nous rejetons l'attitude discriminatoire, injuste et politique à l'encontre de notre équipe nationale et nos clubs", a-t-il ajouté.

L'enquête disciplinaire qui met le feu aux poudres

L'UEFA a annoncé le 15 octobre l'ouverture d'une enquête disciplinaire visant la Turquie et portant sur une potentielle "provocation politique" à la suite des saluts militaires effectués par ses joueurs lors de matchs contre l'Albanie et la France, qualificatifs à l'Euro-2020.

Les joueurs de l'équipe de Turquie ont effectué un salut militaire après avoir égalisé contre l'équipe de France le 14 octobre à Paris, un signe de soutien aux militaires participant à l'offensive d'Ankara contre les forces kurdes dans le nord de la Syrie. Ce geste a suscité l'indignation. Les médias turcs, pro gouvernement ont

tourné en dérision la polémique, publiant des photos montrant l'attaquant français Antoine Griezmann adressant un salut militaire au président Emmanuel Macron lors de la remise de la Légion d'honneur aux Bleus en juin, mais également après la finale du Mondial en Russie.

Quand l'un des athlètes de Macron fait ce geste devant lui, vous ne lui imposez aucune sanction ?

"Quand l'un des athlètes de Macron fait ce geste devant lui, vous ne lui imposez aucune sanction ? ", s'est indigné le président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan ce jeudi en défendant le droit des athlètes turcs "de saluer nos soldats après une victoire".



7 november, 2019
By Ellen Mitchell

Pentagon: Revenue from Syria oil fields going to Kurdish-led forces

Revenue from oil fields that U.S. forces are protecting in northeast Syria will go to U.S. partner forces in the region and not the United States, the Pentagon's top spokesman said Thursday.

"The revenue from this is not going to the U.S., this is going to the SDF," Jonathan Hoffman told reporters at the Pentagon, referring to the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

President Trump last week gave the go-ahead for an expanded military operation to secure expansive oil fields in eastern Syria, and the Pentagon has already sent new troops and armored vehicles to the area.

The new plan backtracks on Trump's original desire to pull all U.S. forces from Syria, and now has hundreds of U.S. troops protecting a stretch of nearly 90 miles from Deir el-Zour to al-Hassakeh that is currently controlled by Kurdish forces.

Trump on Friday still insisted that "we want to bring our soldiers home," but left soldiers in the country "because we're keeping the oil."

"I like oil. We're keeping the oil," he told reporters on the White House lawn.

Later that day at a rally in Tupelo, Miss., Trump told the crowd the United States would distribute the oil to "help out the Kurds and we'll help out other people. We'll also help out ourselves if that's OK."

Defense Secretary Mark Esper, when asked last week by reporters about Trump's claims, said he interprets the president's words "as, deny ISIS access to the oil fields, secure them so that they are denied access to the oil fields."

But details of that plan still remain unclear — as it raises the legal question of whether American forces would be able to attack Syrian or Russian forces if they threatened the security of the oil.

"We work to ensure that no one approaches and shows hostile intent to our forces and if they do our commanders maintain the right of self defense," Hoffman said on Thursday when asked repeatedly if U.S. forces were there to keep Syrian or Russian government actors from accessing the area.

Pentagon officials also insisted that the U.S. mission in Syria still remains the defeat of ISIS.

"The mission is the defeat of ISIS. The securing of oil fields is a subordinate task to that mission and the purpose of that task is to deny ISIS the revenues from that oil infrastructure," said Joint Staff Vice Director Navy Rear Adm. William Byrne, who spoke alongside Hoffman.

Hoffman and Byrne would not say if ISIS actually has the ability to seize the oil fields, given its lack of armor and aircraft, only offering that U.S. forces are focused on preventing that from happening.

The comments add to an already confusing picture of the U.S. role in Syria following Trump's order last month to pull all U.S. troops from the country ahead of a Turkish offensive into Syria. The move appeared to give Ankara the green light to attack the Kurds, who have been instrumental in the U.S. fight against ISIS.

After condemnation from allies and massive pushback from congressional Democrats and Republicans alike, Trump imposed sanctions on Turkey but quickly lifted them as part of a cease-fire agreement brokered by Vice President Pence.

There have since been reports of Turkish violations of the cease-fire, but Byrne said it is holding and while there have been some skirmishes, "it appears that all parties are adhering to the rules."

Hoffman added that the SDF are still "our partners and we are still working with them in our fight against ISIS and we're still going to provide them with the support and ability to be able to continue that fight."

He also said that Washington expects Turkey to investigate reports of Ankara-backed forces allegedly committing war crimes in Syria and to "hold those people to account."



8 november, 2019
By Wladimir van Wilgenburg

Elderly Kurdish civilian dies after assault by Turkish-backed group in Syria's Afrin

Suleyman Hamko, a 73-year-old man from a village in northern Syria, died on Tuesday from injuries sustained while being assaulted by members of a Turkish-backed militia.

Hamko was from the Kanî Gewirkê village, on the road between the city of Afrin and

Jindiris, and had no reported affiliation to any Kurdish parties. A local source who wished to remain anonymous for security reasons told Kurdistan 24 that Hamko was a "communist who was very critical of Turkey and the FSA [Free Syrian Army]."

Kanî Gewirkê is under the control of the Suleyman Shah

Brigade, led by Mohammad al-Jassim, who is also known as Abu Amsha.

Earlier in August, Hamko was previously assaulted by three masked men in his house. He claimed at the time that his attackers stole all his possessions and cash savings.

On Nov. 1, he was attacked again by militia members. The news site Afrin Post claimed the attack was allegedly carried out by members of Ahrar al-Sharqiya and the Suleyman Shah Brigade, but which group or groups were actually responsible could not be independently verified.

Unlike the August attack, the cir-

cumstances suggest that it was a targeted assault rather than a violent act of theft.

"They didn't break in to steal money because everything in the house was intact and untouched. He even had money in his pocket," said the source. "They attacked him to kill him."

He was reportedly hit on the head with a metal canister of cooking gas. After family members later found him unconscious on the floor, he was transported to a hospital in nearby Marea where he died from his injuries.

A religious decree by the Turkish-backed Syrian Islamic Council released in February banned fighters backed by Ankara from taking "houses, furniture or property" from Kurdish or non-Kurdish civilians, but armed groups continue to violently raid houses of often elderly civilians, beating them and stealing their money.

A report published by the Rojava



Information Centre (RIC) on Thursday documents cases of civilians being killed while trying to defend themselves "against looting by armed gangs."

In early October, an elderly man named Adnan Rashid was shot dead in the Midanki village outside Afrin after members of a Turkish-backed faction tried to rob his shop, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported.

Both 74-year-old Houria Mohammed Bakr and her 78-year-old husband Muhyiddin Ose died after being assaulted by the



Jabhat al-Shamiya group on Aug. 25, reported SOHR and the news website Xeber 24. In mid-September, the 3rd Legion, which includes Jabhat al-Shamiya, claimed on social media to have arrested individuals involved in the incident.

Independent human rights organizations and the United Nations have, on multiple occasions, confirmed a sustained campaign of human rights violations by Turkish-backed groups in Afrin.

Read More: UN: Turkish-backed forces continue to commit war crimes in Afrin

Rupert Colville, the spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said in late October that there have been several reports "of intimidation, ill-treatment, killing, kidnapping, looting and seizure of civilians' houses by the Turkish-backed armed groups in these areas."

Civilians were "seized by members of these groups from their homes or at checkpoints, accused of affiliation with specific Kurdish armed or political groups. The fate and whereabouts of many of those civilians remain unknown," he added.

Kumi Naidoo, Secretary General of Amnesty International, said in a report released last month that Turkey has given these armed groups "free rein to commit serious violations in Afrin and elsewhere."

"We call on Turkey again to end violations, hold perpetrators accountable, and protect civilians living under their control."

The
New York
Times

08 november, 2019
By The Associated Press

Turkish Military Vehicle Runs Over and Kills Syrian Protester

Kurdish residents of northeastern Syria opposed to the Turkish invasion have thrown rocks at Turkish and Russian vehicles patrolling the area.

Kurdish demonstrators throwing rocks at a Turkish military vehicle on Friday during a joint Turkish-Russian patrol near the town of Al Muabbadah in northeastern Syria. Credit...Delil Souleiman/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

IDIL, Turkey — A Syrian protester was killed Friday after a Turkish military vehicle ran him over as it drove through an angry crowd of protesters, Kurdish



Kurdish demonstrators throwing rocks at a Turkish military vehicle on Friday during a joint Turkish-Russian patrol near the town of Al Muabbadah in northeastern Syria. Credit...Delil Souleiman/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

forces and a Syria war monitoring group said.

The death reflects the increasingly complicated situation in northern Syria in the wake of the American decision to pull its troops away from the Turkish border. The decision was followed by a Turkish invasion and a deal between Turkey and Russia to jointly patrol a strip of northeastern Syria along the Turkish border.

Many of the region's Kurdish residents oppose the Turkish invasion and the patrols, which they say amount to ethnic cleansing of Kurdish-populated border areas.

The man killed Friday was among a group of residents who had chased and pelted a joint Russian-Turkey convoy with shoes and stones, prompting Turkish troops to fire tear gas to disperse the protesters.

Ten people were hospitalized, according to the Rojava Information Center, an activist group in Kurdish-held areas.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitoring group, said the man was run over in the village of Sarmasakh by a Turkish vehicle that was conducting a joint patrol with the Russians — the third such patrol under a cease-fire deal brokered by Moscow.

Videos circulating online Friday show a group of men running after the Turkish-Rus-

sian vehicles, throwing stones at them. A man is seen trying to mount one of the vehicles and then men can be heard shouting, apparently after the man is run over.

Other videos from the area show men, women and children pelting armored vehicles as they drive near a cemetery before speeding away.

The Turkish Defense Ministry said the joint patrol from the Syrian city of Qamishli to the town of Derik “has been completed as planned with due care and attention to the safety of our personnel and the public against the provocateurs.” It said the patrols were being supported by drones.

There was no immediate comment from the Russian military about the incident.

Mutafa Bali, a spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, tweeted that Turkish troops fired tear gas on protesters in Derik, injuring 10 people. The town is controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish-led militia, and American forces, but the Turkish troops were passing through on patrol.

The agreement with Russia — and a separate one with the United States — halted the Turkish invasion of Syria last month but fighting continues on the edges of the area now controlled by Turkey.

Nearly 200,000 people have been displaced by the fighting since Turkey invaded last month, and, according to the United Nations, 92 civilians have died.



8 november, 2019
By Roj Eli Zalla

Nearly half million people in northeast Syria face water crisis: ICRC

Nearly half a million people in northern Syria may soon be without clean drinking water as a key piece of infrastructure, damaged by Turkish bombs, remains out of service, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned on Friday.

Alouk water pumping station is located east of Sari Kani (Ras al-Ain) and provides clean water for the surrounding area including Hasaka city, Areesha camp, and al-Hol camp. It was damaged in a Turkish bombardment on October 11.

The facility was damaged a second time on October 29 and fighting in the area prevented repair crews from accessing the site. Syrian state media SANA accused Turkish-backed militias of preventing specialized teams from reaching Alouk.

Turkey “has cut our water and we have been drinking water from wells for ten days. I do not know what Turkey wants from innocent people,” Abu Dani, 63, a resident of Tel Tamer told Rudaw.



Residents queue for water next to a tank at al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria, on July 23, 2019. Photo: Delil Souleiman/AFP

The ICRC warned on Friday that the prolonged shut down of the pumping station could cause a humanitarian crisis.

“It’s imperative that we find a solution to this nascent water crisis. A water station that serves 400,000 people is a critical piece of infrastructure that must be put into action,” said Fabrizio Carboni, ICRC’s regional director.

“This is another example of civilians who are not taking part in conflict suffering from it nonethe-

less,” he added. ICRC and its Syrian branch are distributing drinking water to the affected areas.

Turkey launched its Operation Peace Spring one month ago with the goal of forcing Kurdish forces away from the border and establishing a safe zone to accommodate anywhere from one to three million Syrian refugees now sheltering in Turkey. Ankara considers the Syrian Kurdish forces, the People’s Protection Units (YPG) and the Syrian Democratic Forces

(SDF), a branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) with which it has been engaged in a decades-long conflict.

Turkish officials state that their military offensive is solely against the armed forces and not Kurdish civilians, but Kurds accuse Turkey of carrying out ethnic cleansing and demographic change.

The United States and Russia separately brokered ceasefires with Turkey, but clashes continue with each side accusing the other of violating the truces.

The M4 highway, the main east-west artery that runs across northern Syria has been cut by clashes, pushing all traffic, including humanitarian aid and basic goods, onto secondary routes, sending food prices soaring. The United Nations’ humanitarian office has noted a 20 percent increase in food prices.

There are also shortages of fresh produce in the markets after farmers were forced off their lands, the Rojava Information Centre reported.

Feeling betrayed by the United States, which greenlit Turkey's operation, the Syrian Kurdish leadership is appealing to European allies to take a firm hand with Turkey.

"EU-candidate Turkey is not the same Turkey you think you know – it is now a radical Islamist state and you, Europe, should un-

derstand that," Ilham Ahmed, co-chair of the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC) executive, told Reuters.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will meet with his British, French, and German counterparts to discuss Syria on the sidelines of the NATO leaders meeting in

London in early December, presidential spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin said, Anadolu Agency reported on Friday.

Erdogan has said Turkey will stay in Syria as long as other foreign nations remain in the embattled country and until "every last terrorist leaves the region."



9 november, 2019

Turkish police detain dozens of pro-Kurdish HDP youth council members

Turkish police have detained 29 members of the country's pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Council since Friday, the council said on Saturday.

The arrests, which include three members of the council's executive board and 26 members of the council, took place during home raids in multiple provinces Friday and Saturday, it said.

Arrest warrants have been issued for another 45 people in the scope of the same operation.

Ankara has intensified a crack-



down on the Kurdish political movement since peace talks with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) broke down in 2015. HDP lawmakers and mayors have frequently been dismissed from their roles or faced legal charges

for alleged PKK links in the years since.

The party's former co-chairs Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ were arrested on terror charges in 2016.

A total of 16 HDP mayors have been dismissed and replaced with a government appointee since the local elections in March.

HDP Youth Council Member Gülistan Yiğit, who was detained in the southeastern province of Diyarbakır, was subject to naked search and torture, the council said on Twitter.

The council has called for the immediate release of those arrested and vowed that it would not be intimidated by the Turkish government.



10 november, 2019

Syrian Kurdish refugees arriving in Kurdistan Region surpasses 15,000: KRG

The influx of refugees from northern Syria into the Kurdistan Region has surpassed 15,000 people since the start of a Turkish offensive in October, the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) said on Sunday.

In a post on Twitter, the JCC said 112 Syrian Kurdish refugees arrived through the Sehela border crossing, taking the total number of arrivals to 15,109 people, adding to the already 226,000 Syrian refugees that are currently living in the autonomous Kurdish region.

The current camps in the Kurdistan Region were built as a rapid response to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugee crisis emanating from the rise of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Over the past few years, the Kurdistan Region has been home to 1.8 million IDPs and refugees who fled from Syria and other parts of Iraq. Nearly four million Iraqis were displaced when the terror group emerged in northern Iraq in mid-2014.

On Saturday, Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani visited a Syrian refugee

camp in Bardarash to discuss the needs and requirements with camp management and international and local organizations.

The Bardarash camp currently hosts 2,619 Syrian refugee families, equivalent to about 12,000 individuals who fled to the Kurdistan Region following Turkey's military assault on northeastern Syria on Oct. 9.

Prime Minister Barzani also called on "the International community and the Kurdistan Region's partners to aid the KRG as it receives more refugees."

Un prêtre catholique et son père tués dans un attentat en Syrie

Un prêtre arménien catholique et son père ont été tués lundi 11 novembre dans le Nord-Est de la Syrie alors qu'ils se rendaient sur un chantier soutenu par l'Oeuvre d'Orient. Le double assassinat a été revendiqué par Daech.

La communauté arménienne catholique de Qamichli, dans le nord-est de la Syrie, à la frontière de la Turquie, a été terriblement frappée ce lundi 11 novembre. Son pasteur, le père Joseph Hanna Ibrahim, et son père ont été assassinés dans un guet-apens. À un barrage, semble-t-il, leur véhicule a été pris pour cible par des hommes armés à moto. Le père est mort sur le coup tandis que son fils est décédé lors de son transfert en ambulance vers la ville d'Hassaké. Un diacre qui les accompagnait s'en est sorti avec quelques blessures légères.

« Un acte ignoble, pensé, réfléchi » Les trois hommes se rendaient sur un chantier de reconstruction dans la province de Deir ez-Zor commencé



Les trois hommes se rendaient sur un chantier de reconstruction dans la province de Deir ez-Zor. GIUSEPPE CACACE/AFP

l'an dernier avec le soutien de l'Oeuvre d'Orient. « Ce projet vise à reconstruire des maisons, une église et des boutiques pour accompagner le retour des populations déplacées », explique Vincent Gelot, responsable des missions de l'Oeuvre d'Orient en Syrie. Les deux hommes ont été « assassinés au cours d'un acte ignoble, pensé, réfléchi », accuse le jeune homme.

Aussitôt revendiqué par Daech, cet attentat survient un mois après le début de l'offensive turque en Syrie. Pour Mgr Pascal Golnisch, directeur général de l'Oeuvre d'Orient, il est de la « responsabilité » des différentes forces en présence (Syriens, Kurdes et Turcs) de protéger les populations chrétiennes de cette région. Pourtant, s'indigne-t-il, « cette question n'a jamais été évoquée et ne fait jamais débat ». Pour Vincent Gelot, c'est

d'autant plus urgent que plus de la moitié des chrétiens de la région a fui depuis 2011.

Recrudescence des violences contre les chrétiens

Simultanément à cette attaque, la ville de Qamichli a été touchée par trois explosions. Celles-ci ont retenti près de lieux chrétiens, détaille Mgr Golnisch : une école tenue par des religieuses, une église et un commerce géré par un chrétien. « Cela présage sûrement d'autres actes », s'inquiète Vincent Gelot en rappelant qu'un attentat avait déjà visé les syriaques orthodoxes en juillet.

Ces attentats marquent une recrudescence des violences contre les chrétiens en Syrie. En effet, il s'agit du premier prêtre assassiné dans ce pays depuis le père Frans van der Lugt, tué en avril 2014. Selon Mgr Golnisch, un temps de prière et une messe devraient bientôt être organisés en France pour le père Joseph Hanna Ibrahim et son père.



12 novembre, 2019
By Hiwa Shilani

Syrian refugees lack basic services, need more support: JCC

The ongoing influx of Syrian refugees into the Kurdistan Region has increased the need for emergency and essential services, as well as winter supplies for camps, according to a government official.

The Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) on Tuesday reported that a total of 3,114 Syrian families, equivalent to 15,538 individuals, are currently residing in refugee camps in the Kurdistan Region, and more continue to arrive through "informal routes in the Sehela and Al-Walid villages at the border," with a daily average of 150-200 individuals since the beginning of Turkey's military offensive on northeastern Syria last month.



A Syrian refugee family arriving at the Bardarash camp in the Kurdistan Region. (Photo: JCC)

Hoshang Mohammed, Director General of the JCC, warned "Syrian refugees inside the camps in the Kurdistan Region require essential services and winter re-

quirements such as heaters and kerosene," urging local and international donors to provide additional aid.

"The Bardarash refugee camp requires proper WASH services, sanitation facilities, and shelter in preparation for winter," added Mohammed. The Bardarash camp was established in 2014 for internally displaced persons escaping the Islamic State and its infrastructure, tents, and facilities were not made for long-run suitability.

According to the JCC's report, "most of the population are women, children, and the elderly, and they need special care and attention, particularly during the winter season as temperatures dramatically drop and the majority of them unable to care for their families' winter needs; they have no source of income and they are

highly dependent on the assistance that they are provided.”

Mohammed also noted new Syrian refugees arriving in the Kurdistan Region are claiming there are strict security controls at the border inside Syria which are pre-

venting people from fleeing and that some have paid smugglers around 250USD per person to help them reach the border.

Out of the total number of Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region, over 12,000 refugees are shel-

tered in Bardarash Camp, and over 2,000 new refugees are staying at the Gawilan Camp. Some 180 new refugees are at the Domiz camp and the rest, around 2,000, are spread across cities.

Over the past few years, the Kurdistan Region has been home to

1.8 million IDPs and refugees who fled from Syria and other parts of Iraq. Nearly four million Iraqis were displaced when the terror group emerged in northern Iraq in mid-2014.

LE FIGARO

12 november 2019

Retour des djihadistes étrangers : il y a une « responsabilité commune », dit António Guterres

Le secrétaire général de l'ONU António Guterres a estimé mardi que la question des membres étrangers du groupe Etat islamique (EI) capturés en Syrie était une « responsabilité commune internationale » et qu'on ne pouvait pas demander à « l'Irak ou la Syrie de résoudre le problème pour tout le monde ».

« Il nous faut une coopération internationale pour résoudre ce problème », a déclaré António Guterres sur la radio RTL. Le secrétaire général de l'ONU, qui s'exprimait en français, est en déplacement dans la capitale française pour participer au Forum de Paris sur la Paix où sont attendus une trentaine de chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement. La Turquie a commencé lundi à expulser des membres étrangers du groupe EI qu'elle détient. Ces renvois

surviennent dans la foulée d'une offensive menée par la Turquie dans le nord-est de la Syrie, vivement critiquée par l'Occident car elle a visé les forces kurdes alliées de la Coalition internationale dans la lutte contre les djihadistes.

Les forces kurdes ont maintes fois mis en garde contre une résurgence de l'EI, qui profiterait du chaos sécuritaire provoqué par l'offensive de la Turquie. Ces forces retiennent encore des milliers de djihadistes, notamment des Français et des Américains, dans plusieurs prisons à travers le nord-est syrien, ainsi que des milliers de femmes et d'enfants de djihadistes étrangers dans des camps de déplacés. « Je crois qu'il y a une responsabilité commune internationale et (...) une responsabilité collective face à ces

combattants, c'est-à-dire qu'on ne peut pas simplement demander à l'Irak ou à la Syrie de résoudre ce problème pour tout le monde. Il faut qu'il y ait une véritable solidarité internationale », a insisté mardi António Guterres.

« Si tout le monde commence à jeter ces gens là les uns contre les autres, on aura inévitablement des terroristes qui vont se mettre (sic) en liberté et faire n'importe quoi d'une façon dangereuse pour tout le monde », a-t-il ajouté. Sur la question des femmes et enfants de ces djihadistes étrangers, António Guterres a estimé qu'« à (son) avis personnel, chaque pays devrait accepter sa responsabilité » de les rapatrier et « organiser les mécanismes d'intégration dans leurs sociétés respectives ».

lematin.ch

12 novembre 2019

Une manif pro-kurde réunit 2000 personnes à Bâle

Des manifestants ont dénoncé samedi les interventions turques et russes dans le nord de la Syrie, lors d'un rassemblement dans la ville alémanique.

La Turquie veut une « zone de sécurité » à la frontière avec la Syrie. Après avoir forcé le retrait des forces kurdes du nord de la Syrie, Ankara, aidé de Moscou, prend peu à peu position et fait face aux Forces démocratiques syriennes. Près de 2000 personnes ont manifesté samedi

à Bâle contre les hostilités dans les régions kurdes du nord de la Syrie. Le rassemblement, autorisé, s'est déroulé dans le calme.

Des manifestants ont dénoncé samedi les interventions turques et russes dans le nord de la Syrie, lors d'un rassemblement dans la ville alémanique.

La manifestation s'est déroulée dans le calme.



La manifestation s'est déroulée dans le calme. Image: Keystone



12 novembre 2019
Karwan Faidhi Dri

Kurdistan Region in need of a national force free from partisan, political influence: President Barzani

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region —Peshmerga forces must be free of political influence and remain neutral during party disputes, President Nechirvan Barzani told newly-graduated officers on Tuesday.

“[The] Kurdistan Region needs an armed national force which has modern discipline and principles,” said Barzani during the graduation ceremony of 233 officers at Zakho’s military college in Duhok province.

Barzani, who is the commander-in-chief of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq’s (KRI) armed forces called for “a force that is united and has a national thinking as well as being above all political, partisan, ethnic, religious and sectarian purposes. A force based on humanitarian and international deals related to war. A force that defends the country and its achievements,”

The Peshmerga is the main force protecting the Kurdistan Region from external threats. Control of Peshmerga forces is divided between both ruling parties of the KRI: The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

Mixed brigades were a success during fight against the Islamic State (ISIS) until the Iraqi Army and the Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF, known in Arabic as Hashd al-Shaabi) attacked Peshmerga forces in Kirkuk and other disputed areas between Erbil and Baghdad in mid-October 2017.

The offensive dismantled the previously-mixed units among Peshmerga forces after some PUK forces were accused by the KDP of treason. This Peshmerga withdrawal from disputed areas led to the loss of more than half of the territory Peshmerga controlled before the Iraqi offensive.

Barzani, who is also vice president of the KDP, emphasized that the Peshmerga should not be involved in political rivalry between parties.



President Barzani arrives at Zakho military academy on November 12, 2019. Photo: Rudaw TV

“It should not be the force of [political] parties and groups. It should stay away from internal disagreements and rivalry. Kurdistan’s Peshmerga forces should never be for political intentions and determination of political issues,” he said.

Zakho’s military college was founded by the KDP in 1996 but wasn’t incorporated into Iraq’s defense ministry until 2003. Approximately 7,000 officers have graduated from the academy, which involves nine months of training.

The PUK also has a similar military college in Sulaimani province’s Qala Cholan.

Unification of Peshmerga forces have been one of the key topics discussed between foreign military delegations and KRG officials in recent years.

Despite numerous calls for reform from Barzani and other KRG officials and commanders, no concrete steps seem to have been taken yet.

Masoud Salih is a military analyst and senior commander who attended Tuesday’s ceremony. He welcomed Barzani’s

speech.

“He showed a strong determination to make reforms within the Peshmerga because he knows that we really need to organize Peshmerga and be provided with the best training,” he told Rudaw TV.

He said that there are some basics for Peshmerga to be organized as per international standards such as a united military creed, receiving various training, familiarization with modern technology, following military discipline, good supply of weapons and the implementation of military law and courts.

Col. Myles B Caggins III, official military spokesperson for Operation Inherent Resolve, the military coalition to fight ISIS told Rudaw that the coalition hopes that current reforms will create a more united Peshmerga force.

“We know that the Peshmerga forces are going through a series of reforms, 38 reforms. These reforms are important to have the strongest, most effective, most united Peshmerga force as possible,” he told Rudaw on Tuesday.

The Times Leader 13 november, 2019

The Latest : Kurds protesting Trump's meeting with Erdogan

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on (all times local):

1:50 p.m.

Dozens of Kurds and their supporters are waving Kurdish and American flags outside the White House to protest President Donald Trump's meeting with Turkey's leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan (REH'-jehp TY'-ihp UR'-doh-wahn).

The protesters have gathered in Lafayette Park, across the street from the White House, and chanted slogans demanding that Turkey-backed forces withdraw from northern Syria.

Turkey launched an offensive south into neighboring Syria early last month to battle Kurdish forces allied with the United States in the fight against Islamic State militants.

Erdogan sees Kurdish forces in Syria as an extension of a separatist Kurdish group that's been fighting inside Turkey since the 1980s.

12:45 p.m.

President Donald Trump says the U.S. and Turkey are poised to expand trade between the two countries.

Trump is set to meet later Wednesday in the Oval Office with Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan (REH'-jehp TY'-ihp UR'-doh-wahn). Trump says he thinks that trade between the two NATO allies can quickly increase to about \$100 billion.

U.S. goods and services trade with Turkey totaled an estimated \$24 billion in 2017.

But right now, relations between the two countries are at their lowest point in decades. Turkey's decision to buy a Russian air defense system has angered the U.S. and other NATO allies.

Trump says the meeting will also cover Turkey's incursion into northeastern Syria to fight Kurdish forces that have been U.S. allies in the fight against the Islamic State group.

12:10 a.m.

President Donald Trump is to meet with Turkey's president at a time when relations between the two NATO allies are at their lowest point in decades.

Turkey has rebuffed Washington and has warmed ties with Russia, even buying a Russian air defense system, even though Turkey is a NATO member. Turkey also is facing a backlash over attacks on Kurdish civilians during Turkey's incursion into Syria.

Some in Congress have denounced President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (REH'-jehp TY'-ihp UR'-doh-wahn) for what they say are his repressive tactics at home and they say he should never have been invited to the White House.

Trump says Turkey has been a critical U.S. ally for decades, and he cites the strong economic upside to the relationship. He says the two countries have enough in common to overcome their differences.

AL-MONITOR

13 november, 2019

By Sarbas Nazari

Ancient Kurdish festival offers taste of enduring love, mysticism

Located in Iran's Kurdistan province, 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the Iraqi border, Hawraman is an ancient village with an unfathomable uniqueness. Houses have been built on rugged mountains, where a family's rooftop serves as the upper neighbor's yard, making the entire village resemble a gigantic stairway from afar. Sitting right across from the village is a massive garden that has much in common with the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Lifestyle in Hawraman has dodged the waves of 21st-century technology that continue to hit communities across the world. The architecture is characterized by walls erected with stones that are not transferred to the site but extracted from the very mountain they are built upon. What makes the construction style exceptional is "weshka kalak" or the "dry walls," to which cement is a stranger.

Hawraman is also home to the ancient Pir-Shalyar wedding festival, an intricate set of rituals performed amid the characteristic harsh snowy days and nights. Starting on the 40th day of winter, the festival's different stages take place over three days during three consecutive weeks after the 15th of Rebandan (early February). Re-



A view of the home to the ancient Pir-Shalyar Wedding, Hawraman, Iran/ Al-Monitor/Sarbas Nazari

bandan is a month in the Kurdish calendar that signifies a period when roads are typically blocked due to relentless snowing.

The exact historical context and origin of the ceremony continue to be an open debate among scholars. But what is performed annually is believed to be a centuries-old celebration of Pir-Shalyar's wedding, a revered white-bearded

religious figure and community leader who enjoyed inexplicable mystic powers. One narrative has it that at some point in the 12th century, Shah Bahar Khatun, the blind daughter of the King of Bukhara (now a city in modern-day Uzbekistan), travels along with a convoy to Hawraman, where she regains her eyesight thanks to Pir-Shalyar's divine healing

powers. To express her gratitude, she marries Pir-Shalyar, sending the entire village into several days of jubilation and a festivity mood.

There are also unsettled accounts as to what religion Pir-Shalyar followed. Muslim scholars, who insist he lived after the advent of Islam, have managed to introduce some Islamic elements into the ceremony. However, symbols of

such ancient faiths as Mithraism and Zoroastrianism — two pre-Islamic religions — also abound and even outnumber the Islamic ones.

The three hectic days of the festival involve a strict order, in which every step is closely taken and labor is divided among all locals. Unlike many religious rituals across the world, the Pir-Shalyar wedding festival heavily engages children. In fact, they are the ones who usher in the festival. "Khabar" is the first stage when they spread the news of the wedding by distributing to all homes walnuts picked from an old garden believed to have been looked after by Pir-Shalyar.

Before sunrise on the Wednesday in the second week, children mount rooftops to chant a traditional song in Kurdish. Afterward, in what seems to share some elements with Halloween in the Western culture, they perform "Kota Kota," knocking on one door after another. Neighbors either offer some treat or have to face a sudden trick meant to scare them.

But that's not an end to the children's role. "Klawrochna" is another ritual they exclusively lead. The Kurdish word literally describes a hole on every rooftop that catches the sunlight and leads it inside. Children rappel down a bowl, expressing loudly a wish for the couple inside to have more children. In exchange, the dish is filled with dried nuts or wheat before being pulled back up.

The place where Pir-Shalyar is believed to have used in seclusion for prayers.

Hadi, a father of two is happy his young kids always count the days before the festival starts.

"Children observe their part with more excitement and enthusiasm year after year," he told Al-Monitor. The ceremony, from his point of view, is what constitutes the "identity" of locals in Hawraman.

The wedding festival gathers pace with the sacrifice of cows and sheep on the same morning. Part of the meat is handed to all families who in return offer a dish of ingredients to contribute to "hloshena tsheh" a collective meal cooked for everyone in the form of a stew that includes pomegranates and mountain vegetables. To mark the importance of equality, all villagers have the same share from the same food regardless of the class they hail from.

The meal is followed by a collective mystic dance or "zikr" performed by long-haired dervishes dressed in traditional Kurdish clothes. Arms chained, they chant hymns and play the daf (a traditional percussion instrument) in praise of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, as well as other mystic figures. The ritual is succeeded by an overnight vigil of poetry reciting at a place believed to have been Pir-Shalyar's home.

Symbols continue to show their palpable presence well into the closure of the ceremony that falls on the Friday of the third week. The concepts of light, livelihood and blessing are manifested in a special type of bread locally known as "geta mazhga" baked by women who have had a less colorful role until now. Wheat and walnuts make up the main ingredients of the sun-shaped yellow loaves of bread, which are served along with yogurt and handed to the crowds who have congregated at Pir-Shalyar's grave, where tribute is paid to the religious figure before the festival is wrapped up.

Poor accessibility and unsafe roads coupled with little knowledge about the ceremony had for long kept the Pir-Shalyar wedding festival a secret from both domestic and foreign visitors. In recent years, however, the village has turned into a popular tourist destination gradually rising from obscurity. Yet for a village that remains largely intact and maintains rigidity to modern technology, tourism could be tricky and double-edged.

Zhiwar, a local and student of geography, is concerned about what he finds to be an unregulated growing number of visitors attending the festival. "It is not a show but rather a celebration enshrined in our lives here. But with the increasing number of tourists, it is gradually turning into a street performance watched by spectators, which is not what it is meant for," he told Al-Monitor.

A man prays outside Pir-Shalyar's shrine in Hawraman.

Farid, who owns a gift shop opposite the shrine's entrance, selling his own wood art and other locally produced handicrafts to visitors, laments how the festival is being "marred and harmed" by some tourists. "When they come, they keep jostling others to be part of the mystic performances, while they have little idea they are actually ruining it," he complained in an interview with Al-Monitor.

"It is our ceremony and they need to let it proceed the way it should." And that's not where it ends. "Some tourists leave behind lots of litter," Farid added. "They seem to be mixing it up with a Mediterranean beach, failing to understand that this is basically an ancient religious ceremony that invites utmost reverence."

13 novembre 2019

Faut-il être Kurde pour s'indigner devant ce qui se passe au Rojava ?

Alors que la France pleure ses victimes du 13 novembre 2015, une citoyenne française soutenant les Kurdes du Rojava, massacrés et chassés de leurs terres en ce moment-même, crie son indignation devant l'inaction de la communauté internationale.

« Je ne suis pas kurde

Je n'ai jamais mis les pieds à Afrin ni au Rojava. Et même si mes amis kurdes disent de moi que je suis une Kurde d'origine

française, mes liens avec eux sont avant tout des liens du cœur.

Je ne fais pas partie du plus grand peuple apatride au monde : plus de 40 millions de personnes sans Etat, sans droits et sans reconnaissance internationale.

Ni mes ancêtres ni moi n'avons vécu la promesse de l'Europe faite en vertu du droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes, d'un Etat kurde comme

d'un Etat arménien dans le Traité de Sèvres en 1920. Je n'ai pas vu la fin du rêve d'un Kurdistan libre par le traité de Lausanne en 1923 ni la trahison de la promesse d'Atatürk d'une autonomie kurde au lendemain de la guerre contre la Grèce.

Je n'ai pas vécu l'éclatement de ma famille, de mes proches, de mes racines et de mon histoire sur quatre nouveaux Etats par la création de frontières fixées au gré des intérêts économiques européens qui sont pour les

Kurdes autant de murs de Berlin.

Mon existence, mon histoire millénaire et mes hauts lieux historiques comme le village d'Hasankeyf vieux de 12 000 ans, n'ont pas été niés ou détruits.

Je n'ai pas été privée d'identité ni même de documents officiels prouvant mon existence ou appartenance à un Etat m'empêchant ainsi de circuler librement (300 000 Kurdes n'avaient pas

de carte d'identité en Syrie).

Je n'ai jamais eu peur d'être emprisonnée quand je parlais dans ma langue maternelle. On ne m'a jamais interdit de l'enseigner à mes enfants.

Je ne suis pas persécutée depuis près d'un siècle et n'ai pas subi les nombreuses répressions turques dont celle de Dersim (1938) parce que j'étais Kurde ou alévie (entre 70 000 et 90 000 morts, 10 000 déplacés).

Je n'ai pas subi le génocide de l'Anfal (1988 – Saddam Hussein a tué 182 000 civils kurdes dont 5 000 gazés à Halabja).

Je n'ai pas subi une politique ordonnant le déplacement des Kurdes, leur interdisant l'accès à l'éducation, à la propriété et à l'emploi et les privant de leurs droits civiques (Plan Mohamed Taleb Hilal en Syrie – 1963).

Je n'ai pas peur en allant manifester ni des représailles contre ma famille ni des inconnus depuis que trois militantes kurdes féministes et ferventes laïques Sakine Cansiz, Fidan Doğan et Leyla Söylemez ont été assassinées en plein Paris par un Turc que la justice française sait, preuves à l'appui, être téléguidé par le MIT, le service secret turc.

Je n'ai pas perdu un de mes proches dans la guerre contre Daesh depuis 2014 comme presque toutes les familles kurdes de Syrie qui ont vu mourir 11 000 des leurs et revenir 23 000 blessés ou mutilés.

Alors oui, je ne suis pas kurde pour toutes ces raisons.

Au mieux je ne peux qu'imaginer ce que les Kurdes peuvent ressentir de cette nouvelle et ultime trahison des USA, puis de la Russie mais également de l'Europe qui les livre pour la troisième fois en trois ans, à la fureur d'Erdoğan et à ses supplétifs issus des rangs de Daesh ou d'al-Qaïda pour la plupart.

J'ai du mal à imaginer ce que les Kurdes peuvent ressentir en



Image : Zin Kobanê (Suad Cimo), commandante des YPJ tombée le 13 octobre lors de combats contre l'invasion turque dans le village de Siluk, près de la ville frontalière de Girê Spî (Tal Abyad).

voyant le meurtre de Hevrin Khalaf, jeune femme de 35 ans, politicienne œuvrant pour un Moyen Orient laïque et démocratique, pacifiste et féministe, filmé et diffusé avec fierté par des membres de l'Armée Syrienne Libre, supplétifs islamistes de l'armée turque. Son corps disloqué au-delà de l'imaginable a été retrouvé avec des marques de viol, de lapidation et de tortures d'une extrême et rare violence. Hélas elle n'est pas la seule à avoir subi un tel acharnement.

Je ne peux imaginer ce qu'un peuple, dont 5000 des siens ont déjà été gazés, doit revivre quand tombent sur des civils innocents des bombes au phosphore pourtant interdites.

Mais tout ceci se passe si loin de chez nous n'est-ce pas ? Et pourtant, ce qui se passe là-bas nous concerne directement et aura un impact sur l'Europe qu'on le veuille ou non et certainement bien plus que sur la Russie et les Etats Unis pour qui tout ceci n'est que dommages collatéraux.

Parce que les Kurdes sont comme la communauté de l'anneau qui lutte contre le Mal qui s'étend partout sur la terre du Milieu. Ce mal qui se nourrit de la destruction qu'il provoque, ce mal que l'on nomme terrorisme islamiste et qui s'étend bien au-delà de l'Orient. Les Kurdes sont

ce rempart qui nous protégeait au prix de leurs vies. Et au lieu de leur en être reconnaissant, nous les avons trahis une nouvelle fois. Pauvres fous que nous sommes !

Nous laissons désormais la voie libre au terrorisme pour s'étendre jusqu'en Europe. Car c'est notre mode de vie qui est également menacé. C'est notre vision d'un monde libre laïque et démocratique qui est la cible de l'expansionnisme islamiste qui rêve d'un monde sous la charia. Et l'exception française est la cible idéale.

Les frontières turques sont perméables. Les liens entre Turquie et islamisme ont été maintes fois prouvés et le financement par la Turquie établi. Ce n'est certainement pas un hasard si Al Bagdadi, leader présumé de Daesh a pu circuler librement en Turquie et a été tué en zone sous contrôle turc. Erdoğan d'ailleurs utilise contre l'Europe exactement les mêmes armes que Daesh : utiliser nos peurs en semant la terreur ! Et que craint plus que tout l'Europe ? Que la Turquie ouvre ses frontières pour «submerger» l'Europe des 3,5 millions de réfugiés syriens qu'elle «accueille». Le fera-t-elle vraiment ? Rien n'est moins sûr. Avec discernement et pour alimenter nos peurs, elle distille régulièrement le doute en laissant échapper quelques vagues de migrants mais jamais trop. Car

ne l'oublions pas, les réfugiés syriens sont nécessaires voire indispensables à Erdoğan pour changer la démographie du Kurdistan. Ils sont même la clé de voûte de son projet. D'ailleurs, la Turquie s'est vite trouvée un autre levier : les djihadistes de nationalité européenne.

Depuis toujours, la réponse à la question kurde d'Erdoğan qui ne rêve que de retrouver la splendeur de l'Empire ottoman, est et a toujours été la suivante :

- 1 – Éliminer toutes les forces armées de résistance kurde soit plus de 50 000 personnes.
- 2 – Changer la démographie du Kurdistan en l'arabisant avec les 3,5 millions de réfugiés
- 3 – Confier la gouvernance de la région aux « Syriens » qui ne sont ni plus ni moins que les djihadistes d'al Qaïda ou de Daesh que nous combattons et qui se sont réfugiés en Turquie.

C'est exactement ce qu'il fait déjà à Afrin et qui est connu de toute la communauté internationale !

Alors abandonner les kurdes pour qu'ils finissent massacrés ou entassés dans des camps, c'est bien plus que perdre notre humanité et nos valeurs, le sens de l'honneur et celui de la parole donnée.

C'est perdre tout ce qui construit une société pour aller vers le chaos ! J'attends autre chose de la France comme la très grande majorité des français, une autre vision des relations avec nos alliés à travers le monde, un autre choix de société. »

Christine Valain – Citoyenne française et membre de l'association humanitaire Soleil Rouge France – RojaSor

PS – Je dédie ce texte à Charb, à l'équipe de Charlie Hebdo ainsi qu'à tous ceux, Kurdes et autres, que le terrorisme islamiste a tués, pour qu'ils ne soient pas morts en vain.



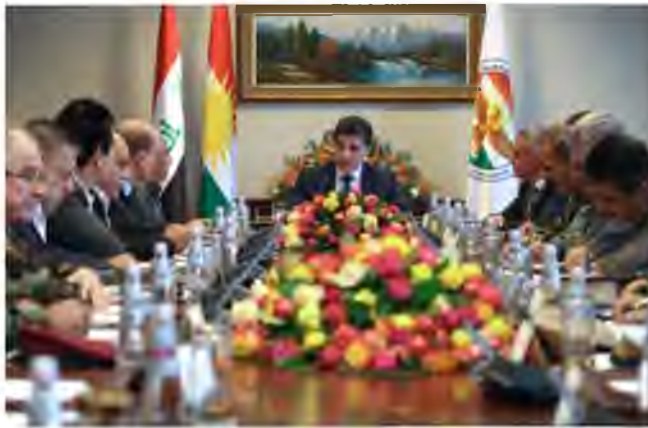
13 november, 2019

Nechirvan Barzani Reiterates on the Reform Process of MOPA

President of the Kurdistan Region and Commander-in-Chief of Peshmerga Forces, Nechirvan Barzani met with the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs and Commanders of Peshmerga Forces to assess the latest developments of its reform process.

President Barzani reiterated the importance of the reform process within the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs. For this reason, President Barzani assigned relevant sides from the Kurdistan Region Presidency and the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs to establish special committees that review and follow up on the reform process and reorganise the ministerial structure and its administrative and legal affairs.

During the meeting, the necessary steps for the



reform process and unifying Peshmerga forces were discussed in detail. Both sides highlighted the challenges the reform process is facing and

assessed a number of suggestions.

Officials in the meeting recognized and greatly appreciated the support and backing of the International Coalition. In particular, the role of the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. It was also decided to hold periodic meetings to follow up on the progress of the reform process.

Both Vice Presidents of the Kurdistan Region, the Minister of Peshmerga Affairs and commanders of Peshmerga Forces attended the meeting.

REUTERS 13 november 2019
By Ece Toksabay

Turkey removes four more Kurdish mayors over alleged terror links

Turkey removed four more mayors on Wednesday as part of a widening government crackdown on the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), bringing to 20 the number of mayors who have been dismissed after being elected earlier this year.

President Tayyip Erdogan and his government accuse the HDP of having links to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group, leading to prosecutions of thousands of its members and some leaders. The HDP denies such links.

Turkey's interior ministry appointed local governors in place of the mayors in the two districts of Diyarbakir, the largest city in the country's mainly Kurdish southeast. Two mayors from districts of Sirnak and Tunceli provinces were also removed.

The HDP governs many cities in the southeast of Turkey and typically appoints one male and one female co-mayor to promote gender equality.

The former co-leaders of the HDP have both been jailed since 2016 on terrorism charges,

with several other prominent members accused of supporting terrorism over what the government says are links to the PKK.

The moves against the HDP come amid a Turkish military offensive in neighbouring Syria against the YPG Kurdish militia, which Ankara also accuses of ties to the PKK.

The HDP is the only party in the Turkish parliament that opposed the offensive in northeast Syria that began on Oct. 9.

GREEK REPORTER 13 november, 2019
By Tasos Kokkinidis

Greeks, Armenians, Kurds to Rally Against Trump-Erdogan White House Meeting

A large protest at Washington's Lafayette Park across from the White House is being organized before the Trump-Erdogan meeting on Wednesday by Hellenic, Ar-

menian, Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac-American, Kurdish-American, Arab-American and other human rights groups. The call for protest accuses Erdogan of a long

list of wrongdoings, including destroying democracy, desecrating churches, invading Syria, killing Kurds and denying genocide. The Order of AHEPA and the Armenian Na-

tional Committee have invited all members of the public to meet at 12 PM in Lafayette Square to voice opposition to Trump's meeting with Erdogan, who has drawn international outrage for launching military strikes in North-eastern Syria — uprooting hundreds of thousands of civilians and killing dozens more.

AHEPA President George Horiates said the organization is calling on all chapters nationwide to help defy Erdogan.

"We call upon all AHEPAs to attend a peaceful demonstration to encourage the West to stop turning a blind eye toward Turkey," Horiates said. "Defend Hellenism now. It is needed more than ever."

The Chicago-based Hellenic American Leadership Council also released an official statement condemning the meeting.

"Turkey is not a friend of the US, and Turkey's President Erdogan should never have been invited to the White House," Public Affairs Director Thanos Davelis said. "His regime leads the world in jailing journalists; violates human rights at home and abroad; occupies the northern part of Cyprus; invades Greek airspace; tramples on religious freedom; helps Iran evade sanctions; purchases Russian missiles; attacks US partners and allies; engages in ethnic cleansing in northeast Syria; and continues to deny genocide."

American Hellenic Institute (AHI) President Nick Larigakis wrote to President Donald J. Trump to convey the Institute's profound disappointment that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will visit the White House on November 13, 2019.

"Turkey is not a friend of the United States, let



Demonstrators during Erdogan's last visit to D.C. in May of 2017

alone an ally. We vehemently opposed your invite to Mr. Erdogan because his authoritarianism must not be rewarded or dignified with a visit to the White House," Larigakis wrote.

"However, because the meeting it is set to take place, you must therefore deliver a clear, stern message that Turkey will be held accountable for its illegal activities in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean," the AHI president added.

Larigakis cited the laundry list of examples of how Turkey, under the Erdogan government, has been a consistent violator of the rule of law. As a result, the AHI president insisted that President Trump make it clear that there will be consequences for Turkey's illegal actions.

Larigakis expressed further disappointment with the State Department's opposition to two House-passed measures last week, a bill to impose sanctions on Turkey and a resolution to recognize the Armenian genocide, because

they risk further "straining relations with a key NATO ally."

Larigakis wrote, "Turkey has never proven to be a faithful NATO ally and the State Department's rationale for this position is moot and the evidence does not support it."

Aram Hamparian, executive director of the Armenian National Committee of America, attended the 2017 protests and filmed Turkish security personnel physically attacking demonstrators. Hamparian said he is helping to organize the protest.

"There's a right that has to be protected. That's the right of Americans to speak freely here in America and not ever feel as though they should be quiet or silenced because of threats and intimidation from a foreign government," Hamparian declared. "The law enforcement authorities are on notice and the world is watching."

ASHARQ  AL-AWSAT 14 novembre 2019

Barzani Visits Baghdad, Discusses Kurdish Fears on Constitutional Reform

Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani has launched a visit to Baghdad as mass protests continue to mount in Iraq amid a reform package by the government to appease demonstrators.

During his visit, Barzani discussed local and regional developments with each of Iraqi President Barham Salih, Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi and Parliament Speaker Mohamed al-Halbousi.

Following the meeting, statements issued by



the offices of Salih, Abdul Mahdi and Halbousi emphasized the discussion of well-known principles namely "the security and political situation, the relationship between the federal government and the Kurdistan Region and the importance of promoting stability in the country."

Ahead of Barzani's visit, Kurds expressed fears towards any constitutional amendment negatively affecting the rights of the Kurdish people. Erbil and Baghdad had long disputed over clauses in the constitution.

Barzani's visit to Baghdad follows a visit last week by Salih to Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region, where he held meetings with Kurdish leaders.

According to sources, the Kurdish leader-

ship stressed during its meeting with Salih that any constitutional amendment must preserve the federal system and the rights and freedoms of all components of Iraq, especially the rights of the Kurdistan Region.

In his meeting with Salih, Barzani discussed "amendments planned for the Iraqi constitution," deputy speaker Bashir Haddad told reporters in Baghdad.

Haddad pointed out that Barzani affirmed

the region's "support for any constitutional amendments that serve Iraq and ensure better services to the Iraqi people in general."

Barzani reiterated this position during his meeting with Halbousi, saying "any amendments to the constitution must serve the interests of Iraq, the country's stability, and protect the constitutional rights of the Kurdistan Region and all of Iraq's components in general."



14 novembre 2019
Anthony Zurcher

Erdogan shows anti-Kurdish video to senators at White House

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sparked tensions during his US visit when he showed Republican senators an anti-Kurdish video, US media say.

On Wednesday Mr Erdogan played the video on an iPad during a White House meeting with President Trump and the lawmakers who vocally back the Kurds.

President Donald Trump mostly observed the interaction, sources told US media.

Mr Trump has been widely criticised in the US for his decision to withdraw troops from Syria's border region.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) - which are supported by the US - played a leading role in the fight against Islamic State (IS) militants.

The senators involved in Wednesday's meeting were Lindsey Graham, Ted Cruz, Rick Scott, Joni Ernst, and Jim Risch.

All five have sharply criticised Mr Erdogan's October move against Kurdish forces in Syria following Mr Trump's announcement to pull US troops.

Turkey regards the Kurdish fighters as terrorists and is seeking to turn the area into a "safe zone" for resettling the Syrian refugees currently in Turkey.

Mr Erdogan reportedly believed he might change the senators' views on the Kurds by showing them the short film, but instead received pushback from the entire group.

After viewing the film, Mr Graham asked Mr Erdogan if he wanted him "to go get the Kurds to make one about what you've done", prompting a heated discussion, a source present during the



meeting told the Axios news website, which first reported the incident.

Media playback is unsupported on your device

Media captionThe BBC's Martin Patience explains what's behind the conflict in northern Syria.

Mr Trump only occasionally intervened in the conversation as the senators took turns debating Mr Erdogan.

The US president said during a news conference on Wednesday he was a "big fan" of Mr Erdogan. He has previously said that the Kurds are "not angels".

President Trump had invited the lawmakers to speak to Mr Erdogan to try to persuade him to avoid buying Russian military equipment, administration sources told US media.

Turkey has been threatened with sanctions if it continues to deploy Russian defence systems.

The senators have said they will not allow Turkey to purchase US fighter jets if Mr Erdogan continues to procure equipment from Russia.

Following the meeting, Mr Cruz released a statement saying he has always viewed Turkey as "a deeply problematic ally, but an ally nonetheless".

"While our alliance with Turkey is important to maintaining US national security interests, Turkey's assault against our Kurdish allies, who have a long history of standing with America against our enemies, is absolutely unacceptable."

Mr Graham "forcefully" rejected the "Turkish narrative that they have done more to destroy Isis", he told Axios, using an alternative name for IS. "I let Turkey know that 10,000 SDF fighters, mostly Kurds, suffered, died or injured, in the fight against Isis, and America will not forget that and will not abandon them."

Malgré les tensions et les controverses Trump reçoit Erdogan

Le locataire de la Maison-Blanche s'enorgueillit de savoir négocier avec les dirigeants autoritaires. Mais ses tractations avec M. Erdogan au cours des semaines écoulées ont été pour le moins chaotiques, suscitant de réelles interrogations sur sa stratégie dans la durée, en Syrie.

Le président américain Donald Trump a reçu hier à la Maison-Blanche son homologue turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, pour évoquer la Syrie, le sort des prisonniers terroristes ou encore l'Otan. La conférence de presse commune des deux dirigeants, prévue en début d'après-midi, s'annonçait haute en couleur. D'autant qu'elle coïncidait avec un autre événement de taille à Washington: les premières auditions publiques au Congrès dans l'enquête, en vue d'une éventuelle destitution de Donald Trump. Le locataire de la Maison-Blanche s'enorgueillit de savoir négocier avec les dirigeants autoritaires. Mais ses tractations avec M. Erdogan au cours des semaines écoulées ont été

pour le moins chaotiques, suscitant de réelles interrogations sur sa stratégie dans la durée, en Syrie. Après l'annonce par M. Trump du retrait des troupes américaines déployées dans le nord-est de la Syrie, Ankara a lancé 9 octobre une offensive militaire visant les forces kurdes alliées de la coalition internationale dans la lutte contre les jihadistes. «Ne jouez pas au dur! Ne faites pas l'idiot!», lançait alors M. Trump dans une lettre au ton surprenant adressée à son homologue turc.

Fortement critiqué, y compris dans son propre camp, il a ensuite durci le ton, menacé de «détruire» l'économie turque et autorisé des sanctions contre la Turquie, qui ont été levées après un accord conclu mi-octobre. Mais l'abandon des forces kurdes et la place laissée à la Russie dans le conflit syrien ont indigné nombre d'élus, démocrates comme républicains. «Nous pensons que le moment est particulièrement mal choisi pour recevoir le président Erdogan aux états-Unis, nous vous exhortons à reti-

rer votre invitation», ont écrit des élus des deux bords dans une lettre rendue publique lundi.

N'est-ce pas faire un cadeau à Recep Tayyip Erdogan que de le recevoir en grande pompe à la Maison-Blanche? «Nous nous devons de parler avec la Turquie sur la Syrie», répond un haut responsable du département d'état, sous couvert d'anonymat. «Il ne faut pas voir ce genre de visites comme des récompenses mais comme des outils de la diplomatie». Des outils d'autant plus indispensables que de nombreux dossiers qui fâchent sont sur la table des pourparlers entre Washington et Ankara, notamment la question des missiles russes S400 et le sort réservé aux milices kurdes des FDS-YPG alliés des états-Unis dans la lutte contre le groupe autoproclamé état islamique que la Turquie veut exclure de la zone de sécurité tout au long de la frontière turco-syrienne, les qualifiant de terroristes au même titre que le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK).



14 novembre 2019

Enquête sur les effractions ayant visé des journaux et personnalités arméniennes et kurdes

Question écrite n° 13055 de M. Pierre Ouzoulias (Hauts-de-Seine - CRCE) publiée dans le JO Sénat du 14/11/2019 - page 5696

M. Pierre Ouzoulias interroge M. le ministre de l'intérieur sur le cambriolage perpétré, dans la nuit du 19 au 20 octobre 2019, dans les locaux parisiens de l'éditeur des Nouvelles d'Arménie Magazine et d'Armenews.com. En effet, ils ont été forcés et plusieurs ordinateurs ont été emportés.

Ce vol est survenu très peu de temps après les effractions commises au domicile d'une journaliste d'origine kurde, fortement investie

dans la défense de la cause kurde, et de la responsable en France du Conseil démocratique kurde en France.

La concomitance de ces trois effractions et de l'intervention militaire de la Turquie en Syrie doit interroger et rend difficilement plausible l'hypothèse d'une simple coïncidence alors que les personnes victimes de ces effractions ont été très impliquées dans la dénonciation de cette agression militaire.

Aussi, il lui demande quelles mesures il souhaite mettre en œuvre pour élucider les

conditions de ces effractions, pour identifier les éventuelles immixtions étrangères susceptibles de les avoir commandées ou organisées et d'assurer, en France, la sécurité et la liberté d'expression des organes de presse, des journalistes et des représentants politiques qui interviennent sur le Proche Orient en général et sur les dossiers arménien et kurde en particulier.

Transmise au Ministère de la justice
En attente de réponse du Ministère de la justice.



15 november 2019

Turkish Embassy employee flashes 'fascist' salute at pro-Kurdish protesters in Washington

Chaos broke out in front of the White House on Wednesday when a Turkish Embassy employee was seen flashing a fascist salute at a group of protesters demonstrating against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, provoking a near-riot until police intervened, the Armenian Weekly reports.

"Baby killer Erdogan!" the pro-Kurdish demonstrators had been shouting. "Turkey out of NATO!" The man—later identified as Berkay Altinok—was seen arguing with a group of anti-Erdogan protesters carrying Kurdish flags outside the White House. While walking away, Altinok made the politically-charged sign of the Gray Wolf, prompting several protesters to peel away from the pro-Kurdish rally and give chase across Lafayette Park.

Inside the White House, Erdogan was meeting with US President Donald Trump, trying to smooth over heightened tensions between their countries.

"The gray wolf sign is not only associated with the Erdogan-allied far right Nationalist Action Party (MHP), but also with decades of paramilitary vigilantism responsible for pogroms, extrajudicial executions, and hate



crimes," wrote Dr. Aykan Erdemir, a former member of Turkey's parliament, in an email to the Armenian Weekly. Erdemir said it would be "correct" to describe the salute as "fascist."

One man was knocked down as police on horses rode in to protect the fleeing counter-protester. Protest marshals and organizers in yellow armbands ran to the front of the crowd, shouting at their fellow protesters to ignore Altinok and avoid clashing with the police lined up along H Street.

A protester also reportedly shoved Tuna

The incident evoked memories of a violent international incident in May 2017, when Erdoğan's entourage attacked a group of Kurdish, Armenian and American demonstrators outside the Turkish Ambassador's residence at Sheridan Circle. Eleven people were injured, and the House of Representatives unanimously voted to condemn Turkey over the incident. No one was hospitalized during Wednesday's incident, during which protest organizers successfully turned back the angry crowd as Altinok slipped behind police lines.

Sanli, a reporter for Turkish state television. "I extend my sincere best wishes to TRT News reporter who was attacked by the enemies of Turkey during live stream in Washington," the station's Director General Ibrahim Eren wrote on Twitter. "We will continue to transmit the truth without fear, no matter which part of world we are."



15 novembre 2019
Par Noémie Grynberg

L'histoire des Juifs du Kurdistan : il y a 2500 ans..

A lors qu'Israël fournit de l'aide aux Kurdes dans le nord de la Syrie depuis le retrait américain de la zone, Haguesher s'est penché sur l'histoire des Juifs d'Asie occidentale, vieille de 2500 ans.

Cette communauté se revendique comme les descendants des 10 tribus expulsées du Royaume d'Israël, pendant l'exile assyrien.

Le Kurdistan est une région moyenorientale éclatée entre l'Iran, l'Azerbaïdjan, l'Irak, la Syrie et la Turquie.

De nombreuses communautés juives de

ces territoires affirmaient y demeurer depuis plus de 2500 ans, depuis que les Juifs du nord du royaume d'Israël ont été envoyés en exil dans les régions kurdes d'Iran et d'Asie centrale. La majorité d'entre eux vivait en Irak jusque dans les années 1950.

Une communauté ancestrale

L'ancienne communauté kurde d'Irak puise ses racines dans le premier exil babylonien ; ses membres parlaient l'araméen, la langue du Talmud. Globalement, pendant des générations, les Juifs des zones kurdes ont vécu dans un isolement relatif. Beaucoup travaillaient comme agriculteurs, mar-

chands ambulants ou tisserands.

Au 12e siècle, certains Juifs fuyant les violences croisées en Syrie et en Terre d'Israël, ont trouvé refuge parmi les communautés du Kurdistan. A cette époque, plus d'une centaine y résidaient.

L'une des plus importantes se trouvait à Amadiya dans l'Irak actuel, où la communauté comptait environ 25 000 personnes.

Vers le milieu du 13e siècle, les Juifs irakiens ont à leur tour fui les grands centres juifs tels que Bagdad lorsque les Mongols

s'emparèrent du Moyen-Orient. Beaucoup ont ainsi rejoint les communautés juives autochtones des régions kurdes.

Dans l'ensemble, les Juifs kurdes semblaient très attachés à Sion; pendant des générations, ils aspiraient à retourner sur la terre de leurs ancêtres.

Au 16e siècle, les Juifs kurdes ont commencé à s'y installer, notamment dans la ville de Safed, en Haute Galilée. Des milliers d'autres ont émigré en Palestine mandataire dans les années 1920 et 1930.

L'époque contemporaine

Jusqu'à leur immigration massive et quasi totale vers le nouvel Etat hébreu à la fin des années 1940 et surtout au début des années 1950, les Juifs du Kurdistan (principalement d'Iran, d'Azerbaïdjan, d'Irak) vivaient en tant que groupes ethniques fermés, parlant des dialectes néo-araméens.

Sans statistiques précises, on supposait à 20 000 ou 30 000 leur nombre avant 1948.

Jusqu'en 1950-51, 146 communautés ha-

bitaient en zone irakienne, 9 en zone irakienne, 11 en zone turque et 11 autres réparties entre zone syrienne et azérie.

A la création de l'Etat d'Israël, les Juifs du Kurdistan subirent de fortes pressions de la part des autorités de leurs pays respectifs, surtout en Irak.

De 1950 à 1952, l'opération « Ezra et Néhémie », une série de ponts aériens préparée par le gouvernement israélien, permit le rapatriement en Israël de la totalité des Juifs kurdes d'Irak.

Ainsi durant ces années, le jeune Etat hébreu est venu à la rescousse des quelque 25 000 Juifs des régions kurdes irakiennes.

Pratiquement tous les autres Juifs des terres kurdes ont suivi leurs frères en Israël; on estime que seule une poignée de Juifs vit encore dans ces contrées.

La vie religieuse

Les communautés avaient pour coutume le

mariage à un très jeune âge et la prière sur les tombes des prophètes juifs. Ainsi, les Juifs kurdes vénéraient particulièrement le prophète Na'houm.

Chaque année, pendant la fête de Chavouot, ils se rendaient sur sa tombe, à Alqosh en Irak, pour y organiser des célébrations.

Au 17e siècle, la fameuse famille Barzani fit construire des yechivot dans tout le Kurdistan.

La lignée donna de nombreux rabbins et maîtres d'étude aux Juifs du Kurdistan mais aussi à l'ensemble des Juifs d'Irak jusqu'au 20e siècle.

Plus récemment, le rabbin kurde Zecharia Barashi, l'un des fondateurs de l'Association des Juifs kurdes en Israël, rédacteur d'un journal judéo-kurde et membre du Département d'éducation de la ville de Jérusalem, a été connu comme le doyen des Israéliens, mort à 117 ans !

15 novembre 2019

Kurdistan en Média

Armes chimiques au Rojava : L'OIAC veut-elle protéger la Turquie ?

BERLIN – L'Organisation pour l'interdiction des armes chimiques (OIAC) ne prend aucune mesure pour enquêter sur l'utilisation par la Turquie de produits chimiques dans la région kurde du Rojava.

Ulla Jelpke, députée de DIE LINKE, a interrogé le gouvernement fédéral sur sa connaissance de l'utilisation de bombes au phosphore blanc par l'armée turque dans le nord de la Syrie et de ses conséquences.

Les forces de l'État turc ont utilisé des armes chimiques interdites lors de l'invasion du nord et de l'est de la Syrie. Alors que le gouvernement allemand a jusqu'à présent fermé les yeux sur cette question, la députée Ulla Jelpke du parti de gauche allemand (DIE LINKE) a demandé au gouvernement si une enquête serait ouverte contre la Turquie à ce sujet.



Répondant à Jelpke, le gouvernement allemand a expliqué qu'il n'était au courant de rapports sur l'utilisation de bombes au phosphore que par le biais des médias, mais qu'il n'avait pas l'autorité nécessaire pour enquêter. L'Organisation pour l'interdiction des armes chimiques (OIAC) est chargée d'enquêter sur les allégations, a dit la réponse et a noté que l'OIAC a pris la décision de ne pas enquêter sur l'utilisation d'armes chimiques au Rojava (...).

Jelpke a vivement critiqué l'OIAC pour avoir « deux poids,

deux mesures », en disant : « Lorsque les troupes du gouvernement syrien ont été soupçonnées d'avoir utilisé des armes chimiques, l'OIAC a agi rapidement. Mais lorsque des enfants brûlés par les bombes au phosphore de la Turquie, État membre de l'OTAN, montrent leurs blessures, une enquête sur ces événements est refusée. Les agents de guerre chimique sont interdits dans le monde entier. J'attends donc du gouvernement fédéral, qui dispose d'une représentation permanente auprès de l'OIAC, qu'il collabore avec cette organisation pour clarifier les allégations contre la Turquie. Les crimes de guerre devraient faire l'objet de poursuites (...). La cohorte criminelle avec le dictateur Erdogan doit enfin être arrêtée. »



15 november, 2019
By Wladimir Van wilgenburg

Syrian Kurdish reporter wins distinguished journalism award

A reporter based in the embattled Syrian city of Qamishlo (Qamishli) received the David Burke Distinguished Journalism Award on Wednesday for extraordinary bravery and journalistic integrity in his ongoing coverage of the war in Syria for Voice of America's (VOA) Kurdish language service.

The US-government linked US Agency for Global Media, which operates state-run media outlets, announced that Faheem Omer, known as Zana Omer, was being recognized as a seasoned war correspondent who has repeatedly put his and his family's life on the line for his work.

"I was honored to have received this award. It has a special meaning for me, for someone who works with an international media outlet in his local language to report the sufferings of the war victims, people who have faced ISIS attacks and now attacks from Turkey," Omer told Kurdistan 24 in an interview.

Since starting work for VOA in 2014, Omer was arrested covering pro-democracy rallies in Damascus, escaped a kidnapping by an armed pro-Assad group, and forced to flee his home, which was destroyed in a 2016 double bombing claimed by the Islamic State.

In the attack, 44 civilians were killed. Omer, his wife, and two sons were injured and his residence was completely demolished. Omer stands in the the remnants of his home, completely demolished in a 2016 double bombing that was claimed by the Islamic State.

Despite his own hardships, he continued to put "immense time and effort" into providing regular reports to VOA "with information that



Syrian Kurdish journalist Zana Omer won the David Burke Distinguished Journalism Award on Wednesday. (Photo: Zana Omer/Social Media)

was not available anywhere else," the award announcement read.

"During recent events in northern Syria, under extremely precarious circumstances, including the destruction of his equipment from bombings, Omer's reporting was never interrupted and remained central to VOA's coverage from the region," the USAGM said.

"I can't think of anyone else that is more deserving of this award than Zana Omer," said VOA Director Amanda Bennett. "His courage, determination and dedication to the mission of the Voice of America has been exemplary and his contribution to our programming unparalleled."

Omer, who was not able to join the award ceremony in Washington, addressed the crowd in a video statement in which he dedicated his award to his fellow journalists who lost their lives reporting on the fight against "ISIS terror

and [the] recent Turkish offensive."

Omer told Kurdistan 24, "It has been an honor for me to report the bravery of the fighters who fought ISIS, and now face attacks from Turkey."

"As a journalist, I myself have been a victim of the conflict, I have had that experience, after [surviving] two explosions," he continued. "I am happy to receive this award, and I would like to dedicate it to almost 25 journalists who lost their lives on the front line against ISIS and Turkish attacks."

VOA's Kurdish language service reaches its audience on radio, television, and online. The USAGM presents the David Burke Distinguished Journalism Awards annually to recognize "courage, integrity and professionalism of journalists working for each of its five networks."



15 november, 2019
By Laurie Mylroie

US affirms opposition to demographic change in northeast Syria

Amb. James Jeffrey, US Special Representative for Syria Engagement and

Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, expressed Washington's concern that Turkey

might try to engineer a significant demographic change in northeast Syria and described the steps that

Washington is taking to prevent that. Jeffrey spoke at a press confer-

ence on Thursday, following the conclusion of a ministerial conference of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, which was hosted by the State Department.

Last week, The New York Times reported on a lengthy memo, written by Amb. William Roebuck, Jeffrey's deputy, detailing ethnic cleansing and war crimes conducted by Turkish-backed militias in northeast Syria. In light of that report, as well as Turkish statements about moving large numbers of Syrian refugees into the area, Kurdistan 24 asked Jeffrey if the US was doing anything to prevent a major demographic change.

"Ambassador Roebuck isn't the only one who's warned of ethnic cleansing," Jeffrey responded. "I did it many times in my testimony before the Senate and the House, now, two weeks ago, and more behind the scenes."

"I was just in Ankara," he continued, and "raised all of these issues, including the idea of moving people back."

In that diplomacy, Jeffrey secured a Turkish commitment that "any movement of people back into northeast Syria will be a return of people from the area, and it will be done in conjunction with the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and under the UNHCR rules of safe, dignified, and voluntary" movement, he stated.

Jeffrey also noted that the issue had been addressed in the joint



Ambassador James Jeffrey, US Special Representative for Syria Engagement and Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, during a press conference on November 14, 2019. (Photo: Kurdistan 24)

communique of the ministerial conference of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, which had just concluded.

"We urge all actors operating in northeast Syria to refrain from any action that could lead to change in the demographic structures in northeast Syria," paragraph five of the communique reads. As Jeffrey noted, Turkey, which added the ministerial conference, signed onto that statement.

The day before, on Wednesday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had a series of meetings with US President Donald Trump, and the two leaders held a joint press conference at the end of the day. Erdogan stated that he wanted to move a substantial number of the Syrian refugees now in Turkey to the "safe zone" that Turkey is carving out in Syria, along its border with Turkey.

"We're talking about an area of 444 kilometers in length and 32 kilometers in depth," Erdogan said at the White House briefing, and "one million people can be repatriated."

The Syrian refugees are overwhelmingly Arab. According to Turkey's figures, they number 3.6 million, of which 350,000 are Kurds, a figure that Jeffrey suggested was reasonable.

Thus, even by Turkey's accounting, the movement of one million people into that area would cause substantial demographic change, essentially creating an "Arab belt" separating the Kurdish inhabited area of Syria from the Kurdish area of Turkey.

Jeffrey suggested that US officials have been aware of this problem for some time, including last month, when Vice President Mike Pence led a delegation to Ankara to negotiate a ceasefire between

Turkey and the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG.)

Jeffrey pointed out that the issue was "cited indirectly in paragraphs three, four, and seven" of the Oct. 17 joint US-Turkish statement, establishing the ceasefire. "And I raised this repeatedly with the Turkish government, when I was out there last week," he said.

Paragraph four of the Oct 17 statement, for example, says, "The two countries reiterate their pledge to uphold human life, human rights, and the protection of religious and ethnic communities."

However, Turkish-backed militias subsequently violated that pledge and did carry out acts of ethnic cleansing, as both Ambassadors Jeffrey and Roebuck reported.

The statements made on Thursday—both in Jeffrey's press conference, as well as the joint communique of the Defeat ISIS Coalition—represent the strongest public expression from the US, and 26 other countries, of their opposition to any Turkish plans to alter the demography of northeast Syria.

Of course, whether that will be enforced remains to be seen, but there is, at least, a clear, official statement, on the record, that the US and other major powers, including France, Germany, and the UK, as well as the European Union and NATO, all oppose such a move.



16 november,
2019

Jailed Kurdish leader Demirtaş receives international award for political courage

Germany-based Progressive Alliance gave its 2019 award for special political courage to former chair of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Selahattin Demirtaş, who has been

in prison since November 2016. The Progressive Alliance encompasses over 130 organisations, including the Party of European Socialists (PES) and the Group of Socialists and Democrats in the Eu-

ropean Parliament.

Selahattin Demirtaş's wife Başak Demirtaş received the award in his name, while HDP's Deputy Chairman Hişyar Özsoy read a letter by

the jailed politician in the ceremony.

"Selahattin may be thousands of kilometres away in a cell, but I feel his heart beating in excitement here in this hall with me," Başak Demirtaş

said, calling for the release of all those unjustly imprisoned.

"International cooperation and solidarity is vitally important in the face of the incredible insanities of the existing order that threatens human life in its entirety," Demirtaş said in his letter read by Hişyar Özsoy.

"The task for socialists, social democrats and all other progressive forces is to find creative solutions towards displacements, destruction of nature, massacres against women and children, all kinds of racism, gender discrimination, unemployment, poverty, merciless terrorism targeting civilians, and many other problems," Demirtaş's letter said.

"A nice coincidence in Stockholm tonight. Progressive Alliance Awards 2019 was given to my friend and colleague Selahattin Demirtaş for his efforts for human rights and



peace," main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) lawmaker Sezgin Tanrikulu said in a tweet on Friday.

Former European Parliament Rapporteur for Turkey Kati Piri said Demirtaş dedicated the award to all the peoples of Turkey.

Selahattin Demirtaş faces up to 142 years in prison over various charges related to alleged links to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and remains in prison despite a 2018 ruling by the European Court of Human Rights for his immediate release.

A Turkish court in late October ruled for Demirtaş's release in one of the cases he faced trial for, which involved insulting Turkey's president, but a separate case prolonged his imprisonment.



16 november, 2019
By Jabar Dastbaz

'We were poor already': Kurds in Iran vow to continue fuel price hike protests

Hundreds of people blocked major roads with their vehicles in the Kurdish city of Sanandaj, western Iran to protest a government decision to triple the price of fuel. The demonstration later turned violent as police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the protesters.

US economic sanctions, imposed after President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal, have caused a large dent in the government's coffers as oil exports dropped dramatically. In response, the government of President Hassan Rouhani has tried to boost the petrochemical industry, including by increasing petrol exports to neighboring countries since late July.

Despite its huge crude oil reserves, Iran was a net importer of petrol for decades. However, oil minister Bijan Zanganeh announced the country had become self-sufficient in petrol production earlier this year.

The moment the government announced the price hikes on once heavily subsidized fuel on Thursday night, people took to the streets. Demonstrations intensified on Friday night,



Iranian protesters block a road during a demonstration against an increase in gasoline prices in the central city of Isfahan, on November 16, 2019. Photo : 2AFP

with one protester killed as crowds set a petrol station alight in the central town of Sirjan and attempted to torch the city's fuel depot. In Sanandaj, the vehicles blocked the main

roads of Firdaws, Iqbal Square and the three lane Adab road to protest the hike in fuel prices from 1000 to 3000 tomans and prevented any attempt to break the blockade.

"Unfortunately, this [price hike] was a sudden decision shocking us all," Ismael Shkur, a 50-year-old taxi driver participating in the blockade told Rudaw English. "It is just that I am roaming the streets until dusk for just 50,000 tomans [\$4] dollars a day."

To cope with the increasing fuel price, "taxi fares must be increased three times," he said, a decision largely "affecting the poor".

"I just cannot understand what made officials make such a decision. They want to deceive us into believing that with the increased fuel price, they can pay an amount of money to the people."

The Iranian public will not accept the price hike, Shkur said.

"We were poor already, and this decision will make us poorer," he decried, believing the state's decision will impact other aspects of life too.

"This decision will directly impact goods and services including food, and rent prices," he said. "Inflation has already haunted Iran. The anger of the people of Iran has indeed reached its peak. I will stay on strike, even if I know I will suffer financially."

Elsewhere on the Adab road, a 32-year-old

woman is encouraging other strikers not to end their protests.

"When I came from Saqqez to Sanandaj last night I paid 50,000 tomans, while just one day before, I paid just 20,000 tomans from Sanandaj to Saqqez."

"Why should we pay the price for our country's hostilities with America?" she asks.

"This is a simple indicator that this decision will impact every other part of life," she said.

"The problem is not just the fuel price increase," she explains. "Just now, my landlord called me and said I must pay an extra 200,000 tomans in rent [from next month] due to this decision."

Chronic poverty in the Kurdish regions of Iran has forced many people to use their private vehicles as taxis to make a living for their families.

"Though I had to pay rent and we were an impoverished family, we would still make ends meet as I was making a living out of this old modeled car. With this new situation, I will have to make money to pay for the price of fuel or rent for my home," said Abdulla Nasri, 50 who drives a 1995 model Peugeot.

He holds little hope the situation will improve.

"If taxi fares increase, I am sure people will choose to go on foot and maybe they will not even be able to set foot in a car. This will be true to me because I mainly work in poor neighborhoods," Nasri says.

"Now I have to think of getting another job and as you can see, I am a 50-year-old man. What can I really do?" he asked.

Students who make journeys between campus and their hometowns will also be impacted by the decision.

Among those protesting was a 21-year-old university student, who said Iran's battle with the US has created the current conditions.

"It is clear that US sanctions on Iran has created a situation that I have no doubt people will make people much poorer than they are," Zanko said, adding he is worried it will become increasingly difficult for him and his friends to visit their families.

"The cost of my round trips by taxi was just 50,000 tomans from Sardasht to Sanandaj and vice versa, but it has now become 150,000 tomans," Pizhman, a Sardasht native and third year student at university in Sanandaj said. "It will become very difficult for me to easily visit my family now."



17 november, 2019

Turkey arrests two journalists over terror charges

A Turkish court on Saturday ordered the arrest of two journalists on terror charges, Duvar news site reported.

Ruken Demir, a reporter for Mezopotamya, and Melike Aydın from Jin news agency were charged with conducting activities on behalf of a terror organisation, Duvar said.

Jin News Agency, which is staffed only by women, operates from the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir in Turkey's southeast and focuses reporting on Kurdish and women's issues.

It has been repeatedly shut down by Turkish authorities, who accuse the agency of making terror propaganda for the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), that has waged a decades-long insurgency in Turkey for Kurdish self-rule. Two journalists and several members of the Association for Assistance with Relatives of Prisoners and Convicts (TUHAY-DER) were detained in simultaneous police raids on Nov. 12, the news site said.



And members of the association were later released but they were banned from leaving the country.

The government's broad media crackdown has gained strength since the failed coup of July 2016. Some 115 journalists and media workers are currently behind bars, according to the Jour-

nalists' Union of Turkey.

In 2018, Turkey placed 157th out of 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index ranking by Reporters Without Borders, and remains the "world's biggest jailer of professional journalists" according to the report.

Syrie : Un civil meurt dans des heurts avec la police



Des manifestants syriens à Al-Bab jettent des pierres lors d'une protestation contre la présence turque dans le nord syrien. (Dimanche 17 novembre 2019)

Une personne est morte à Al-Bab dimanche lors d'une protestation devant le QG de la police. Les forces de l'ordre avaient tiré en l'air pour disperser les manifestants.

Un civil a été tué dans des heurts dimanche entre manifestants et policiers dans la ville syrienne d'Al-Bab, sous contrôle des forces pro-Ankara, après l'arrestation d'un suspect d'un attentat meurtrier commis la veille, selon l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'Homme (OSDH).

Dix-neuf personnes, dont treize civils, ont été tuées samedi dans un attentat à la voiture piégée à Al-Bab, dans le nord de la Syrie, avait rapporté l'Observatoire.

«La police locale de la ville a arrêté dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche un suspect, après vérification des caméras de surveillance sur les lieux, et l'a emmené à son QG, en vue de le livrer à l'armée turque», a indiqué à l'AFP le directeur de l'OSDH, Rami Abdel Rahmane.

Cela a provoqué la colère de la population et plusieurs centaines d'habitants ont ma-

nifesté devant le QG de la police, certains tentant d'y pénétrer par la force, pour réclamer que le suspect soit exécuté dans leur ville.

La police a tiré en l'air pour tenter de disperser les manifestants, tuant un civil et blessant un autre, selon l'Observatoire.

Un photographe de l'AFP a fait état d'habitants jetant des pierres sur le QG protégé par des blocs de béton, tandis que le feu s'élevait d'un véhicule militaire dans le secteur.

Attentat de samedi pas revendiqué

L'attentat de samedi dans cette ville située à 30 km au nord-est d'Alep n'a pas été revendiqué.

Mais la Turquie, pays voisin de la Syrie où elle maintient des troupes, a pointé du doigt samedi la principale milice kurde syrienne (YPG) qu'elle qualifie de «terroriste». Le ministère turc de la Défense a annoncé dimanche sur Twitter l'arrestation de l'auteur de l'attentat.

Ancien fief du groupe djihadiste, Etat islamique (EI), Al-Bab est le théâtre de violences, notamment d'assassinats, depuis sa conquête il y a plus de deux ans par les forces turques aidées de supplétifs syriens, selon l'Observatoire.

Ancien membre de l'EI

Citant des sources locales, le directeur de l'OSDH a indiqué que le suspect n'était pas lié aux forces kurdes, qu'il est originaire d'un village proche d'Al-Bab et qu'il avait été membre de l'EI quand le groupe djihadiste, contrôlait la région, avant de rejoindre un groupe syrien pro-Ankara.

En mars, l'EI a été vaincu dans son dernier fief, aux confins orientaux de la Syrie, par les forces kurdes soutenues par une coalition internationale dirigée par Washington.

Le groupe a toutefois muté en organisation clandestine menant des attentats meurtriers dans plusieurs régions de Syrie, où la guerre a fait plus de 370'000 morts et déplacé des millions de personnes depuis 2011. (afp/nxp)



17 november, 2019
KBy Kosar Nawzad

Iranian police kill 11, wound dozens more in protests erupting across the nation

On the second day of demonstrations that have spread to dozens of cities nationwide, Iranian security forces on Saturday killed or wounded upwards of 90 protesters mostly in Kurdish-majority regions of the country, a rights group reported.

Protests began on Friday after Tehran passed a new regulation on subsidized gasoline. The price was previously set at 10,000 rials per liter, but the government has decided to raise it by 50 percent. It also implemented a rationing scheme, doubling that to 30,000 rials per liter for anyone having already purchased 60 liters in one month.

Many Kurdish rights groups and watchdogs, including Hengaw and Kurdistan Human Rights Association (KMMK), reported on the number of casualties sustained during the demonstrations, which reportedly occurred in 30 Kurdish cities and towns.

Protesters chanted anti-government slogans and, in some cities, called for an end to Iran's foreign ventures, which includes funding of various armed groups throughout the Middle East, from Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine, to Yemen.

Tehran has usually deployed the militant paramilitary Basij force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to crack down on protesters.

Graphic images accompanying local reports showed people, including a teenage boy of 13, either killed or severely wounded amid a crackdown by the security forces. In the Kurdish city of Mariwan (Mariwan), "a Kurdish civilian by the name of Osman Naderi and another unidentified person were killed as a result of clashes between protesters and the security forces," according to local media organization KurdPa.

At least four deaths were reported in Mariwan, located in Kurdistan province, but



A mobile phone text message that a civilian reportedly received after appearing in anti-government protests in the city of Karaj, Alborz Province. (Photo: Social Media)

major protests also took place in Javanrud (Jwanro) and Sanandaj (Sine), both in Kermanshah province. In the latter, security forces shot at demonstrators, killing one and wounding 25 others.

Hengaw has logged a total of 13 dead and 79 injured in Sine, Mariwan, and Jwanro alone. Six people each had been killed in Mariwan and Jwanro. Tehran has also almost completely shut down access to the internet, according to web blockage observatory NetBlocks.

Along with this, local authorities in the southern city of Sirjan, in Kerman Province, reportedly attempted to deter protests by sending intimidating text messages to civilians they alleged had participated in the demonstrations. Similar tactics were allegedly used in the northern region of Alborz. A mobile phone text message that a civilian reportedly received after appearing in anti-government protests in the city of Karaj, Alborz Province. (Photo: Social Media)

"Your presence in today's illegal gathering has disturbed the public order and is an abuse against the revolution," read one

such message posted on social media. It added, "Repeated presence in these gatherings will lead to prosecution," signing the text with "Alborz Province Judiciary."

Demonstrations have taken place on multiple occasions over Iran's continued human rights violations, especially against minorities. Notable among these are Kurds, who make up a majority of the population in western provinces of the country but are denied political representation in the Iranian government.

The protests come amid underlying tensions between Iran and the West over Tehran's continued violations of the 2015 nuclear accord after the unilateral withdrawal of the US from the deal and reinstatement of sanctions that have crippled Iran's economy.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani claimed the revenue from the gasoline price hike would fund an aid scheme for low-income households, saying, "About 75 percent of people are in stressful conditions."



18 novembre 2019
By Mohammed Rwanduzy

Yezidi woman reportedly killed by Turkish-backed group in Syria's Afrin

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region – Nergiz Dawoud, a 23-year-old Yezidi woman from the north-west Syrian district of Afrin, was allegedly killed on Sunday by suspected Turkish-backed Syrian fighters, according to several sources.

Afrin fell under the control of Turkish forces and their Syrian militia proxies in early 2018 following Operation Olive Branch.

A source inside Afrin, who must remain anonymous to protect them from reprisals, confirmed the woman's identity in a series of voice messages sent to Rudaw, claiming she was killed by a group of armed men on Sunday in the village of Kimare.

Rudaw's source inside Afrin said it has not yet been confirmed who was responsible for the killing.

Ezidi 24, a local news outlet focusing on the Yezidi community, also reported Dawoud's death and accused Syrian proxies backed by Turkey of killing her.

Dawoud was reportedly working for Afrin's Civil Defense Organization. She was allegedly attacked while carrying a large sum of money to pay the salaries of the organization's employees, according to Rudaw's source.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a UK-based war monitor, said another individual was killed alongside Dawoud.

Hawar News, a media outlet close to Kurdish authorities in northern Syria, identified the other person as Ali al-Shaghouri, an Arab man from Eastern Ghouta, who had settled in Afrin following Turkey's invasion of the Kurdish enclave. He was also a member of the Civil Defense Organization.



Turkish-backed fighters man a checkpoint in the northwest Syrian town of Afrin in March 2018. File photo: AFP

Their bodies were discovered early on Sunday morning on the Gumrik village road in the Mobata sub-district in Afrin, the outlet said.

The Kurdish-majority region of Afrin is isolated from other Kurdish towns and cities by a Turkish-controlled zone in northern Aleppo.

Turkey launched its Afrin offensive against the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in January 2018 to force the group back from its border.

Ankara accuses the YPG of fostering ties with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), an armed group fighting for greater political and cultural rights for Kurds in Turkey.

Turkey's Syrian proxies were accused of looting Kurdish homes and businesses, van-

dalizing Kurdish cultural landmarks, and resettling Arab families in vacant homes left by fleeing Kurdish families.

According to UN estimates, upwards of 150,000 Kurds were displaced. General lawlessness, arbitrary kidnappings, and assassinations have overrun Afrin.

According to Rudaw's source from Afrin, the Yezidi ethno-religious minority, who faced genocide in Iraq at the hands of the Islamic State group (ISIS), nowadays face a double stigma in Afrin.

As Kurdish speakers, they are a target of Turkish-backed groups, while their non-Islamic faith has also made them vulnerable to aggression. According to Rudaw's source, Islamists among the Turkish-backed groups have pressured local Yezidis to convert to Islam.

LesEchos 18 novembre 2019
Par Virginie Robert

Emeutes et blocage numérique en Iran

Une hausse soudaine du prix de l'essence vendredi a provoqué des manifestations dans tout le pays. Les manifestants se sont mobilisés dans des dizaines de villes et les communications ont été coupées par l'Etat.

C'est le quatrième jour de rébellion en Iran. Pour les opposants au régime, les manifestations qui ont éclaté depuis vendredi - en réponse à une hausse du prix de l'essence résultant d'un changement dans le mode de subvention - façonnent un mouvement bien plus important que celui de décembre 2017. Des contestations et accrochages auraient été recensés dans des dizaines de villes, y compris de taille importante. Si beaucoup d'étudiants sont dans la rue, l'université de Téhéran n'a toutefois pas été fermée lundi.

La situation est explosive car l'économie s'est beaucoup dégradée avec le renouveau des sanctions américaines en 2018. Selon le Fonds monétaire international (FMI), le PIB de l'Iran devrait chuter de 9,5% cette année, après un recul de 4,8% en 2008. L'inflation atteint officiellement 40%. Mais le message est aussi politique avec des demandes de changement du système. Banques et édifices publics incendiés

A Téhéran, les opposants estiment à 6.000 hommes les troupes réparties dans la ville pour protéger lieux de pouvoirs et personnalités de premier rang, avec des snipers sur les toits des immeubles. Face à la contestation, le Guide suprême, Ali Khamenei, a soutenu la décision prise par les tenants du pouvoir exécutif, législatif et judiciaire.

Des banques et édifices publics ont été incendiés dans certaines villes et un policier aurait été tué à Kermanshah, dans le Kurdistan iranien. Entre 400 et 1.000 personnes auraient été arrêtées. Lundi, les chiffres variaient grandement sur le



Des manifestants bloquent une route à Isfahan pour protester contre la hausse de l'essence le 16 novembre 2019. (AFP)

nombre de victimes civiles, d'une soixantaine à plus de 150 alors que les autorités ne parlaient que de deux morts. A l'hôpital de Shiraz, cinq personnes ont été soignées parce qu'on leur avait tiré dans les yeux avec des armes à feu, rapporte Babak Taghvaei, blogueur et analyste de la politique iranienne. Internet coupé

Les communications ont été coupées. « C'est impossible d'appeler quelqu'un sur son portable à Téhéran. On peut y parvenir par la ligne fixe cependant. Internet est complètement coupé mais certains opérateurs le réactivent au milieu de la

nuit et c'est comme ça que quelques vidéos peuvent passer. Mais on n'est même pas à 1% du trafic normal », raconte Babak Taghvaei.

Le secrétaire d'Etat américain, Mike Pompeo, tout comme la Maison-Blanche, ont soutenu ce mouvement. En réaction, l'Iran en a profité pour accuser les Etats-unis d'ingérence et a annoncé que son stock d'eau lourde dépassait le seuil des 130 tonnes métriques qui avait été fixé dans le cadre de l'accord sur le nucléaire iranien de 2015.

REUTERS NOVEMBER 18, 2019

Reporting by Ece Toksabay; Editing by Jonathan Spicer

Turkey's pro-Kurdish party mulls pulling MPs from parliament

ANKARA (Reuters) - A pro-Kurdish opposition party is considering withdrawing lawmakers from Turkey's parliament due to mounting pressure it is facing, and as an act of protest against the government's decision to oust 24 of its mayors in the past three months.

Pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) lawmakers, mayors and local officials will gather on Wednesday in Ankara to discuss the situation and make a decision on

how to respond, HDP's deputy chairman told reporters.

"We will continue our struggle against the removal of our mayors in every platform. One of the questions we will answer is whether to withdraw our deputies from the parliament," Saruhan Oluc told a news conference in the parliament.

President Tayyip Erdogan and his government accuse the HDP of having links to the Kurdistan Workers

Party (PKK) militant group, leading to prosecutions of thousands of its members and some leaders. The HDP denies such links.

The HDP mayors in the country's majority-Kurdish southeast were removed in recent months over alleged terror links.

The former co-leaders of the HDP have both been jailed since 2016 on terrorism charges, with several other prominent members accused of supporting terrorism over what

the government says are links to the PKK.

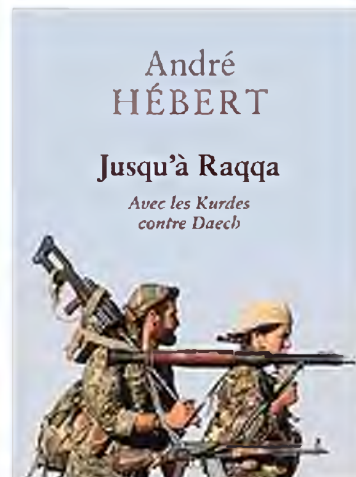
The moves against the HDP come amid a Turkish military offensive in neighboring Syria against the YPG Kurdish militia, which Ankara also accuses of ties to the PKK.

The HDP is the only party in the Turkish parliament that opposed the offensive in northeast Syria that began on Oct. 9.

Présentation du livre “Jusqu’à Raqqa, avec les Kurdes contre Daech” par l’auteur André Hébert.

À Angers, ce vendredi à 20h à la bourse du travail (entrée par la rue Léon Jouhaux).

André Hébert est le pseudonyme d’un jeune Français parti combattre durant quinze mois l’État islamique aux côtés des Kurdes de Syrie. Dans *Jusqu’à Raqqa*, lieu de la dernière bataille menée avec ses camarades du YPG, « les Unités de Défense du Peuple », dans la capitale des djihadistes, il livre le premier témoignage, essentiel, sur ce conflit. À la lecture de ce journal de guerre, on plonge dans la vie quotidienne, âpre, de ceux qui mènent la lutte contre Daech et dans la férocité des combats qui les opposent. Mais *Jusqu’à Raqqa* est aussi un manifeste politique. Celui de ce militant internationaliste qui choisit en 2015 de risquer sa vie pour ses idées : « Je m’exprime en tant qu’activiste révolutionnaire, internationaliste, marxiste, soutenant la cause kurde. »



Kurdistan au féminin

Le Kurdistan à travers le regard féminin

19/11/2019

Avec Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN)

IRAN: au moins sept manifestants tués dans la ville kurde de Marivan

IRAN / ROJHILAT – MARIVAN – Au moins sept civils ont été tués et des dizaines d’autres blessés dans la ville kurde de Marivan au cours d’une journée de manifestations antigouvernementales à la suite d’une augmentation soudaine du prix de l’essence dans plusieurs villes kurdes et iraniennes.

Adnan Hassanpour, journaliste à Marivan, a déclaré que «les manifestations ont commencé pacifiquement dans la ville mais ont été violemment attaquées par la police et les forces de sécurité».

« Des violences sans précédent ont été infligées par les forces de l’ordre et de sécurité qui tirent sur les gens depuis hier », a ajouté Hassanpour en rejetant les rumeurs selon lesquelles il y avait eu des affrontements armés et des manifestants désarmés par la police.

À la suite des tirs des forces de sécurité iraniennes, sept civils ont été tués à Marivan le 16 novembre. Par ailleurs, un à quatre autres civils auraient perdu la vie à Marivan, en plus d’un civil à Sanandaj le 17 novembre. En outre, des dizaines de civils ont également été blessés, dont certains ont été emmenés dans les hôpitaux de Bou Ali et de Fajr à Marivan. « Un autre citoyen blessé est soigné chez lui, craignant d’être identifié et détenu s’il était transféré à l’hôpital », a ajouté Hassanpour.



« À la suite des troubles, 10 manifestants ont incendié 10 succursales de banque, deux stations-service et un magasin de la chaîne Ofogh Korosh, dont beaucoup de citoyens pensent qu’il fait partie des institutions militaires et de sécurité. Certaines autres stations-service ont été démolies au lieu d’être incendiées en raison de leur proximité avec les quartiers résidentiels. Les manifestants ont également perquisitionné plusieurs banques. De plus, les manifestants ont détruit les tracts et les banderoles des agences de sécurité dans les villes de Sanandaj et Marivan. En

outre, les lignes téléphoniques ont été coupées constamment », a poursuivi Hassanpour en évoquant l’indignation des citoyens à travers la ville de Marivan.

Différentes villes du Kurdistan, ainsi que d’autres villes d’Iran, sont la scène de rassemblements de protestation contre l’augmentation soudaine du prix de l’essence. L’ampleur de la répression et de la violence perpétrées par les forces de sécurité et de police dans les villes [kurdes] de Marivan, Javanrud, Sanandaj et Kermanshah était plus grande que dans d’autres villes [iraniennes].



19/11/2019
Par Valérie Crova et
Franck Ballanger

L'Iran en photos, histoires d'un pays à la dérive

Avec "Iran, rêves et dérives", les photojournalistes franco-iraniens Reza et Manoocher Deghati témoignent de ce que fut l'arrivée de la terreur islamique en Iran dans les années 80. Pour France Culture, Reza commente une série de photos marquantes extraites de ce livre-témoignage.

En cette année 2019 qui marque l'anniversaire des 40 ans de la révolution islamique en Iran, Reza et Manoocher Deghati publient un livre de 250 photos issues de leurs archives personnelles, dont certaines n'avaient jamais été publiées. Iran, rêves et dérives (Éditions Hoëbeke, 2019) nous raconte cette révolution qui va ébranler le monde, depuis le départ du Chah d'Iran jusqu'au retour de l'Ayatollah Khomeini en 1979. Les deux frères photographes sont les témoins de la vague d'espoir suscitée par la révolution islamique, espoir rapidement douché par la répression qui va s'abattre sur la population iranienne, en particulier sur les femmes, contraintes de revêtir le tchador noir comme d'autres portent le deuil. Les libertés se réduisent au fur et à mesure que la domination religieuse se répand. Le pouvoir des Mollahs ne souffre aucune opposition. Reza et Manoocher couvrent aussi le déclenchement de la guerre contre l'Irak, la prise d'otage à l'ambassade des Etats-Unis, les bombardements contre les villages kurdes. Leurs

clichés sont publiés dans tous les grands journaux de l'époque. Mais toutes les vérités ne sont pas bonnes à dire ou à montrer. Les deux frères devront quitter leur pays natal. Vient alors le temps de l'exil qui dure encore aujourd'hui. Manoocher n'a pas revu l'Iran depuis 34 ans, Reza depuis 38 ans.

Retour avec Reza sur quelques unes de ces images, à l'heure où l'Iran endure une crise économique croissante et vient de vivre plusieurs jours de contestation déclenchée par une hausse du prix des carburants, avec une coupure de l'accès à internet.

"La prise d'otages dans l'ambassade américaine par les étudiants islamiques a



Les femmes iraniennes ne pensaient pas du tout être les premières victimes de l'arrivée des islamistes. • Crédits : Reza



Du 4 novembre 1979 au 20 janvier 1981, pendant 444 jours, cinquante-six diplomates et civils américains sont retenus en otage par des étudiants iraniens dans l'ambassade des États-Unis de Téhéran. • Crédits : Reza

commencé un matin de pluie à Téhéran. C'est vraiment ce qu'on appelle le flair du journalisme qui m'a amené à me dire qu'il pouvait se passer des choses à l'ambassade américaine parce que la veille, Khomeini avait fait un discours très anti-américain. En arrivant, j'ai vu des étudiants en train de grimper les grilles et le mur de l'ambassade pour rentrer à l'intérieur. C'était incroyable de voir ça. Mes photographies, ce sont les seules photographies de ces premiers moments. J'ai continué à photographier cet événement pendant les 444 jours qu'il a duré. Comme je travaillais pour l'agence Sipa Press et pour Newsweek, on m'avait surnommé "le 54e otage" ! Parce que j'étais tout le temps devant l'ambassade, et que je ne bougeais pas de là-bas."

Les Iraniennes

"Les femmes ont vécu, je dirais, une double souffrance, une double injustice en Iran. Les femmes étaient très actives. Elles croyaient que Khomeini était un vieux sage, qu'il



L'une des rares photos d'exécutions publiques prises dans les rues de Téhéran (1980).
Crédits : Manoocher Deghati

n'avait aucune envie de pouvoir. Elles ne croyaient pas du tout être la première victime de l'arrivée des islamistes, qui les obligeraient à porter des voiles, ou des vêtements comme elles portent aujourd'hui. Les premières manifestations d'opposition, c'étaient des femmes qui sont venues devant le palais du Président, devant des lieux gouvernementaux en disant : on nous avait promis la liberté. Et à peine arrivés au pouvoir, vous nous obligez à porter des vêtements noirs et des voiles.... Les femmes sont les premières qui ont subi cette injustice. Encore aujourd'hui, il y a des manifestations de femmes qui mènent des campagnes contre le voile. Il y a des jeunes filles de 20 ans qui ont enlevé leur voile en signe de protestation et qui se retrouvent en prison. Elles ont été condamnées à vingt ans de prison."

Les exécutions publiques

"Quelques mois après la révolution où le peuple iranien a cru se trouver dans une démocratie, on a vu que ce n'était pas du tout ce qui était promis. Cette haine de la part des religieux contre la liberté, contre les gens libres, s'est abattue sur l'Iran. Les arrestations, les exécutions dans les rues ont commencé assez vite. Dans l'une des photos de Manoocher, on voit très bien une exécution en public. C'était le début de milliers d'autres exécutions..."

La souffrance des Kurdes

Des scènes comme celle-là, quand on les voit pour la première fois, c'est très choquant de se trouver devant une telle injustice, une telle souffrance humaine. Mais de l'autre côté, dans la continuité de ce travail

que je mène depuis quarante ans dans d'autres pays du monde, dans d'autres guerres, je vois les mêmes scènes : les pères qui prennent dans leurs bras leurs enfants morts, les mères qui pleurent leurs enfants, les enfants qui pleurent leurs parents. On est tous hantés par ces scènes. Il n'y a pas une scène plus forte que les autres, ça reste en nous. On doit l'absorber, on doit vivre avec. Mais surtout, le plus important, c'est de ne pas s'habituer à voir ces scènes. A chaque fois, ce doit être comme si c'était la première fois. S'habituer à la souffrance



Habitants du village Kurde de Baneh après un bombardement iranien en 1980. Crédits : Reza

pour se protéger, c'est la mort du photojournalisme."

Dès le début de la révolution islamique, les Kurdes (qui ont activement participé à la résistance contre la dictature du Chah en 1979) ont exprimé leur souhait d'autonomie. Pour l'ayatollah Khomeini, qui veut asseoir la jeune République, il n'en est pas question. Il déclare la guerre sainte aux Kurdes, surnommés "les fils de Satan". Ce fut une guerre militaire, économique, culturelle et psychologique pendant laquelle des milliers de civils perdirent la vie.

Un livre pour le peuple iranien

"J'ai quitté l'Iran en mars 81 à cause de mes photographies qui avaient engendré la rage du régime contre moi. Je ne pouvais plus rester. Je suis resté en contact constamment avec l'Iran, même si la France est devenue mon pays d'adoption, mon pays du cœur. Cela m'a aussi donné cette possibilité d'avoir un regard beaucoup plus ouvert sur l'Iran, et vers d'autres pays du monde. Le monde doit comprendre ce qui s'est passé en Iran et comment ce que nous vivons aujourd'hui au Moyen-Orient avec l'arrivée de Daech, la guerre de la Turquie contre les Kurdes, tout cela est lié. A la base, c'est cette révolution en Iran et l'arrivée des islamistes au pouvoir en Iran qui a engendré tout cela. Ce livre, quelque part, c'est aussi un hymne à ce peuple qui souffre, ce peuple qui se voit constamment mis de côté pour des intérêts économiques mais qui continue à se battre."



November 19, 2019
Kosar Nawzad

Fearing arrest, wounded Kurdish protesters avoid clinics as Iranian security forces crackdown continues

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) – Wounded Kurdish protesters are avoiding treatment at medical facilities in fear of being arrested by Iranian security forces, a local human rights watchdog wrote on Monday, amid growing nationwide unrest.

Protests began on Friday after Tehran passed a new regulation on subsidized gasoline, effectively tripling its price. Although limited at the start, demonstrations quickly spread to other parts of the country, including its Kurdish region to the west.

According to multiple local rights groups, the security forces have killed over a dozen protesters in a crackdown campaign, allegedly using live rounds. The elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) threatened on Monday to take a “decisive” response if demonstrations continued.

The judicial authorities also appear to be using intimidating tactics to deter protests. They had allegedly sent messages to people they deemed had participated in the demonstrations and threatened that repeated presence would lead to prosecution.



Iranians take to the streets to protest growing financial insecurity with a security forces crackdown reportedly leading to the deaths of close to 200 people, Nov. 18, 2019. (Photo: Social Media)

Tehran has also shut down access to the internet, according to web blockage observatory Net-Blocks, over the past two days, in a country which already severely restricts access to online resources and websites.

Hengaw, which frequently writes on issues relating to Kurdish rights in Iran, reported on Monday that the security forces had arrested over 300 Kurdish civilians, as per their local sources, in the cities of Kermanshah (Kermashan), Javanrud (Jwanro), Marivan (Mariwan), and Bikan. Amid fears of being captured themselves, many people in-

jured by the security forces during demonstrations avoid going to hospitals, it added.

According to reports by Hengaw and Kurdistan Human Rights Association (KMMK), upward to 25 protesters from the Kurdish provinces of Kermashan, Kurdistan, and West Azerbaijan have been killed. KMMK also estimated that close to 200 people might have been killed nationally and 3,000 others wounded.

The numbers could not be immediately confirmed. Protesters have been chanting

anti-government slogans and, in some cities, are calling for an end to interventionist policies abroad, which includes funding of various armed groups throughout the Middle East, from Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine, to Yemen.

Westward, in Iraq, protests have similarly called for an end to Iran’s command over Iraqi affairs.

Late on Sunday, the extent of Tehran’s influence over Baghdad became even more apparent as The New York Times and The Intercept published a report analyzing hundreds of pages of secret intelligence exchanges between Iraqi and Iranian officers shared with the latter.

The unrest comes amid simmering tensions between Iran and the West over a year after the United States left a 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and international powers. Washington re-instituted successive rounds of sanctions that have crippled the Iranian economy.

Editing by Karzan Sulaivany



November 19, 2019
Hiwa Shilani

Turkey conducted several airstrikes in the Kurdistan Region

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) – Turkish military helicopters targeted areas on the outskirts of the Soran district in Erbil late Tuesday night.

According to local sources, the gunships heavily shelled the vil-

lages of Khalifan and Siran in the Soran district in the Erbil governorate.

It was not immediately clear if the attacks resulted in casualties. However, a massive fire erupted and burned down farm and cattle grazing lands in the

nearby area, causing significant environmental damage and destroying livelihoods in the process.

The airstrikes generated widespread panic among residents of the area, forcing families close to the

bombardment zones to evacuate their houses.

Earlier this morning, Turkish fighter jets also targeted a house in the disputed Sinjar (Shingal) district in northwestern Iraq, killing five and injuring one.



A Turkish military helicopter takes off from a military base. (Photo: Reuters)

The airstrike targeted the Khana Sor region of the Sinune sub-district of Shingal, about 8 kilometers from the Syrian border to the north.

car burned down due to Turkish airstrikes in Khana Sor, in the Sinune sub-district of Shingal Nov.19.2019. (Photo: Kirkuk Now)

According to Abbas Ibrahim, a resident of Khana Sor, five individuals were caught in the fires.



A car burned down due to Turkish airstrikes in Khana Sor, in the Sinune sub-district of Shingal Nov.19.2019. (Photo: Kirkuk Now)

However, it was unclear if they were civilians or militants of the Yezidi (Ezidi) Shingal Resistance Units (YBS), who are based in the targeted settlement.

Turkish bombardment of the vast border areas of Turkey, Iran, and the Kurdistan Region have become commonplace since the peace process between Turkey and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) broke down in July 2015.

The PKK, now headquartered in the Qandil Mountains of the Kurdistan Region, took up arms against Ankara in the 1980s to demand more rights for the Kurds in a conflict that has killed thousands of people on both sides.

During the past two years, Turkey has stepped up airstrikes against the PKK and has threatened to launch a military operation in the Qandil Mountains in the Kurdistan Region, where the PKK is headquartered, and the Kurdish-Ezidi city of Shingal on the Syrian border.

Editing by Nadia Riva

LA PRESSE

19 novembre 2019
Agnes Gruda Agnes Gruda

Djihadistes occidentaux: rapatrier femmes et enfants d'abord, clame un rapport

Les pays occidentaux ne peuvent pas « se laver les mains » du problème que représentent leurs ressortissants détenus dans des prisons et camps du nord de la Syrie, affirme l'institut de recherche International Crisis Group (ICG) dans un rapport publié hier. Il enjoint à ces pays, incluant le Canada, de rapatrier en priorité les femmes et les enfants.

Au moins 13 500 femmes et enfants, en plus d'environ 2000 combattants étrangers du groupe armé État islamique, sont détenus dans le nord de la Syrie, estime l'ICG. Parmi eux, 1450 proviennent de pays européens ou d'Amérique du Nord – des statistiques qui restent impré-

cises et sous-estiment vraisemblablement la réalité.

On estime qu'une quarantaine de Canadiens, soit 5 hommes, 10 femmes et 25 enfants, font partie du groupe.

Détenus dans des conditions inhumaines, aux prises avec la faim, les maladies et l'insécurité, ces prisonniers étaient gardés depuis la chute du « califat islamique » de l'EI par les Forces démocratiques syriennes, groupe armé contrôlé par les Unités de protection du peuple kurdes.

Le mois dernier, quand la Turquie a lancé son offensive au Kurdistan, suivant l'annonce du retrait militaire américain, plu-

sieurs centaines de djihadistes ont pris la clé des champs.

Depuis l'arrêt de l'offensive, les Forces démocratiques syriennes ont repris le contrôle des camps et prisons où sont parqués les djihadistes et leurs familles. De leur côté, les États-Unis ont finalement laissé un millier de militaires dans la région.

La situation dans le Kurdistan syrien reste « tout sauf stable » et l'éventualité d'un autre geste « impulsif » du président Donald Trump risque de la déstabiliser davantage, écrit l'ICG.

Voilà pourquoi les pays occidentaux, qui essaient d'éviter la question délicate de leurs ressortissants djihadistes comme la peste,



PHOTO IVOR PRICKETT, ARCHIVES THE NEW YORK TIMES
Le camp d'Al-Hol, dans le nord-est de la Syrie, abrite des femmes et des enfants de djihadistes étrangers.

devraient au contraire amorcer leur rapatriement, et ce, autant pour des raisons humanitaires que sécuritaires, plaide l'ICG.

Conditions effroyables

Le rapport décrit comme « effroyables » les conditions de détention dans l'un des trois camps qui abrite des femmes et des enfants de djihadistes étrangers, celui d'Al-Hol, particulièrement pour les enfants qui n'ont aucune responsabilité dans les événements qui ont conduit à leur captivité.



PHOTO DELIL SOULEIMAN, ARCHIVES AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
Le rapport de l'International Crisis Group décrit comme « effroyables » les conditions de détention dans l'un des trois camps qui abrite des femmes et des enfants de djihadistes étrangers, celui d'Al-Hol (photo), dans le nord-est de la Syrie.

Ces enfants souffrent de « malnutrition grave, de diarrhées, de tuberculose, de rougeole et d'hépatite », énumère le rapport de l'ICG. L'accès aux soins médicaux est limité et celui à l'instruction, inexistant. Le retrait

américain a incité les Kurdes à se rapprocher du régime syrien qui est réputé pour la manière cruelle avec laquelle il traite ses prisonniers, dont le sort serait pour le moins incertain si jamais ils devaient tomber sous le contrôle direct de la Syrie. Dans le contexte instable et changeant, ils pourraient aussi fuir et se retrouver dans la nature.

« La détention à long terme de ces hommes, femmes et enfants [...] a toujours été problématique pour des raisons sécuritaires et humanitaires », fait valoir le rapport de l'ICG, selon qui la «fenêtre de possibi-

lité» pour le rapatriement « pourrait se fermer rapidement ».

L'institut spécialisé dans la recherche sur les situations de crise reconnaît que la possibi-

lité d'un rapatriement de masse pose un défi logistique, juridique et politique aux pays concernés. L'opinion publique des démocraties occidentales y est majoritairement opposée. Les lois nationales ne donnent pas toujours prise à des poursuites.

Idéalement, tous les ressortissants étrangers devraient être rapatriés dans leur pays d'origine, selon l'ICG. Mais dans les circonstances, il faudrait au moins commencer par les plus vulnérables : les enfants, dont certains sont orphelins, et les femmes, qui présentent des degrés inégaux d'allégeance à l'EI.

L'approche la plus réaliste pourrait consister à diviser la population et placer les femmes et les enfants en haut de la liste de rapatriement.

Extrait du rapport de l'International Crisis Group, publié hier

Casse-tête

Le sort des ressortissants étrangers pose un sérieux casse-tête à leurs pays d'origine. Certains d'entre eux, comme la Russie, l'Ouzbékistan ou le Kosovo, ont entrepris de rapatrier leurs djihadistes. Exemple : la Russie a déjà ramené 200 femmes et enfants dans des vols nolisés.

Les pays européens, l'Australie et le Canada y vont au compte-gouttes ou ne font rien du tout. La France, qui a établi un protocole de retour prévoyant que les combattants seraient incarcérés ou placés en garde à vue, tandis que les enfants seraient confiés aux services sociaux, n'a pas ramené plus d'une vingtaine de personnes depuis deux ans, selon Azadeh Moaveni, chercheuse à l'ICG, jointe hier.

Seuls les États-Unis ont fait des efforts sérieux pour rapatrier leurs ressortissants des camps et prisons du Kurdistan syrien, constate l'ICG. C'est dû à la conjonction de deux phénomènes : le nombre relativement restreint de djihadistes détenant la citoyenneté américaine et les lois sévères qui permettent de les détenir et de les juger plus efficacement, souligne Azadeh Moaveni.

Plusieurs sources indiquent que le Canada aurait abandonné un plan de rapatriement de 21 djihadistes et membres de leurs familles, projet qui aurait été sur le point d'être réalisé, comme l'indiquait La Presse dans un article publié il y a deux semaines. Mais Ottawa persiste à nier cette information. « Compte tenu de la situation sécuritaire sur le terrain, la capacité du gouvernement du Canada à fournir une aide consulaire dans l'ensemble de la Syrie est extrêmement limitée », a d'ailleurs réitéré une porte-parole d'Affaires mondiales Canada dans un courriel envoyé hier, à titre de réaction à l'appel de l'International Crisis Group.



November 19, 2019
By Mohammed Rwanduzy

Corruption cases increase against Iraqi officials

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region- An Iraqi body tasked with investigating corruption has begun court proceedings against a number of former and current officials, in cooperation with a government-founded anti-corruption council.

Iraq's Integrity Commission, tasked with investigating cases of corruption has upped the ante on past and current corruption cases in recent days.

Iraqi Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi previously announced on October 10 that the Anti-Corruption Council would refer cases of nine former ministers and governors for trial.

Iraq is one of the most corrupt countries in the world, ranked 168 out of 180 countries by Transparency International.

On November 17, the commission clarified details regarding a court summons in Saladin for former Iraqi Minister of Science and Technology Abdulkareem al-Samarai.

The former minister, alongside Samara's unnamed district mayor, is said to owe 61 billion dollars (approximately \$51 million) which had been allocated as funds for the districts of Samara and al-Siniyah in Saladin province.

The body, in its announcements, however, does not name all of the individuals who are being taken to court.

It also announced the summons of an MP for "scam contracts" issued under his past tenure as head of Nineveh Provincial Council.

According to the Commission, the current MP issued more than 60 contracts used as election propaganda during his post.

One of the current high ranking officials facing corruption charges is the Governor of Babil. On Tuesday, the Integrity Commission announced that Babil's Criminal Court has issued an "arrest and investigation warrant" for the current governor of Karar al-Abadi.

The arrest warrant was issued after the current governor failed to attend a court hearing for a corruption case.

The court had also imposed a travel ban on the governor on November 7.



Iraqi demonstrators gather in the capital Baghdad's Tahrir square during ongoing anti-government demonstrations on November 18, 2019. Photo: Sabah Arar/AFP

The corruption case surrounds alleged relationships with construction suppliers in the province.

The highest judiciary authority, the Supreme Judicial Council, announced on Monday that its Karikh Investigative Court specialized in integrity cases has also issued a travel ban on a member of parliament.

"The Karikh Investigative Court specialized in integrity cases issued an arrest warrant against MP Talal al-Zubayi, with a travel ban and a confiscation of his transferrable and non-transferrable property," the court said on Monday.

This latest round of corruption cases against current and former officials is amid ongoing protests in the south of the country.

Iraqis have been on the streets since October 1, 2019, protesting corruption, unemployment, nepotism, among other things.

Iraqis, however, were met with deadly force by security forces, such as military-grade tear gas and live rounds. At least 320 protesters and members of the security forces have been killed since October 1, with around 15,000 others wounded due to the clashes between security forces and protesters.

This has prompted Iraq's government under

Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi to start half measures of reform, despite the demand of the protesters of an overhaul of Iraq's electoral laws, constitutional amendments, and a change of the ruling system from parliamentary to presidential.

It is amid this that the government has also decided to step up efforts to speed up measures to hold the corrupt accountable.

Spokesperson for the office of PM Saad al-Hadithi, on Monday, confirmed the court orders to state media Iraq News Agency, saying anti-corruption efforts will continue.

"Coordination is ongoing between the head of the Supreme Judicial Council and the head of the Anti-Corruption Council on the judicial level to follow up on corruption cases," al-Hadithi said.

The Anti-Corruption Council was a body formed in the first months of Abdul-Mahdi's tenure in office, and includes judiciary, Integrity Commission, and government members. The Council was formed to strengthen coordination between different authorities in the country to coordinate the fight against corruption.

The country, which exports a daily average of around 3.5 million barrels of oil per day is suffering from a lack of electricity, services, and unemployment, with millions of Iraqis living below the poverty line.

L'EI s'est renforcé après le retrait américain de Syrie

(Washington) Le groupe armé État islamique (EI) a profité de l'offensive turque en Syrie et du retrait des forces américaines du nord-est du pays pour se regrouper et pourrait préparer de nouveaux attentats en Occident, selon un rapport d'un organisme indépendant américain.

Fortement critiqué, y compris dans son propre camp, M. Trump a changé de cap à plusieurs reprises, finissant par annoncer le maintien d'une «force résiduelle» en Syrie pour «protéger» des champs de pétrole.

«L'EI a exploité l'incursion turque et le retrait des forces américaines qui s'en est suivi pour reconstituer des capacités et des ressources en Syrie», indique le rapport publié par le bureau de l'inspecteur général du Pentagone, un organisme indépendant chargé des enquêtes internes sur cette administration tentaculaire.

Citant des informations fournies par l'agence de renseignement militaire du département de la Défense, la Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), l'inspecteur général ajoute que l'EI «va vraisemblablement utiliser le vide sécuritaire dans le nord-est de la Syrie pour prendre l'Occident pour cible parce qu'il aura sans



Le président Trump a annoncé le 6 octobre le retrait des 1000 soldats américains déployés dans le nord-est de la Syrie, ouvrant la voie à une offensive militaire turque visant les forces kurdes, alliées de la Coalition internationale dans la lutte contre les djihadistes de l'EI. AFP

tats et soutenir ses 19 branches dans le monde».

probablement à reprendre le contrôle de certaines localités syriennes et à étendre sa sphère d'influence dans le monde», ajoute l'inspecteur, citant des réponses écrites de la DIA à ses questions.

En outre, la mort du chef du groupe État islamique (EI), Abou Bakr al-Baghdadi lors d'une opération militaire américaine le 26 octobre, ne devrait pas empêcher l'EI de se reconstituer, selon le document.

«Selon la DIA, l'EI s'était préparé à résister à la mort d'Al-Baghdadi et devrait pouvoir «poursuivre ses opérations, maintenir sa cohésion mondiale et conserver sa posture actuelle», précise le rapport.

D'ores et déjà, l'EI «a activé des cellules dormantes pour multiplier les attentats contre les Forces démocratiques syriennes» (FDS), la coalition arabo-kurde sur laquelle les alliés se sont appuyés pour chasser au printemps l'organisation djihadiste du «califat» territorial qu'elle avait instauré en 2014 sur un vaste territoire à cheval entre la Syrie et l'Irak.

Le rapport précise que les forces américaines en Syrie continuent d'armer les combattants des FDS mais qu'elles ont cessé de les former. À la fin du troisième trimestre, les effectifs des FDS se montaient à 100 000 combattants, selon le document.



Des résidents kurdes du nord-est de la Syrie jettent des pierres contre un blindé turc, le 8 novembre. AFP

doute plus «de temps et d'espace» pour préparer des atten-

À long terme, l'EI «cherchera

New scandals pour more fuel on Iraq protests

The protests are escalating rapidly in Iraq, with the players moving fast and adding more fuel to an already burning region. This increasingly complex conflict is not just reshaping the country's politics, but affecting the entire region.

Every day a new scandal against the government comes up, most recently surrounding documents revealed by The Intercept on Nov. 17 exposing Tehran's power in Iraq. Unidentified militias shell the Green Zone every now and then, most recently on Nov. 17, threatening the US and Iraqi governments if the governments take action against the militias. The Iranians and Americans are competing to shape Iraq's future and the protesters are pushing to turn the entire political system upside down.

So, who is fighting whom and how are they moving their chess pieces on the map of conflict?

Political class

The recently leaked documents on Iran's powerful system and network in Iraq, obtained by The Intercept and shared with The New York Times, which used them in a Nov. 17 story, have shaken Iraq's political foundations, giving more energy and persistence to the protesters and exposing huge scandals that affect almost all Iraqi politicians.

The Iraqi political class seems helpless, isolated and incapable of dealing with the crisis that threatens to remove it from power. Several proposals have been made but none have been accepted, leading the protesters to escalate the movement further and increase their demands.

In the latest attempt, on Nov. 18, most of the parliamentary blocs — the Fatah Coalition affiliated with the Iran-backed factions in the Popular Mobilization Units, the Nasr coalition of former Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Ammar al-Hakim's Hikma Movement and the two major Sunni coalitions, the Iraqi Forces Alliance led by parliament Speaker Mohammed al-Halbasi and the National Coalition led by Ayad Allawi — gathered in Hakim's house in Baghdad. They agreed on a proposal to undertake reforms within 40 days, including establishing a special court for corruption, changing the electoral law and electoral commission, reshuffling the Cabinet, prose-

cuting the forces who targeted the protesters and passing several pending proposals involving oil and gas, social security and other issues.

The Nasr Coalition and Hikma Movement warned that they will form an opposition bloc in the parliament and move to withdraw confidence in Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi



An Iraqi demonstrator burns tires during the ongoing anti-government protests in Najaf, Iraq, Nov. 18, 2019. REUTERS/Alaa al-Marjani

if he does not proceed with the reform proposal within 40 days.

There is almost nothing new in the proposal; Iraqi President Barham Salih and the prime minister have put forward similar plans but they have not been implemented.

A former US senior adviser to the Iraqi government who just visited Baghdad's fortified Green Zone told Al-Monitor, "This place is almost finished. The leadership has no clue at all. It is like being in the Palace of Versailles on May 4, 1789," a reference to the last days of the French monarchy before the French Revolution. "Iraq's political class is utterly clueless and disconnected."

In such an environment, the protesters' demands for regime change are loud indeed.

Armed forces

Several security forces are dealing with the protests. Local police, the Iraqi army and counterterrorism forces can be seen in great

numbers almost everywhere in Baghdad. But mask-wearing special forces are behind the majority of the violence against the protesters. The special forces seem to outrank the others, giving orders and sometimes pushing the other security units back and taking their positions.

It seems the government has been taken

over by unnamed forces that all officials talk about but that no one dares name. For example, Iraqi Defense Minister Nijah al-Shimmery said Nov. 15, during his visit to France, that his forces had not received any order from him to target the protesters, and that a third party is targeting both the security forces and the protesters.

Shimmery also said, "The tear gas used to disperse the protesters is not safe and has killed several protesters. We learned after an investigation that this tear gas was not imported by the Iraqi government."

Shimmery added that he would say no to any order from Qasem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Quds Force.

Reuters reported that Soleimani attended a high-level security meeting in Baghdad in late October, in a move to prevent Abdul Mahdi's ouster. Soleimani also urged the head of the Badr Organization, Hadi al-Amiri, to keep supporting Abdul Mahdi.

Abdul Mahdi also accused a third party of attacking both the protesters and the security forces, but he did not name this group.

Last month, Reuters quoted several Iranian and Iraqi officials who accused Iran-backed militias of deploying snipers on Baghdad's rooftops.

Iran's influence inside Iraq's security forces is broad and not limited to the Shiite factions of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU). In one of the Intercept documents, the former head of military intelligence for the Iraqi army, Gen. Hatam Maqsoosi, told an Iranian agent in 2015, "All of the Iraqi army's intelligence — consider it yours. Tell me whatever you need and I will provide to you."

Apart from a few pro-Iranian factions such as the Badr Organization and the Khorasani Brigades, most of the PMU are distancing themselves from the situation, trying to avoid any clashes with the protesters. Many PMU members have expressed their support to the protesters and condemned using violence against them via videos shared over social media.

Religious institution

The Shiite seminary of Najaf has been supporting the protesters' demands since the demonstrations began in early October. In

addition to Grand Shiite Ayatollah Ali Sistani's weekly statement in support of the protesters, the clerics in Najaf and the staff of the Shiite shrines have been actively participating in the protests.

In his latest Friday sermon, on Nov. 15, the official representative of Sistani called for meeting the protesters' demands, emphasizing changing the entire political establishment via early elections and a new electoral law and condemning the government's use of violence against the protesters.

Sistani has been escalating his discourse against the government, promoting the demonstrators' demands as the violence against the protesters has been on rise.

Nearly 320 people have been killed and about 15,000 wounded.

A senior cleric close to Sistani told Al-Monitor that he had told Abdul Mahdi prior to the Nov. 18 meeting, "Any drop of blood will be met with a major escalation against the government."

Protesters

Despite their differences in terms of age, gender, social class, tribe and location, the protesters are all gathered under one national umbrella, calling for a strong, united Iraq with a powerful and efficient govern-

ment that does not allow outsiders to influence its policies.

In Baghdad, protesters are gathered in Tahrir Square, trying to advance toward the Green Zone. They made progress toward the Green Zone on Nov. 17, gaining control of Ahrar Bridge. They also advanced in central Baghdad, taking control of al-Khallani Square and several other squares and streets. Security forces continue using tear gas to disperse them.

Protesters are very active in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, where they have established a daily newspaper called Tuk-Tuk. They repaired the streets, sidewalks and fountains. They're operating clinics and other public facilities and have set up public tents where scholars give lectures on the Iraqi Constitution and laws. "If the successive Iraqi governments had even 1% of these kids' energy, they could have fixed the whole country," a Western researcher and journalist who visited Tahrir recently told Al-Monitor, asking to remain unidentified. Sistani's support for and influence among the protesters is visible everywhere in photos.

In conclusion, it seems that the protests have created powerful dynamics in Iraqi politics that are certain to change the future of Iraq. As Sistani said in his latest Friday sermon, "Iraq after the protests will not be the same."

L'Humanité

21/11/2019

Par Pierre Barbancey

États-Unis. L'« État islamique » renaît de ses cendres grâce à Erdoğan

Un rapport du Pentagone alerte sur la résurgence de Daech dans le Nord-Est syrien, à la suite de l'invasion turque. Les djihadistes pourraient reprendre des villes en Syrie et en Irak. Un danger qui menace l'Europe.

L'Agence France Presse appelle cela un « organisme indépendant chargé des enquêtes internes » alors que ce n'est rien d'autre que l'Inspection générale du Pentagone, le ministère américain de la Défense. Cet organisme, en réalité, pire qu'un drone, survole et évalue tout ce qui se passe dans le cadre des opérations militaires états-uniennes. Ce qui se passe au nord-est de la Syrie ne pouvait échapper à son attention. D'autant plus que Donald Trump a annoncé, le 6 octobre, le retrait des 1000

soldats américains déployés dans cette région, ouvrant la voie à une offensive militaire turque visant les forces kurdes, alliées de la coalition internationale dans la lutte contre les djihadistes de l'organisation dite de l'« État islamique » (EI).

L'EI a exploité l'incursion turque et le retrait des forces américaines

Fortement critiqué, y compris dans son propre camp, le président américain a changé de cap à plusieurs reprises, finissant par annoncer, après avoir affirmé que tous les soldats yankees rentreraient, le maintien d'une « force résiduelle » en Syrie pour « protéger » des champs de pétrole. On imagine bien que les États-Unis ne comptent pas sur le pétrole syrien pour leurs besoins

(d'autant qu'avec l'exploitation du pétrole de schiste, ils deviennent le premier producteur d'or noir sur la planète), mais entendent garder un pied en Syrie pour peser, voire surtout influencer sur les développements politiques ultérieurs.

Cette inspection générale vient de publier un rapport, citant des informations fournies par l'agence de renseignement militaire du ministère de la Défense, la Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). Elle se rend compte que « l'EI a exploité l'incursion turque et le retrait des forces américaines qui s'en est suivi pour reconstituer des capacités et des ressources en Syrie ». L'inspecteur général qui signe le texte ajoute que l'EI « va vraisemblablement utiliser le vide sécuritaire dans le nord-est de la Syrie pour prendre



La ville de Raqqa, au nord de la Syrie, a longtemps vécu sous la coupe de Daech avant d'être libérée par les Forces démocratiques syriennes en octobre 2017. Jacob Simkin/NurPhoto

(FDS), la coalition arabo-kurde sur laquelle les alliés se sont appuyés pour chasser au printemps l'organisation djihadiste du « califat » territorial qu'elle avait instauré en 2014, entre la Syrie et l'Irak.

La Turquie a formé, financé et armé des milices djihadistes

Précision ultime, le rapport précise que les forces américaines en Syrie continuent d'armer les combattants des FDS, mais qu'elles ont cessé de les former ! La réalité de ce rapport apparaît dans les chiffres publiés par le Centre d'information du Rojava, qui estime que le nombre d'attaques revendiquées par Daech depuis l'invasion turque a augmenté de 300 %. Ce qui signifie une capacité pour les cellules dormantes d'empêcher la sécurisation des transports entre les différentes villes du nord-est de la Syrie.

Il s'agit aussi et surtout de la duplicité de la Turquie. Celle-ci a formé, financé et armé des milices djihadistes dont les membres sont déjà passés par Daech ou le Front al-Nosra (ex-al Qaida en Syrie), alors que certains groupes évoluaient dans la province d'Idleb, au nord-ouest de la Syrie, et sont maintenant projetés dans les zones à majorité kurde pour procéder à un nettoyage ethnique, soit en tuant, soit en déplaçant des dizaines de milliers de civils. Reste la question récurrente : pourquoi aucun État n'empêche la Turquie d'imposer sa loi sanglante dans cette région ?

l'Occident pour cible parce qu'il aura sans doute plus de temps et d'espace pour préparer des attentats et soutenir ses 19 branches dans le monde ». À long terme, l'EI « cherchera probablement à reprendre le contrôle de certaines localités syriennes et à étendre sa sphère d'influence dans le monde », ajoute l'inspecteur, citant des réponses écrites de la DIA à ses questions. Cela montre également que l'utilisation politico-médiatique de l'annonce de la mort

d'Abou Bakr Al Baghdadi lors d'une opération militaire américaine, le 26 octobre, ne devrait pas empêcher l'EI de se reconstituer. Selon la DIA, l'EI s'était préparé à résister à la mort d'Al Baghdadi et devrait pouvoir « poursuivre ses opérations, maintenir sa cohésion mondiale et conserver sa posture actuelle ». Pire, toujours selon le rapport, l'EI « a activé des cellules dormantes pour multiplier les attentats contre les Forces démocratiques syriennes »



20/11/2019
avec AFP et France Télévisions

"Ce que nous avons vécu est inimaginable" : 27 femmes yézidiennes et leurs enfants sont arrivés en France pour commencer une nouvelle vie

Il s'agit du dernier groupe de femmes yézidiennes reçues en France dans le cadre d'un programme d'accueil mis en place à la fin 2018.



Des avions à l'aéroport Charles de Gaulle, le 27 juin 2019. (JOEL SAGET / AFP)

Vingt-sept femmes yézidiennes et leurs enfants, victimes en Irak du groupe État islamique (EI), sont arrivées mer-

credi 20 novembre à l'aéroport Charles-de Gaulle près de Paris pour commencer une nouvelle vie en France, ont constaté des

journalistes de l'AFP. Il s'agissait du dernier groupe de femmes yézidiennes reçues en France dans le cadre d'un pro-

gramme d'accueil mis en place à la fin 2018. Au total, 100 femmes et leurs enfants ont rejoint la France après un engagement en ce sens du président Emmanuel Macron auprès de Nadia Murad, Prix Nobel de la paix 2018 et elle-même ancienne victime de l'EI.

"Vous êtes les bienvenus en France ! Vous allez voir, progressivement vos enfants vont aller à l'école, vous allez vous faire des amis. (...) Soyez chez vous", a dé-

claré le directeur du Centre de Crise du ministère des Affaires étrangères, Eric Chevallier, lors d'une brève cérémonie d'accueil à leur descente d'avion en provenance d'Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan irakien.

Les femmes, le regard parfois perdu, étaient accompagnées d'enfants souvent en bas âge, pour certains endimanchés, portant costume et cravate, comme pour mieux marquer l'instant présent. Des adolescents

étaient aussi du voyage. "Ce que nous avons vécu ces cinq dernières années est inimaginable. Aujourd'hui la France nous a ouvert les bras, nous ne pouvons qu'être reconnaissants", a raconté à l'AFP Turko, une jeune mère de famille de 30 ans.

La première chose que nous voudrions faire, c'est apprendre la langue, envoyer nos enfants à l'école, apprendre la culture française. Après, c'est nos enfants qui décide-

ront ce qu'ils veulent faire de leur vie. Turko, mère de famille à l'AFP

Parmi les femmes accueillies en France, certaines ont été esclaves de l'EI et ont aujourd'hui du mal à se réintégrer dans la société yézidie. D'autres ont dû fuir leur zone d'habitation lors de l'avancée de l'EI, perdant la plupart des hommes de leur entourage, et sont aujourd'hui très isolées avec leurs enfants.

duvaR.english
Turkey's own independent gazette

20/11/2019

Syrian Kurds nominated for TIME 'person of the year'

This year's nominees for 'TIME Magazine Person of the Year', which has been a tradition since 1927, have been announced. Syrian Kurds were included in the shortlist for the award, which can be voted for on the magazine's website. The magazine said Syrian Kurds recently have been subject to isolation after battling ISIS for a long period.

This year's nominees for 'TIME Magazine Person of the Year', which has been a tradition since 1927, have been announced. Syrian Kurds were included in the shortlist for the award, which can be voted for on the magazine's website. The magazine said Syrian Kurds recently have been subject to isolation after battling ISIS for a long period.

Among the other nominees were Turkish President Tayyip Erdoğan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Russian President



Vladimir Putin, 'Whistleblowers' who have paved the way for Trump's impeachment inquiry, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, climate change activists led by Greta Thunberg, protesters in Hong Kong and the television series Game of Thrones.

TIME magazine, for better or worse,

recognizes a person, a group, an idea or an object that has done the most to influence the events of the year. The winner is announced with specially designed cover for the last issue of the year. In recent years, readers have also voted online, magazine editors then make their choice among the 'finalists'.

Mouvements de contestation: «Au Moyen-Orient, la politique de l'Iran est fragilisée»

INTERVIEW - Après les Irakiens et les Libanais, les Iraniens manifestent, ce qui peut nuire à la politique d'influence de Téhéran au Levant, analyse Vincent Eiffling, chercheur à l'Université Libre de Bruxelles.

LE FIGARO. - Suite à une hausse du prix de l'essence, des manifestations ont eu lieu en Iran. Le régime reconnaît la mort de cinq personnes, mais certaines ONG évoquent plusieurs dizaines, voire centaines. Comment observez-vous cette contestation?

Vincent EIFFLING. - Qu'une hausse de la moitié du prix de l'essence déclenche une forte contestation était prévisible. Je crois d'ailleurs que le régime iranien s'y attendait: cela explique la rapidité de sa réaction, avec une coupure générale d'internet et une forte mobilisation des forces de sécurité. L'année dernière, il y avait déjà eu des mouvements de contestation, mais, avant que le régime réagisse, il y avait eu un temps de latence. Rien de tel aujourd'hui.

Pourquoi dites-vous que c'était prévisible?

Il y a deux raisons principales, l'une plutôt objective, l'autre davantage symbolique. Avec le rétablissement des sanctions économiques américaines, les Iraniens subissent une inflation galopante, de l'ordre de 40%, de faibles perspectives d'emploi et une baisse très forte de leur pouvoir d'achat.

Pourquoi une telle décision de Téhéran?

L'économie iranienne est en mauvaise santé. Pour garder la tête hors de l'eau, l'État a besoin que le pays exporte un million et demi de barils de pétrole par jour. Depuis plusieurs mois, c'est moins d'un million. Les subventions qui permettent aux Iraniens de payer leur essence moins cher coûtent très cher. Économiquement, cette réforme fiscale n'est pas absurde, mais la communication du gouvernement a été désastreuse puisqu'aucune explication n'a été donnée.

Vous parlez d'un aspect plus symbolique?

L'essence est un symbole en Iran, l'un des pays du monde qui consomme le plus de carburant par habitant et qui possède les quatrièmes réserves de pétrole. Les Iraniens considèrent qu'ils doivent pouvoir jouir de cette exploitation. C'est pour eux une sorte de droit inaliénable. Il faut comprendre que, pour la jeunesse en particulier, il n'y a

pas beaucoup de sources de distraction. Que font les jeunes souvent? Ils prennent leur voiture et font un tour, sans destination. C'est une petite bulle de liberté. Dans leur voiture, hors de leur famille et du régime, ils peuvent s'exprimer plus librement, écouter la musique qu'ils souhaitent.

Alors que la situation sociale s'aggrave, les Iraniens sont-ils aussi en colère contre une politique étrangère trop onéreuse, notamment en Syrie, où Téhéran soutient el-Assad depuis 2011?

Cette question divise profondément la société iranienne. La politique étrangère inter-

Al-Qods, cette unité des Gardiens de la Révolution spécialement conçue pour combattre à l'étranger. Pour beaucoup, c'est un héros national, pour d'autres, le symbole de tous les maux du régime.

Peut-on savoir quel camp l'emporte sur l'autre?

L'Iran étant un pays autoritaire, il est très difficile de prendre la mesure de ces divisions. Je crois néanmoins qu'il y a une tendance au renforcement de ce mécontentement, sans pour autant qu'il soit possible de dire qu'une majorité d'Iraniens est hostile à cette politique étrangère.



Des Iraniens manifestent à Téhéran, le 16 novembre. -AFP

ventionniste de Téhéran coûte des centaines de millions de dollars chaque année. Pour une part de la population, c'est une source de mécontentement: ils préféreraient que l'argent soit utilisé autrement. Mais pour d'autres, qui considèrent que l'Iran est la puissance naturelle du Moyen-Orient, c'est une réelle source de fierté nationale. Je dirais même que beaucoup tiennent parfois les deux discours à la fois: ça coûte trop cher, mais ils sont fiers de dire que l'Iran a défait Daech. Ce clivage est particulièrement prégnant à l'endroit du général Qasem Soleimani, qui dirige la force

Cette politique est particulièrement tournée vers trois pays - l'Irak, la Syrie et le Liban. Depuis plusieurs semaines, les Irakiens et les Libanais manifestent aussi massivement. Cela a-t-il des implications pour Téhéran?

Pour l'instant, la politique iranienne au Moyen-Orient est fragilisée, mais il y a des différences notables entre les manifestations en Iran, en Irak et au Liban. Au Liban, ce sont principalement les classes moyennes et aisées, urbaines, qui manifestent. Leur hostilité est tournée vers tout le

système politique en place et non seulement vers le Hezbollah - la milice chiite iranienne. Les manifestants ont des revendications interconfessionnelles - au-delà des frontières institutionnelles entre sunnites, chiites et chrétiens - qui les distinguent des classes populaires chiites favorables au Hezbollah, qui joue un rôle politique mais aussi social primordial. Après, comme en Iran en matière de politique étrangère, certains d'entre eux reprochent au Hezbollah ses activités aux côtés du gouvernement d'el-Assad en Syrie, qui seraient trop onéreuses. Quant aux opposants qui estiment que le Hezbollah joue un rôle trop important dans la vie politique du Liban, ils ont toujours existé, mais ils s'expriment de plus en plus fort.

Et en Irak?

Les Irakiens ont l'impression d'être pris en tenaille entre de nombreuses influences étrangères, pas seulement iraniennes, mais aussi saoudiennes et américaines. Ils ont l'impression d'être otages de luttes géopoliti-

ques qui fragilisent leur pays. Pour ce qui est de la politique iranienne en Irak, la population irakienne chiite est elle-même divisée: une partie s'en accommode, mais une autre - représentée par l'ayatollah al-Sistani - s'y oppose vivement. Cette opposition n'est pas nouvelle, mais, là encore, les positions se radicalisent. Elles divergent vers les extrémités du spectre.

Vous parliez de revendications intercommunautaires au Liban, qu'en est-il en Irak?

On assiste clairement au développement d'un fort nationalisme, au-delà des appartenances communautaires et alors même que le pays est assez artificiel dans ses frontières. Saddam Hussein avait essayé de pousser ce nationalisme mais sans vraiment réussir: à l'époque, les sunnites dominaient plutôt les chiites, pourtant majoritaires. Avec l'intervention américaine, ils ont pris leur revanche. Mais toute l'instabilité et la conflictualité qui existent depuis ont fait qu'une part croissante d'Irakiens n'en peut plus de

toutes ces influences étrangères, d'où qu'elles viennent.

Ces dernières années, avec la guerre en Syrie, certains experts reprenaient l'expression de «croissant chiite» forgée en 2003 par le roi de Jordanie pour parler de l'influence de Téhéran à Bagdad, à Damas et à Beyrouth. Cela vous paraît-il pertinent aujourd'hui?

Je n'ai jamais été un grand défenseur de cette expression. J'ai toujours considéré qu'elle ne tenait pas assez compte des particularismes politiques, sociaux, nationaux et mêmes religieux entre l'Iran, l'Irak, la Syrie et le Liban que ces manifestations mettent aussi en lumière. Il est vrai que l'Iran joue la carte de la protection des populations chiites, mais c'est moins une raison en soi qu'un instrument au service de leur politique étrangère. Aujourd'hui, même si celle-ci est affaiblie, la position de l'Iran ne disparaîtra pas de la région.

Le Monde

Par Hélène Sallon
le 20 novembre 2019

« On est avec le peuple iranien » : à Bagdad, le soutien des Irakiens pour la révolte de leurs voisins

Les manifestants de la place Tahrir se réjouissent du mouvement populaire qui défie le régime de Téhéran depuis le 15 novembre.

Si, sur la place Tahrir de Bagdad, aucune affiche ou pancarte ne salue le soulèvement qui embrase les rues d'Iran, les centaines de jeunes Irakiens qui campent sur la place sont loin d'être indifférents au combat que mènent leurs voisins. De part et d'autre de la frontière entre les deux pays, les manifestants irakiens et iraniens affrontent un adversaire commun : la République islamique.

C'est d'ailleurs avec une certaine fierté que les manifestants de la place Tahrir ont observé, dès le 15 novembre, les villes iraniennes se soulever une à une pour protester contre la flambée des prix de l'essence avec les mêmes slogans que ceux scandés en Irak depuis le début de la contestation, le 1er

octobre. Ils ont, comme leurs précurseurs irakiens, piétiné les portraits du Guide suprême, Ali Khamenei, et appelé à « la chute du régime ». « Pendant quarante ans, l'Iran a essayé d'exporter sa révolution islamique en Irak, en vain. Il semble que l'Irak ait réussi à lui exporter sa révolution en quarante jours », se gaussaient alors des Irakiens sur les réseaux sociaux. Communauté de destin

L'éditorial du 19 novembre du journal Tuk-Tuk, écrit et distribué par des activistes de la place Tahrir, est dans cette même veine. « De Bagdad cette fois, sont insufflées des images de résurrection de l'Orient, qui ont d'abord fait bouger Beyrouth puis secoué Téhéran. (...) La révolution marque l'achèvement de l'axe Bagdad-Beyrouth-Té-

héran et bientôt, le monde entier se réveillera face à un nouvel Orient », se prêtent-ils à rêver. A l'arc chiite qu'a patiemment façonné l'Iran de Bagdad à Beyrouth, en passant par Damas, assurant sa mainmise sur chaque capitale par l'intermédiaire de forces politiques et de factions armées chiites vassalisées, les contestataires de Tahrir espèrent voir se substituer des nations souveraines et sans référence confessionnelle, dirigées par des gouvernements civils.

« On diffuse leurs vidéos sur les réseaux sociaux pour que leur révolution vive malgré la coupure d'Internet »

Il y a bien eu, place Tahrir, quelques taquineries adressées aux Iraniens mais les critiques

virulentes contre Téhéran n'ont visé que son régime, jamais son peuple. Les cibles des attaques les plus dures sont le Guide suprême, Ali Khamenei, et le général des forces Al-Qods des gardiens de la révolution, Ghassem Soleimani, accusés de faire et défaire à leur guise les gouvernements et de siphonner les ressources de l'Irak. Avec le peuple iranien, nombre de contestataires de la place Tahrir éprouvent une communauté de destin.

« Notre pays est dans cette situation à cause de l'Iran mais les Iraniens sont des gens bien, éduqués, qui souffrent, comme nous, de ce régime, de la confusion qu'il fait entre le religieux et le politique, de son attitude prédatrice, de sa violence », dit Hamed, un étudiant de 23 ans.

« On est avec le peuple iranien, on le soutient par l'esprit. On diffuse leurs vidéos sur les réseaux sociaux pour que leur révolution vive malgré la coupure d'Internet », abonde Haider, un ouvrier et militant de 27 ans de Kerbala. Article réservé à nos abonnés Lire aussi En Irak, la classe politique unie dans le statu quo

La similitude des méthodes de répression des mouvements en Irak (320 morts au moins) et en Iran (au moins 106 morts selon Amnesty International mardi soir) est soulignée dans le journal Tuk-Tuk, qui y voit la marque d'un « même esprit criminel et malade. » « Ce n'est pas la première fois que les Iraniens se ré-



Des jeunes manifestants irakiens grimés brandissent des pancartes sur la place Tahrir, à Bagdad, le 15 novembre. L'un de leurs slogans est : « Le gouvernement nous voit comme le diable alors que nous sommes pacifiques. » LAURENT VAN DER STOCKT POUR "LE MONDE"

voltent contre ce régime qui finance tous les groupes armés de la région à leur détriment, qu'ils affrontent ses bassidji (corps de volontaires islamistes chargé du maintien de l'ordre). Aujourd'hui, ce sont les mêmes racines », salue l'un de ses journalistes, certain que « les manifestations en Iran permettront de limiter les crimes du régime iranien en Irak ». Hamed, l'étudiant, a le même sentiment : « S'ils réussissent leur révolution, cela nous aidera car le régime iranien arrêtera de soutenir notre gouvernement. »

Hélène Sallon (Bagdad (Irak) envoyée spéciale)

LE FIGARO

Le Figaro avec AFP
le 20 novembre 2019

Arrivée en France de 27 femmes yazidiennes et leurs enfants

Vingt-sept femmes yazidiennes et leurs enfants, victimes en Irak du groupe État islamique (EI), sont arrivées mercredi à l'aéroport Charles-de Gaulle près de Paris pour commencer une nouvelle vie en France, ont constaté des journalistes de l'AFP.

Il s'agissait du dernier groupe de femmes yazidiennes reçues en France dans le cadre d'un programme d'accueil mis en place à la fin 2018. Au total, 100 femmes et leurs enfants ont rejoint la France après un engagement en ce sens du président Emmanuel Macron auprès de Nadia Murad, Prix Nobel de la paix 2018 et elle-même ancienne victime de l'EI. «Vous êtes les bienvenus en France ! Vous allez voir, progressivement vos enfants vont aller à l'école, vous allez vous faire des amis (...) Soyez chez vous», a déclaré le directeur du Centre de Crise du Quai d'Orsay, Eric Chevallier, lors d'une brève

cérémonie d'accueil à leur descente d'avion en provenance d'Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan irakien.

Les femmes, le regard parfois perdu, étaient accompagnées d'enfants souvent en bas âge, pour certains endimanchés, portant costume et cravate, comme pour mieux marquer l'instant présent. Des adolescents étaient aussi du voyage. «Ce que nous avons vécu ces cinq dernières années est inimaginable. Aujourd'hui la France nous a ouvert les bras, nous ne pouvons qu'être reconnaissants», a raconté Turko, une jeune mère de famille de 30 ans, à l'AFP. «La première chose que nous voudrions faire, c'est apprendre la langue, envoyer nos enfants à l'école, apprendre la culture française. Après, c'est nos enfants qui décideront ce qu'ils veulent faire de leur vie», a-t-elle ajouté.

Pour Giovanni Cassani, responsable de l'Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM) à Erbil, qui a fait le voyage avec les familles, «il y a beaucoup d'attentes», «d'un côté la difficulté de quitter leur pays d'origine, leur famille, leur village mais d'un autre aussi l'excitation de recommencer une nouvelle vie dans un nouveau pays et avec plein d'opportunités». Vivant dans les coins reculés des montagnes du Kurdistan irakien, dans le nord de l'Irak, les Yazidis sont une minorité kurdophone adepte d'une religion ésotérique monothéiste. En août 2014, leur sort a basculé lorsque l'EI s'est emparé d'un tiers de l'Irak, notamment du foyer historique des Yazidis sur les monts Sinjar. Les djihadistes ont tué des hommes, transformé en enfants-soldats les plus jeunes et condamné des milliers de femmes aux travaux forcés et à l'esclavage sexuel.



By Hiwa Shilani |
November 21-2019

Last group of Yezidi women, children arrive in Paris for resettlement program

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) – On Wednesday, 27 Yezidi (Ezidi) women and their children arrived in Paris, completing a resettlement initiative by the French government that has welcomed members of the Iraqi religious minority that suffered greatly under the Islamic State.

As a part of the Humanitarian Admissions Program launched by President Emmanuel Macron in cooperation with The International Organization for Migration (IOM), France promised to receive 100 Ezidi families who were victimized by fighters from the extremist organization in northern Iraq and Syria.

Read More: Over 130 Yezidis resettle in France as part of new humanitarian initiative

After taking off from the Kurdistan Region's capital of Erbil, a plane carrying the final families assisted by the program touched down at Charles de Gaulle Airport, where they were greeted by the head of the French Foreign Ministry's Crisis Management Unit, Eric Chevallier.

"Your children are going to go to school, you're going to make friends," he told them.

A 30-year-old mother named Turko told AFP, "What we've lived through these past five years is unimaginable. Today France is opening its arms to us, we can only be grateful."

"The first thing we would like to do is learn the language, send our children to school, and learn French culture. Afterward, our chil-



A group of Yezidis (Ezidis) displaced from their hometown of Sinjar (Shingal) by the Islamic State. (Photo: Archive)

dren will decide what they want to do with their lives," she added.

The project was introduced by Macron with the support of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Nadia Murad, who is an Ezidi Islamic State survivor and has advocated for victims from her community worldwide.

The emergence of the group's militants and their violent assault on the Ezidi-majority city of Sinjar (Shingal) in 2014 led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Ezidi civilians. Most of them fled to the Kurdistan Region, while others resettled to neighbo-

ring countries in the region or Western states.

Others were not as lucky and remained stranded in the war zone, where they experienced atrocities and mass executions at the hands of the extremist group for years. Militants subjected women and girls to sexual slavery, kidnapped children, forced religious conversions, executed scores of men, and abused, sold, and trafficked females across areas they controlled in Iraq and Syria.

Editing by John J. Catherine



By Hiwa Shilani |
November 21-2019

Armenia to open consulate in the Kurdistan Region

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) – The Armenian Ambassador to Iraq announced on Thursday that his country plans to open a new consulate in the Kurdistan Region in the near future.

"The purpose of my visit is to develop the relation[s] between Armenia and Kurdistan

Region and to visit the Armenian citizens in Duhok and Zakho," Ambassador Hrachya Poladian told Kurdistan 24 while in the northern province of Duhok.

He affirmed his country's support for the Kurdistan Region, extending his thanks and gratitude to its people and government for

safekeeping Armenian citizens and providing them with an environment to freely practice their faith.

"We have good ties with the Kurdistan Region in terms of economy, politics, and trade and we are planning in coordination with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to



Armenian Ambassador to Iraq Hrachya Poladian speaks to Kurdistan 24 in Duhok, Nov. 21 2019. (Photo: Kurdistan 24)

open a Consulate General in Erbil, as the Armenian government have provided the needed budget in 2020 to achieve that, which will improve the relationship between us," added Poladian.

According to a 2011 census, more than 37,000 Kurds live in Armenia, predominantly in western parts of the country.

The autonomous Kurdistan Region has a unicameral parliamentary legislature with 111 seats, with quota seats reserved for Turkmen and Christian parties and one specifically set aside for a member of an Armenian party.

In May, the KRG opened the first Armenian Orthodox church in Erbil's Christian-majority district of Ankawa.

Read More: Kurdistan opens first Armenian Orthodox church in Erbil

"The opening of this church itself is laying another foundation stone for a peaceful co-existence of different ethnic and religious groups in the Kurdistan Region," Safeen Dizayee, the spokesperson of the KRG present to represent Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani at the observance, told Kurdistan 24.

In June, the Iraqi Ministry of Transport announced that it had launched the first Iraqi bus line traveling Armenia that day, in what it called, "the first of its kind."

Read More: Iraq launches first bus line to Armenia, traveling through Iran

A ministry statement read that the addition to its routes comes within the framework of "the development of international transport and openness to neighboring countries and regional countries."

Busses will pass from Iraq eastward into Iran, and then northward into Armenia, as the statement continued, to open up "new horizons" in tourism available to Iraqis.

Editing by John J. Catherine

NRT

2019-11-21

Baghdad transfers public sector salaries to Kurdistan Region: official

SULAIMANI — The federal government has transferred funds to pay for public sector salaries in the Kurdistan Region, a senior official said on Thursday (November 21).

Director of Region's Central Bank Abid Mizouri told NRT Digital Media that Baghdad had deposited the employees' payment into the account of the central bank. The news came just a few hours after a source from the Ministry of Finance and Economy said that the money had not been transferred.



An undated photo shows a man using a currency counting machine (File)

Mizouri said the ministry would be able to distribute salaries next week.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has only distributed salaries to some

ministries so far this month. The distribution is for work performed in August.

Under the 2019 Federal Budget Law, Baghdad is responsible for paying for public sector salaries in the Kurdistan Region.

(NRT Digital Media)

Syrie : violents combats entre forces kurdes et proturcs près d'une ville clé

Les combattants kurdes sont engagés samedi dans de violents affrontements dans le nord de la Syrie pour entraver l'avancée de forces proturques près de la localité stratégique d'Ain Issa, ont rapporté une ONG et les forces kurdes.

Les Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), coalition dominée par les combattants kurdes, ont rapporté sur Twitter une attaque menée avec des blindés et à l'artillerie "pour envahir Aïn Issa".

L'alliance, qui dispose de bases et de bureaux administratifs à Aïn Issa, "tente d'empêcher l'avancée des forces turques et des supplétifs syriens" en direction de la localité, a de son côté indiqué l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'Homme (OSDH).

Les rebelles proturcs, soutenus par l'artillerie turque et les drones chargés d'explosifs d'Ankara, se trouvent à un kilomètre d'Aïn Issa, a précisé à l'AFP le directeur de l'OSDH, Rami Abdel Rahmane, qui évoque de "violents combats".

Des affrontements sporadiques opposent ces dernières semaines les combattants kurdes aux forces turques et à leurs supplétifs syriens, qui ont conquis quelques dizaines de villages, malgré deux accords de cessez-le-feu.



Ankara avait lancé le 9 octobre une offensive majeure en Syrie pour éloigner de sa frontière la principale milice kurde de Syrie, les Unités de protection du Peuple (YPG).

Cette opération a permis à l'armée turque de s'emparer d'une bande frontalière de 120 km. Les violences ont tué 150 civils et déplacé plus de 300.000 personnes, selon l'OSDH.

Lâchés par Washington, leur allié dans la lutte antijihadistes, les Kurdes se sont tournés vers le régime de Bachar al-Assad, qui a déployé des troupes dans plusieurs secteurs du nord.

Et c'est Moscou, appui incontournable du régime, qui a négocié avec Ankara un cessez-le-feu, en contrepartie de patrouilles conjointes et du retrait des forces kurdes de la frontière.

Le conflit en Syrie, déclenché en 2011 par la répression de manifestations prodémocratie par le régime de Damas, a fait plus de 370.000 morts et des millions de déplacés.

metro 25 novembre 2019

Moscou appelle les Kurdes à rallier l'armée syrienne régulière

La Russie, principal allié militaire des autorités syriennes, a appelé les Kurdes de Syrie à rallier l'armée régulière syrienne. « Au plus vite, au mieux », a déclaré lundi le vice-ministre russe des Affaires étrangères Michail Bogdanov, selon l'agence Interfax. Les milices kurdes – que la Turquie considère comme terroristes – ont été chassées de plusieurs

zones du nord de la Syrie par une offensive turque le mois dernier. La Russie et la Turquie ont ensuite conclu un accord pour contrôler la frontière qui les sépare.

Michail Bogdanov a encore assuré que la Russie était en contact « avec toutes les parties » afin de garantir la paix « dans le respect de la souveraineté de la Syrie ».



Les Kurdes d'Iran oubliés de tous

Le sort des six millions de Kurdes d'Iran, pourtant durement frappés par la récente vague de répression, suscite peu d'intérêt, et encore moins de solidarité.

Les chiffres de la population kurde dans ses quatre principaux pays de résidence ne sont que des estimations. Mais les six millions de Kurdes d'Iran seraient aussi nombreux que les Kurdes d'Irak, deux à trois fois moins nombreux que les Kurdes de Turquie et... trois fois plus nombreux que les Kurdes de Syrie. Malgré ce poids démographique relatif, les Kurdes iraniens sont pourtant pratiquement absents du traitement médiatique de la « question kurde » et de la mobilisation politique à ce sujet. Cette indifférence généralisée est d'autant plus troublante que de multiples discriminations frappent cette population en Iran.

UNE LONGUE HISTOIRE DE RESISTANCE

C'est en Iran, en janvier 1946, qu'est proclamée pour la première fois une « République kurde » avec pour capitale Mahabad. Soutenue à bouts de bras par l'URSS, elle est dirigée par le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan iranien (PDKI) et elle accueille des milliers de membres du clan Barzani, pourchassés par la répression en Irak. Le rétablissement du pouvoir du Shah sonne pourtant le glas de cette « République », dont Téhéran occupe le territoire et élimine les dirigeants. Vingt ans plus tard, le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) d'Irak, organiquement lié à la famille Barzani, se retourne contre ses alliés du PDKI, afin de garantir le soutien du Shah à son insurrection contre Bagdad. Affaibli par cette trahison, le PDKI se restructure en 1973 autour de la personnalité charismatique d'Abdul Rahmane Ghassemlou. Les peshmergas (combattants kurdes) du PDKI contribuent activement à la guérilla contre le régime du Shah, renversé par l'Ayatollah Khomeyni en 1979.

Ils acceptent de se satisfaire d'une simple autonomie dans le cadre de la République islamique, ce qui ne dissuade pas Khomeyni de réprimer leur dissidence au nom d'une « unité nationale » menacée en 1980 par l'invasion de l'Iran par l'Irak de Saddam Hussein.

Contraint à l'exil, Ghassemlou est assassiné en 1989 à Vienne par un commando dépêché

de sacrifier les Kurdes d'Iran pour s'investir massivement sur le théâtre syrien, un cessez-le-feu prévalant de 2013 à 2015 en Turquie.

DE MULTIPLES DISCRIMINATIONS D'ETAT

Les Kurdes d'Iran sont la cible de la part de la République islamique d'une double série de discriminations, en tant que Kurdes dans un régime d'un centralisme

pâtissent de graves entraves dans leur accès à l'emploi, au logement, à la propriété et aux fonctions d'encadrement politique et administrative. Les deux provinces kurdes sont reléguées, en termes de développement, aux tout derniers rangs des trente provinces iraniennes, avec le Balouchistan.

Cette situation déplorable en Iran même s'accompagne, au Kurdistan d'Irak, d'interventions sanglantes du régime iranien contre les cadres et les bases des partis kurdes iraniens. Les sources kurdes évaluent aussi à au moins 35 morts le nombre des victimes kurdes de la répression des récentes protestations populaires en Iran, notamment à Kermanshah et à Javanrood. « Le Monde » rapporte à cet égard un témoignage kurde sur l'entrée en action des gardiens de la révolution, aux côtés de la police engagée dans le reste du pays. Cette dimension tragique de la question kurde suscite néanmoins aujourd'hui aussi peu d'intérêt que de solidarité. Il est vrai que les dirigeants actuels des Kurdes d'Iran n'ont pas les réseaux diplomatiques que l'Internationale socialiste offrait, en son temps, à Ghassemlou et à son successeur. Mais ce silence assourdissant est surtout le fruit d'une décision du PKK, très puissant dans la diaspora kurde, qui a subordonné toute sa propagande à l'impératif d'un soutien au « Rojava » syrien, à l'exclusion des autres composantes du peuple kurde.

C'est ainsi que les Kurdes d'Iran, abandonnés qu'il sont par les relais et les soutiens déclarés de la « cause kurde », apparaissent à certains égards comme les perdants absolus d'une histoire kurde pourtant fertile en défaites.



Sources : Institut kurde de Paris ; Mehrîad R. Izady Université de Columbia, New York.

d'Iran. Les sicaires de la République islamique, éliminent, en 1992 à Vienne, le nouveau dirigeant du PDKI. La formation historique des Kurdes iraniens, ainsi décapitée, peine à maintenir une présence clandestine en Iran et souffre de ses différends internes. Elle est en outre contestée par le PJAK (Parti pour une vie libre au Kurdistan), la branche iranienne dont s'est dotée en 2004 le PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan), fondé un quart de siècle plus tôt en Turquie. Les autorités iraniennes jouent habilement le PJAK contre le PDKI, surtout à partir de 2012, quand Téhéran mise sur le PKK et sa branche syrienne pour affaiblir l'opposition révolutionnaire au régime Assad. En retour, le PKK et ses organisations affiliées acceptent

sourcilieux, d'une part, et en tant que sunnites dans un système privilégiant systématiquement la majorité chiite, d'autre part. La langue kurde, bannie des écoles publiques, ne peut être enseignée que dans des établissements privés, eux-mêmes soumis à l'autorisation préalable de l'Etat. Le militantisme kurde est méthodiquement réprimé, aussi bien dans les régions frontalières de l'Irak que dans le Khorassan, au nord-est du pays. Près de la moitié des détenus politiques en Iran sont ainsi d'origine kurde, selon le rapporteur de l'ONU pour la situation des droits de l'homme dans ce pays, alors que les Kurdes représentent moins du dixième de la population iranienne. Les Kurdes, à la fois minoritaires ethniquement et religieusement,

En Irak, Mike Pence rencontre les Kurdes mais pas les autorités de Bagdad

Bagdad - Le vice-président américain Mike Pence a rencontré les dirigeants kurdes mais pas les autorités de Bagdad samedi, le jour où deux manifestants ont été tués dans la contestation populaire face à laquelle Washington est aux abonnés absents contrairement à son rival iranien.

Pour sa première visite de quelques heures en Irak en tant que vice-président, M. Pence a célébré la fête de Thanksgiving avec les troupes américaines sur la base d'Aïn al-Assad, dans la province occidentale d'Al-Anbar.

Deuxième producteur de l'Opep, l'Irak est en proie à son premier mouvement de contestation spontané -et à sa crise sociale la plus meurtrière avec près de 350 morts en près de deux mois- depuis la chute en 2003 du dictateur Saddam Hussein dans la foulée de l'invasion américaine du pays.

Alors que la rue réclame la refonte du système politique installé après 2003 par les Américains et désormais totalement investi par l'Iran, l'autre grande puissance agissante en Irak, les Etats-Unis restent quasi silencieux.

Une attitude qui signe, affirment les experts, le déclin de leur influence en Irak et même leur désintérêt pour le pays où l'Iran a, depuis des années, "coopté des dirigeants, payé des agents irakiens et infiltrer tous les aspects de la vie politique, économique et religieuse de l'Irak", selon une récente fuite de documents du renseignement iranien.

Il y a près d'un an déjà, le président Donald Trump lui-même

avait fêté Noël sur la base d'Aïn al-Assad, et n'avait rencontré aucun officiel ni fait le déplacement jusqu'à Bagdad à 200 kilomètres de là. Ce qui avait suscité une énième campagne des partisans de l'Iran au Parlement pour bouter hors d'Irak les



Une photo distribuée par le gouvernement autonome du Kurdistan irakien montre le vice-président américain Mike Pence (G) accueilli par Masrour Barzani, le Premier ministre du Kurdistan, à Erbil, dans le nord de l'Irak, le 23 novembre 2019 / afp.com/

5.200 soldats américains postés dans le pays.

- "Gratitude" aux Kurdes -

Après son déplacement dans la base, M. Pence s'est rendu à Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan irakien, où il a assuré le président de la région autonome Netchirvan Barzani et son Premier ministre Masrour Barzani de sa "gratitude" et de sa "détermination à continuer à se tenir aux côtés des alliés kurdes", selon un responsable américain.

De l'autre côté de la frontière, les Kurdes de Syrie, alliés des Etats-Unis dans la lutte antijihadiste ces dernières années, estiment eux que les Etats-Unis les ont abandonnés après un retrait militaire américain de leur région du nord syrien, qui avait ouvert la voie à une offensive militaire turque contre eux en octobre.

En Irak, les autorités fédérales de Bagdad ont dû se contenter d'un appel téléphonique car M. Pence "ne pouvait pas aller à Bagdad pour des raisons de sécurité", a dit un autre responsable américain.

Il a ainsi appelé le Premier ministre Adel Abdel Mahdi depuis la base d'Aïn al-Assad, l'exhortant à "se dissocier de l'Iran", selon ce même responsable.

M. Abdel Mahdi, au pouvoir depuis treize mois et jugé "trop proche" de l'Iran par Washington, n'a toujours pas pu se rendre aux Etats-Unis où sa visite annoncée depuis des mois ne cesse d'être repoussée.

Les relations entre Washington et Bagdad se sont distendues depuis la victoire contre le groupe jihadiste Etat islamique (EI) en Irak en 2017. Les Etats-Unis dirigent la coalition internationale qui appuie encore l'Irak pour lutter contre les cellules jihadistes persistantes.

Mais ils semblent désormais sur la touche politiquement dans ce pays.

- Deux manifestants tués -

Rayan al-Keldani, patron de l'une des très rares factions chrétiennes du Hachd al-Chaabi, la coalition des paramilitaires chiites pro-Iran, a apostrophé sur Twitter M. Pence, l'accusant de venir "furtivement" en Irak. "Vous n'êtes pas le bienvenu sur le sol irakien!", a-t-il écrit.

La liste d'opposition de l'ex-Premier ministre Haider al-Abadi a rappelé dans un communiqué que "Bagdad est la capitale de l'Irak, pas Erbil", dénonçant une visite "sans respect pour la souveraineté" irakienne.

De plus la visite surprise de M. Pence est survenue en plein mouvement de contestation en Irak.

Depuis jeudi, dix manifestants ont été tués par balles, grenades lacrymogènes et balles en caoutchouc, selon des sources médicales.

Parmi eux, deux ont péri samedi sur le pont al-Ahrar, proche de la place Tahrir, épice de la contestation à Bagdad, selon une source médicale.

Des dizaines d'autres ont été blessés à Bagdad et dans plusieurs villes du sud du pays, où les manifestations et la désobéissance civile se poursuivent.

A Kerbala, au sud de Bagdad, les manifestants ont formé un cortège funéraire pour un manifestant porté disparu et finalement retrouvé mort dans le coffre de sa voiture.



November 24-2019

Over 17,000 Syrian Kurdish refugees arrived in Kurdistan since Turkey offensive: KRG

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) – The number of Syrian Kurdish refugees who have fled their homes to the Kurdistan Region since the start of Turkey's military operation in northern Syria has exceeded 17,000, the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) said on Sunday.

In a post on Twitter, the JCC said a new group of 178 refugees arrived in the autonomous Kurdish region through the Sehela border crossing.

The total number of Syrian Kurdish refugees is now 17,046. That number is in addition to the 226,000 Syrian refugees who were already living in the Kurdistan Region.

The current camps in the Kurdistan Region were built as a rapid response to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugee crisis emanating from the rise of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Over the past few years, the Kurdistan Region has been home to 1.8 million IDPs and refugees who fled from Syria and other parts of Iraq. Nearly four million Iraqis were displaced when the terror group emerged in northern Iraq in mid-2014.



The total number of Syrian Kurdish refugees who have arrived in the Kurdistan Region since early October is now 17,046. (Photo: BCF/Dilawer Benlawi)

On Nov. 9, Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani visited a Syrian refugee camp in Bardarash to discuss the needs and requirements with camp management and international and local organizations.

Read More: PM Masrour Barzani visits Syrian refugee camp in Kurdistan Region

The Bardarash camp currently hosts 2,619

Syrian refugee families, equivalent to about 12,000 individuals who fled to the Kurdistan Region following Turkey's military assault on northeastern Syria on Oct. 9.

During his visit, Prime Minister Barzani called on "the International community and the Kurdistan Region's partners to aid the KRG as it receives more refugees."



November 24-2019
Zhelwan Z. Wali

Kurdish authorities repatriate American, German children from Rojava

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region – Local Kurdish authorities in Syria announced on Saturday that they handed over three German children, their mother and an American toddler to their respective governments, an official confirmed to Rudaw.

"We handed over three German children and their mother as well as an American toddler to their respective governments. Their government representatives were present when the hand-over protocol was signed," Ab-



People walk through Aio Issa, one of the camps that holds displaced Syrians as well as foreign wives of ISIS fighters and their children. Photo: Delil Souleiman/AFP

dulrehman Salman, member of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES), told Rudaw on Saturday.

Syrian Kurds are holding thousands of foreign women with suspected links to the Islamic State (ISIS), along with their children.

The German mother has been named as Laura H, 30, by magazine Der Spiegel and was said to have been living in Al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria.

There are roughly 12,000 suspected ISIS fighters detained by Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northern Syria, including some 2,000 foreigners. 70,000 women affiliated with the group and their children are held in camps across the region.

The repatriation of foreign nationals has sparked hot debate in Europe and beyond, particularly in cases involving children.

European countries, fearful their radicalized citizens could pose a security risk if they are permitted to return, have in many cases refused to take them back. Special dispensation has been given in the case of unaccompanied minors, however.

France, Belgium, Germany and Denmark are some of the several countries who have taken back children born to ISIS-affiliated parents.

"We do not have a solid figure on the Daesh children because the number keeps changing. But recently, we hold more than 7000 Daesh children," Salman said, using the Arabic acronym for ISIS.

He added they have so far handed over "around 400 foreign Daesh children to their countries."

According to AFP, the American toddler, reported to be three years old, was handed over to US officials at the Semalka border crossing on the Iraqi Kurdistan border.

The American child was reportedly the daughter of the German woman's first husband, who was a US citizen, according to Germany's Bild newspaper.

The United Nations children's fund (UNICEF) has described the orphans of foreign fighters as the world's most vulnerable children.

UNICEF also reported on November 4 that 28,000 children from more than 60 countries remain trapped in the region, mostly in displacement camps. This includes almost 20,000 from Iraq.

Britain repatriated a number of British orphans from Syria earlier this week.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab described

the repatriation as "the right thing to do," adding that the children born of terrorist fighters should "never have been subjected to the horrors of war."

In the summer of 2014, ISIS overran large swathes of Iraq and Syria. Thousands of foreigners traveled from across Europe, the Americas, and Asia to build or fight for the so-called caliphate.

Following the collapse of the caliphate earlier this year, many women and children ended up in overcrowded camps managed by Kurdish forces.

Fears of an ISIS resurgence have grown since the Turkish incursion began in northern Syria early last month.

ISIS militants and their families exploited the resulting chaos and escaped from SDF-controlled camps and prisons in Ain Issa.



Nov 25 2019
By Yavuz Baydar

Turkey's Kurds are subjected to political 'ethnic cleansing'

Turkey's Kurds are subjected to political 'ethnic cleansing'

Day after day, anything related to the concept of justice in Turkey resembles a bitter parody of Franz Kafka's works of literature.

The domain of the judiciary has turned into a battlefield for partisanship and clashing political interests in which various flanks of Turkey's far-right, extreme nationalist and Islamist groups elbow each other to gain influence.

It is apparent that the power struggle in the defunct system of justice is a symbol for a showdown between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the militarist right.

The opposition is only a pawn in this cruel game. While the op-

pressive measures against the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) on central and local levels become unbearable, Turkey's lonely and alienated



dissidents and journalists bear the brunt of what they regard as acts of revenge for their standing up against the injustice.

The case of Ahmet Altan, former

editor-in-chief of the shutdown liberal daily Taraf, is telling of the agony. He was sentenced to aggravated lifetime imprisonment for spreading "subliminal mes-

sages" supporting the 2016 attempted coup in Turkey and, when his sentence was recently reduced to 10 years, he was released — but only for five days.

A court agreed with the prosecutor that he must be sent back to prison and he was put back in his cell. During his brief period of freedom, he filed a powerful article to Le Monde.

"In the few days I've spent 'outside' the prison, the things I've heard and watched gave me the feeling that life might only comprise a prison and a madhouse," he wrote. "It is as if a strange ideology one might call 'lumpenism' has, in various guises, taken hold of the 'outside.'"

"A lowly case of madness has penetrated the texture of society. The intellectual hierarchy of society has been turned upside down and those with the poorest acumen and skills have gained

the right to speak the most. Intelligence, skills, knowledge and creativity are demeaned.

“One of the most horrifying questions of humankind determines everyone’s place in society: How much do you love your homeland? Everyone loves their homeland; they love it like crazy, love it to death and, in order to prove it, they keep shouting out how much they love their homeland.

“Political authority has the final say on who loves their homeland more. In this terrifying competition, there is no place for those who have not lost all wisdom and reason. Any reasonable objection, any belief in law and human rights will suffice to leave you out of the race... Lumpens have planted their flags everywhere.”

The pattern was repeated when journalists of the secular daily Cumhuriyet had a lower court defy the overturn of their lengthy prison sentences by the High Court of Appeals. The case will continue to agonise them because it means the process will begin from scratch.

These examples help understand how acrimonious the internal battle in the power echelons in Turkey has become. As a part of bureaucracy tries to prevent things from getting out of hand completely, the other part pushes for crossing all the lines in order to establish a full-scale police state.

If the cases of Altan and Cumhuriyet are not clear enough to see through the patterns, a look into the series of devastating measures employed against the HDP — with 62 seats, the third largest party in the Turkish

parliament — would leave one with no doubts.

On the central level, there are more than 100 subpoenas against its deputies, all on terrorism charges. It is a question of Erdogan’s tactical timing before their immunities are lifted, paving the way for prison.

Of the 69 municipalities won by the HDP, 27 have been imposed with state trustees appointed by Erdogan. Thirteen HDP mayors are in pretrial detention, along with tens of municipal council members. They are added to the 41 former mayors of the HDP who were removed from their posts before the elections in March and sentenced to a total of about 237 years in prison.

There is another pattern: Erdogan is determined to break the backbone of the HDP’s rather

solid structures and continue to conduct, to the very end, what could be defined as “ethnic cleansing in Turkish politics.” The aim is to copy-paste the Sri Lanka experience, which crushed the Tamil movement.

The despair is so deep among Turkey’s Kurdish politicians that an extraordinary meeting took place in Ankara with the question on whether the party should withdraw from parliament and local councils. After stormy debate, the decision was to continue but the HDP knows that, under such dire circumstances, it would only serve the purpose of a postponement, an act of winning some time.

Turkey continues to breathe under the state of emergency, however de facto it seems to be. Realism is useful: it will have to be much worse, before the tide eventually turns.

L’OBS

25/11/2019

Avec afp

De l'esclavage au sauvetage, la résurrection d'une Yazidie d'Irak

Camp de déplacés de Charia (Irak) (AFP) - Il y a cinq ans, elle est parvenue à se libérer des griffes des jihadistes du groupe Etat islamique (EI) qui en avaient fait une esclave sexuelle. Aujourd'hui, Imane Abbas, tout juste majeure, s'assure que les Yazidies qui, comme elle, ont connu l'enfer, soient entendues.

"Après ce que j'ai vécu, je ne me vois pas comme une adolescente", affirme-t-elle d'emblée à l'AFP dans le camp de Charia, dans le nord de l'Irak, où elle survit avec des milliers d'autres déplacés.

Là, cette jeune fille longiligne aux cheveux noirs, issue de la minorité yazidie longtemps recluse et inconnue avant de devenir le symbole des atrocités de l'EI, est un modèle.



Imane Abbas, une jeune Yazidie qui a échappé aux jihadistes du groupe Etat islamique qui en avaient fait une esclave sexuelle, dans le camp de déplacés de Charia, dans le nord de l'Irak, le 21 novembre 2019 ((c) Afp)

Elle revient tout juste d'Inde où elle a reçu le prestigieux prix Mère Teresa au nom de la Direction de sauvetage des Yazidis.

Cette institution pour laquelle elle travaille a été créée au Kurdistan irakien après l'horreur de l'été 2014, quand des jihadistes

ont déferlé sur leur région du nord-ouest montagneux, tué des hommes, transformé les plus jeunes en enfants-soldats et des milliers de femmes en esclaves sexuelles. L'organisation a déjà sauvé environ 5.000 Yazidies retenues par l'EI.

A Bombay, "j'ai raconté mon histoire et celles d'autres survivantes yazidies et certains dans l'assemblée se sont mis à pleurer", dit à l'AFP Imane Abbas, alors que ce lundi marque la Journée internationale pour l'élimination de la violence à l'égard des femmes.

Elle a raconté comment, à 13 ans à peine, elle a été enlevée avec sa famille. Rapidement isolée, elle a été revendue trois fois sur les tristement célèbres marchés aux esclaves de l'EI.

- "Travail triste et heureux" -

Son dernier "propriétaire", un médecin irakien de 40 ans, lui a proposé un marché: "Si je mémorisais 101 pages du Coran, il me libérerait", rapporte la jeune Yazidie, kurdophone, qui a dû apprendre tout ces versets en arabe.

"Chaque jour, il me disait de m'asseoir devant lui et de réciter le Coran. J'ai réussi à retenir les 101 pages en un mois et quatre jours", continue la jeune fille vêtue de blanc sous la tente où vit sa famille.

Fidèle à sa promesse, l'homme a signé --devant l'un des très sévères tribunaux de l'EI à Mossoul, "capitale" du groupe en Irak-- un document certifiant qu'elle était "une femme musulmane libre".

Alors elle a pu retrouver en 2015 sa famille de bergers, forcés par l'EI de garder des troupeaux à Tell Afar, dans le nord-ouest.

Tous ont ensuite été délivrés par la Direction de sauvetage des Yazidis et conduits au camp de Charia.

Raconter son histoire devant des inconnus "a apaisé une partie de la souffrance", assure Imane Abbas, encore davantage convaincue de sa "responsabilité" à "aider les autres survivantes".

Si Bagdad a proclamé la victoire sur l'EI en 2017 et que le groupe ultraradical a perdu son dernier bastion en Syrie en mars, plusieurs milliers de Yazidis sont toujours portés disparus.

Certains, convertis à l'islam, vivent toujours avec des familles musulmanes car trop effrayés ou honteux de rentrer chez eux, selon des responsables yazidis.

En plus de recueillir des témoignages, Imane Abbas explique que l'une de ses missions est de persuader des Yazidies de rentrer chez elles.

"C'est un travail qui me rend triste parce que je dois entendre toutes ces histoires horribles mais aussi heureuse parce que je fais partie de ceux qui aident à sauver des survivantes", dit-elle.

- "Plus forte" -

La trajectoire de la jeune femme rappelle celle de Nadia Murad, lauréate du prix Nobel de la paix qui a elle aussi réchappé à l'EI et porte inlassablement la cause de son peuple à travers le monde.

Plus tard, Imane voudrait être avocate pour défendre les droits de sa communauté, depuis toujours au ban de la société irakienne qui la juge hérétique.

Pour le moment, elle apprend l'anglais et après le bac, il faudra "apprendre les lois irakiennes et le droit international", détaille-t-elle, sous le regard attentif de ses parents, des sourires fiers barrant leurs visages.

Ils ont toujours leur téléphone à portée de main car, disent-ils, depuis que leur fille est rentrée d'Inde, il n'arrête pas de sonner: de nombreux Yazidis les appellent pour les féliciter d'avoir dans la famille une porte-parole de talent faisant connaître au monde leur tragédie.

Il est loin le temps, reconnaît Abdallah, le père, où il vivait dans la honte et cachait sa fille. "Au début, quand elle racontait sa captivité, je lui tournais le dos parce que c'était trop dur pour moi de la regarder en face", avoue-t-il.

Maintenant, il voudrait que toutes les survivantes yazidies puissent parler avec la même liberté.

Car, dit-il, "Imane est plus heureuse et plus forte depuis qu'elle a raconté son histoire en public".



25/11/2029

Par Charlotte WILKINS

Traduit de l'anglais par Aude Mazoué.

Libre ou emprisonnée, Zehra Dogan défend la cause kurde avec son pinceau

Les œuvres de l'artiste et journaliste kurde Zehra Dogan, emprisonnée pendant 600 jours en Turquie après la sévère vague de répression de 2016, ont été récemment exposées à Paris. Des peintures, dessins et lettres réalisés en prison pour ne pas sombrer. Et défendre la cause kurde.

Dans une cellule de prison du sud-est de la Turquie, une jeune femme kurde repose sur un matelas posé à même le sol. La lumière est faible, l'air vicié et la température suffocante. Zehra Dogan, 30 ans, artiste militante et journaliste kurde, arrêtée le 12 juillet 2016 suite à la vague de répression en réaction au coup d'État militaire avorté, a passé 600 jours derrière les barreaux à dessiner, peindre, écrire.

L'œuvre qu'elle a produite durant sa détention est actuellement présentée à l'Espace des femmes, à Paris. L'exposition



Zehra Dogan, artiste, militante et journaliste kurde, a été arrêtée Turquie en 2016 et libérée en février 2019.

"Œuvres évadées" témoigne de sa féroce détermination. La

jeune femme turque, qui vit maintenant à Londres, reconnaît

qu'il a été difficile de s'adapter aux premiers jours d'emprisonnement. Mais elle a toujours refusé de sombrer dans le désespoir et a rivalisé de créativité et de débrouillardise.

Zehra Dogan made paintbrushes from the hair of her fellow inmates and the feathers of birds who nested in the barbed wire.

Zehra Dogan made paintbrushes from the hair of her fellow inmates and the feathers of birds who nested in the barbed wire. Zehra Dogan

De "précieux pinceaux"

Dans le réduit humide de ses 20

mètres carrés qu'elle partage avec des dizaines d'autres femmes et un bébé de deux ans, Dogan profite de la solidarité de ses co-détenues, qui l'encouragent et lui fournissent de précieuses matières premières pour créer. Depuis une cage d'escalier faiblement éclairée, la jeune femme dessine sur des t-shirts, des serviettes ou sur le dos de ses camarades détenues. Peint sur des taies d'oreil-



"HER YER EFRİN", peinture sur journal, réalisée en 2018 à la prison de Diyarbakir. Zehra Dogan

ler, du linge de maison, des enveloppes, du papier à cigarettes, tout ce qui lui tombe sous la main. Ses couleurs sont obtenues à partir de persil, de pomme de terre, de curcuma, de pâte de tomate et de thé. Parfois, elle peint même avec son "plus beau pigment", son sang menstruel.

Ses pinceaux sont confectionnés à partir de cheveux de ses camarades de cellule. "Je n'avais jamais utilisé des pinceaux aussi précieux de ma vie", écrit-elle depuis sa cellule dans l'une de ses lettres adressées à son amie Naz Oke, rédactrice en chef du webzine Kedistan, parues pour la première fois en français dans le recueil "Nous aurons aussi de beaux jours". "Chaque cheveu raconte une histoire de résistance, chacun d'eux est une relique d'une femme rebelle."

Très vite, elle fait de la prison pour femmes de Diyarbakir, dans le sud-est de la Turquie, un atelier d'artiste improbable. L'idée de ne pouvoir ni dessiner ni peindre était "une autre forme de torture", reconnaît l'opposante, dans un entretien écrit accordé à France 24.

Son crime ? Avoir peint la destruction de la ville à majorité kurde de Nusaybin, une ville du sud-est de la Turquie, à la suite d'affrontements entre les forces de sécurité turques et des insurgés kurdes. Zehra Dogan détient le triste privilège d'être la première prisonnière politique à avoir été arrêtée pour un dessin.

Un dessin et un article de presse où elle fait référence aux attentats à la bombe de Nusaybin suffisent à la juger pour "propagande terroriste". D'abord détenue dans la prison d'Amed, connue dans les années 1980 pour sa brutalité et ses tortures systématiques, elle est ensuite incarcérée dans la nouvelle prison de Tarsus. En tout, elle passera 600 jours en détention.

Le désarroi au stylo bille

De longues journées qu'elle passe à croquer au stylo bille les visages des femmes "qui ont tant vu et qui pourtant refusent d'être intimidées". Des heures à écrire les récits de ses compagnes d'infortune dont la majorité ont, elles aussi, été emprisonnées après la tentative de coup d'État militaire de 2016. Des ouvrières agricoles, des étudiantes qui n'ont rien perdu de leur grâce, leur humour et leur farouche esprit de résistance. Elle y raconte aussi comment, la nuit, elle s'efforçait de regarder les étoiles à travers les rangées de fils barbelés pour garder le moral. Même quand les autorités pénitentiaires lui confisquent un tableau. Et trouver l'énergie nécessaire pour recommencer.

Dans la prose vivante de ses dizaines de lettres, elle revient largement sur la cause kurde. Car Dogan a été arrêtée à 10 minutes de la région où elle a grandi. Où être kurde revient à être "un peuple maudit". "Pas d'enfance, pas de jeunesse, ils ne nous ont rien laissé vivre. Et de poursuivre : La vie est dure, mais si vous êtes kurde, la vie est 10 fois plus difficile".

Une de ses peintures "clandestines", représentant des femmes kurdes en mouvement portant leurs affaires sur le dos, semble résumer à elle seule la lutte de ce peuple. L'histoire des Kurdes – dont la population de 35 mil-

lions d'habitants est dispersée en Iran, en Iraq, en Syrie et en Turquie – est celle d'un déplacement sans fin et le rêve d'une patrie sans cesse confisquée. "Nous nous déplaçons toujours d'un endroit à l'autre avec toute notre vie sur le dos", explique la peintre. Ils essaient de nous rendre apatrides, silencieux et de supprimer notre culture. Mais je suis toujours surprise de voir à quel point notre peuple, soumis à autant de massacres, a si bien réussi à conserver notre histoire, notre culture et notre langue, a réussi à vivre."

Avant sa détention, elle a remporté des prix de journalisme. Membre fondateur de Jin News, ex-JINHA, chaîne de presse féministe kurde composée exclu-

rer. Le retrait des troupes américaines de la zone frontalière entre la Syrie et la Turquie, annoncé le 6 octobre par le président américain, Donald Trump, ne risque pas d'arranger les affaires des Kurdes.

La suite ? Elle n'a pas l'intention de demander l'asile en Angleterre, où elle est actuellement écrivain en résidence. Même si elle sait combien il serait dangereux pour elle de rentrer en Turquie, elle aimerait pourtant bien le faire car elle "ne supporte pas d'être trop loin du Kurdistan."

Pour l'heure, elle veut continuer à produire. Récemment, elle a travaillé autour d'un projet de street art sur les murs en ruines de Kobane, ancien bastion du



2017, Clandestine days, Istanbul. Zehra Dogan

sivement de femmes, elle a été l'une des premières journalistes à rendre compte de la fuite des femmes yézidiennes des mains de l'organisation État islamique.

"S'épanouir comme de belles fleurs"

Dogan est finalement libérée de la prison de Tarsus le 24 février 2019. Mais elle reconnaît être "moins heureuse" qu'elle ne l'était en prison car "toutes ses amies" – dont beaucoup lui ont donné leurs cheveux pour pouvoir peindre – n'ont pas encore été libérées. Elle espère un jour que tous ses camarades prisonniers politiques "pourront quitter les prisons par milliers et s'épanouir comme de belles fleurs."

Mais elle sait que sur le terrain, les choses sont loin de s'amélio-

groupe État islamique en Syrie. Elle envisage aussi de créer un musée de la mémoire à Rojava, considérée comme une région autonome par les Kurdes, dans le nord de la Syrie, et de poursuivre le journalisme.

L'emprisonnement de Dogan a suscité un tollé international. Sa cause a été soutenue par l'artiste de rue Banksy, qui a projeté une peinture murale d'elle derrière les barreaux dans les rues de Manhattan. Aujourd'hui, la militante n'aspire qu'à une chose : que toute l'attention qu'elle a reçue soit davantage dirigée vers le peuple kurde. "Tout ce que je veux, conclut-elle, est que mon peuple soit libre."



Nov. 27, 2019
Karwan Faidhi Dri

Kurdish cafe in London nominated for Eater Awards 2019 Restaurant of the Year

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region – A Kurdish restaurant in the British capital which opened just three years ago has been nominated among four finalists for the Eater Awards 2019 Restaurant of the Year.

Pary Baban, her husband Pola Baban, and their sons Raman and Rang established Nandine cafe and restaurant in London's Vestry Road in 2016.

Their Kurdish cuisine took south London by storm, with the family opening their third restaurant branch in Camberwell Church Street in July this year.

Nandine's nomination was announced on November 18, alongside culinary rivals Flor, Tata Eatery, and Master Wei.

The restaurant serves dishes, meze, and intricate pastries for brunch and kubba, onion dolma, and qawarma for dinner.

The awards will be announced on December 10. Other categories include Design of the Year and Dish of the Year.

"All of these finalists have either opened or come into their own in a new way since we declared the winners last year," Eater said in a statement. "All of them were key contributors to making 2019 a great year of eating and drinking in London."

Last week, Nandine was listed as one of London's best value restaurants by Eater's reviewer Jonathan Nunn.



Nandine's Kurdish cuisine took south London by storm, with the family opening their third branch in Camberwell Church Street in July this year. Photo: Nandine

"If London was New York, then this Kurdish cafe would be the subject of food pilgrimages and glossy weekend magazine features," Nunn said.

The Baban family fled Qaladze in what is now the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in 1989 having survived the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq and Saddam Hussein's brutal repression of the Kurds.

"Kurdish food has got lots of different types of cuisine because each tribe has its own cuisine,"

Pary told Vice in early 2018.

"When you think about it, it's all the same but different because we are all from a different part of Kurdistan, and everyone is putting their own flavor, their own spices, their own thing into it. It makes it really interesting," she added.



27-11-2019
Rawchi Hassan

Turkey bombs Kurdish village north of Sulaimani

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region – Turkish warplanes bombed a village north of Sulaimani on Tuesday evening, forcing locals to flee their homes.

"The Turkish warplanes bombed Sarginel village six times," Nahro Abdulla, mayor of Sangasar, close to Sarginel, confirmed to Rudaw.

"The bombing started at 4pm



Turkish airstrikes on the village of Sarginel, Sulaimani province on November 28, 2019. Photo: Shaho Qandil

and lasted two hours," he added.

The village in Raniya is home to around 50 families.

No one was killed or injured.

Abdulla said the airstrikes sparked fear among the locals, forcing them to flee to nearby villages including Sinamoka. Some have now returned home.

"The bombings caused material damages to households, groves and orchards," he said.

Shaho Qandili, a villager from Sarginel described the series of airstrikes as "huge".

"The noise of the warplanes was massive which made everyone from the village rush and flee," Qandili said. "Some of them fled to the mountains and other to neighboring Sinamoka."

The mayor added it is not the

first time the region has come under Turkish bombardment.

Turkey regularly carries out airstrikes and ground operations against suspected Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) positions inside the Kurdistan Region.

There are no PKK bases in the area, multiple Sarginel locals told Rudaw.

The PKK is an armed group that fights for greater political rights for Kurds in Turkey. The PKK

and Turkey have fought for decades, leading to thousands of deaths, including civilians. The group is based in the Qandil Mountains along the Turkey-Iraq border.

Turkey launched 'Operation Claw' in late May with the goal of removing the PKK from border areas in the Kurdistan Region.

Civilians are routinely caught in the crossfire of the Turkey-PKK conflict.

Locals stormed a Turkish military base in the Duhok province in January after airstrikes killed six civilians.

Both Erbil and Baghdad have called on Ankara to halt its attacks and have demanded the PKK withdraw from their territory.

Translated by Zhelwan Z.Wali

ARTS&CULTURE

Ashleigh Stewart
Nov 28, 2019

Detained journalist Behrouz Boochani finds freedom: The mountains of New Zealand remind me of Kurdistan'

Iranian refugee Behrouz Boochani may no longer be on Manus Island, but he is not yet free

Anthology holds up a magnifying glass to reveal the struggles of Arab-Australians

Kurdish-Iranian writer Behrouz Boochani accepts Australia's National Biography award over WhatsApp from Manus Island prison

Six years after first being imprisoned on Manus Island for fleeing his home country in search of asylum in Australia, Iranian-Kurdish refugee Behrouz Boochani is free.

Better yet, he is free in the country that has for six years offered to resettle refugees incarcerated in the offshore processing islands of Manus and Nauru; an offer that was consistently rejected by the Australian government.

Boochani has arrived in Christchurch, New Zealand, as a guest of the city's Word Christchurch festival. It is the first time he has left detainment in Australia's offshore processing centres (first, living on Manus, and this year being transferred to the Papua New Guinea capital of Port Moresby).

The journalist, novelist and filmmaker is in the South Island city



Iranian Kurdish refugee Behrouz Boochani, pictured in Christchurch, outside the Arts Centre. Courtesy Emily Spink.

to speak about No Friend but the Mountains, on Friday. The book was composed via text message from Manus to his friend Omid Tofighian, who translated the work into English from Farsi.

The book recounts Boochani's journey from Indonesia to Australia by boat, and his ensuing imprisonment by the Australian government, which until his de-

parture, repeatedly refused him entry. Incredibly, it's been a resounding success in the very country it criticises over its 400-odd pages – picking up A\$125,000 (Dh312,000) at the country's richest literary prize, the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, among several other prestigious awards.

Boochani fled Iran and its op-

pressive regime in 2013. His boat came ashore at Christmas Island, off the coast of Australia, on his birthday, four days after a new agreement was signed with Papua New Guinea ruling that those found in Australian waters would be taken to a detention centre on Manus Island for processing. It meant, despite months of travelling, he would never be resettled in Australia.

New Zealand has had a long standing offer to resettle 150 refugees a year from Manus and Nauru, but the offer has been repeatedly declined by the Australian government. So it's an interesting place for Boochani to now find himself in, he admits over the phone from Christchurch.

"It was the right time to leave Port Moresby," he says. "Honestly I didn't expect them to give me a visa, it was unbelievable for me."

Boochani first applied for his travel documents nine months ago, relying on help from his lawyer, UNHCR and Amnesty International. He had tried to apply for visas and travel documents in the past, for the many literary festivals and events he has been invited to over the years, but attempts had until now borne no fruit. In 2017, Boochani publicly campaigned and pleaded to be allowed to attend the London Film Festival, for which his film *Chauka, Please Tell Us The Time*, was shortlisted. The film was shot on a smart phone from within Manus. Despite writing to London mayor Sadiq Khan and appealing to the Australian ambassador to the UK, no visa was forthcoming. "For the other events [I was invited to], I didn't apply because I knew I wouldn't be allowed to go," he says.

He is now in New Zealand on a one-month visitor's visa, and is keen to extend it, if he is able to. And, for now at least, it seems New Zealand writ large is willing and ready to help him. He arrived in Christchurch on November 15 to a civic reception and a traditional Maori mihi whakatau – a formal welcome.

He was greeted from the plane by Lianne Dalziel, mayor of Christchurch, as well as the city's Maori leaders, and NZ Greens party MP Golriz Ghahraman, herself a former Kurdish refugee from Iran.

"The people are so welcoming. I'm so busy meeting with the community," he says. "It's very nice. The mountains here, they are very similar to the ones in Kurdistan. The people are very good, too."

Boochani spoke fondly of the most recent sightseeing



Boochani, pictured on Manus Island in August 2018, shares images from his home town in Iranian Kurdistan with the locals. Getty.

trip he was taken on by community members; a day at Castle Hill, or "this special place with many rocks", on Wednesday. Understandably, the question on everyone's lips is whether he'd like to stay in the country on a more permanent basis. Several articles in the New Zealand media have openly campaigned for him to stay, or at least, for the New Zealand government to support a bid for asylum. Iranian-Kiwi writer Donna Miles-Mojab, a patron of Word Christchurch and one of the people who sponsored Boochani's trip to New Zealand, wrote an article for *Stuff*, stating: "We should beg him to stay and hope that he would accept.

"By allowing Boochani to stay, New Zealand would add to the intellectual and literary freedom

of its own citizens who, at times, because of New Zealand's geographical isolation, miss out on the richness of diverse minds and ideas that come together so easily and so often in other parts of the world."

However, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has openly told New Zealand media that any bid for permanent resettlement would be an independent statutory process, and he would not be given special treatment. But Boochani isn't willing to commit to anything just yet. "I love this country. But I'm not in a position to say that I want to live here, I am a refugee."

When *The National* spoke to Boochani last month, he was applying for resettlement in the US. He wouldn't be drawn on

whether he was still pursuing that option, and admitted he didn't know where he would go once his New Zealand visa was up. For the time being, he would prefer to focus on the literature. He stresses that he is in New Zealand as a writer first and foremost, and wants to focus on the coming days before he thinks about his long-term future. He hopes his appearance at Word Christchurch will draw attention to his book, rather than his political standing, but acknowledges that "people have a lot of questions". He says he would not stop campaigning for the 250 refugees left in Port Moresby awaiting repatriation.

"For now the important thing is that I'm free and people here are welcoming me as a writer and as a person."

Migrants: Erdogan tire parti de la faiblesse de l'Europe

FIGAROVOX/ENTRETIEN - La Turquie menace de laisser les migrants syriens partir en Europe si l'Union européenne ne lui accorde pas un soutien financier supplémentaire. Pour Hadrien Desuin, l'Europe doit adopter une politique migratoire unifiée pour faire face à l'afflux de réfugiés.

Hadrien Desuin est responsable du pôle international de la fondation du Pont-Neuf et chercheur associé à GEOPRAGMA. Il a notamment publié *La France Atlantiste* (Cerf, 2017).

FIGAROVOX.- Pensez-vous que les départs massifs de migrants (plus de 50 000 d'entre eux ont quitté la Turquie depuis janvier) correspondent à un laxisme délibéré de l'État turc? Erdogan met-il à exécution ses menaces?

Hadrien DESUIN .- Les chiffres ne sont pas comparables avec ceux de 2015 mais en termes d'immigration, les statistiques sont toujours un peu la partie immergée de l'iceberg et par rapport à l'année dernière, on constate cette année une hausse de presque 50 % du nombre d'arrivées. Ce n'est donc pas neutre. C'est un avertissement que nous envoie la Turquie. Erdogan fait face à un mécontentement croissant de son opinion publique (il a perdu la mairie de sa ville, Istanbul) parce que les Turcs eux-mêmes se sentent submergés pas ces multiples vagues d'immigrations arabes, kurdes ou d'Asie centrale. La tentation est donc forte de les laisser filer vers la Grèce malgré l'argent livré par les Européens, Angela Merkel en tête. Il faut toutefois reconnaître que le nombre d'expulsion depuis la Turquie vers les pays d'origine augmente drastiquement. L'allié nationaliste d'Erdogan, le MHP, ne plaisante pas sur ces sujets. Et sur ce point, l'Europe serait bien en peine de faire la leçon. Nos taux d'expulsion sont nettement inférieurs.

Le président turc agite avec cynisme le souvenir du traumatisme de 2015 parce qu'il sait que nous sommes incapables de faire face à l'afflux de migrants.

«Avec ou sans soutien, nous allons continuer à accueillir nos hôtes, mais seulement jusqu'à un certain point (...) Si nous constatons que cela ne fonctionne pas, nous n'aurons d'autre choix que d'ouvrir les portes» a menacé Erdogan devant Viktor Orban à Budapest. On estime à près de 4 millions le nombre de réfugiés installés en Turquie, dont 3,6 millions de Syriens. Le président turc agite avec cynisme le souvenir du traumatisme de 2015 parce qu'il sait que nous sommes incapables de faire face à l'afflux de migrants. Autre carte dans le jeu d'Erdogan, les djihadistes

européens et leurs familles, qu'il a lui-même instrumentalisés dans sa lutte contre Bachar Al Assad. Erdogan parle de 8 000 expulsions déjà réalisées vers l'Europe. C'est une véritable bombe à retardement. «Que cela vous fasse plaisir ou non, que vous leur retiriez ou non leur nationalité, nous vous renverrons ces membres de l'EI, vos propres gens, vos propres ressortissants, ils sont à vous, faites-en ce que vous voudrez» a prévenu Süleyman Soyulu, le ministre turc de l'Intérieur. Venant de la part d'un pays qui déstabilise la Syrie et donc l'Irak depuis plus de huit ans, il fallait oser.

Dans de telles conditions, il est de plus en plus difficile pour les pays européens de s'opposer à sa politique, notamment les offensives lancées contre les Kurdes..

La conquête d'une zone tampon dans le Nord syrien a été menée sur le dos des milices kurdes (YPG) mais a été présentée comme une tentative de renvoyer les réfugiés syriens chez eux. Erdogan voulant toujours plus, il cherche désormais des financements européens pour reconstruire les villes syriennes et kurdes qu'il a lui-même détruites. Comme si les réfugiés allaient trouver asile dans des zones de guerre...

Seule la paix en Syrie peut résoudre la crise migratoire.

Bachar Al-Assad, dans un entretien à Paris Match, a proposé un accord avec les pays occidentaux, un peu sur le modèle de ce que nous faisons avec l'Irak. Il propose de garder les djihadistes et de les juger sur place. Bien que cette proposition ne soit pas gratuite, c'est quelque chose que l'on ne peut pas dégager d'un revers de la main.

De même, si la Syrie et la Turquie signaient un traité de paix, alors le retour des réfugiés syriens dans leur pays serait nettement plus crédible. Il en est de même pour le Liban et la Jordanie. Seule la paix en Syrie peut résoudre la crise migratoire. L'Europe ne devrait pas laisser à la Russie le monopole des discussions entre la Turquie et la Syrie.

Peut-on espérer un sursaut européen contre Erdogan?

Il ne faut pas rêver. Sur les questions migratoires, l'Union Européenne a toujours été d'une grande naïveté. Elle ne sait pas gérer sa propre politique migratoire, je ne vois pas comment elle pourrait expliquer à ses voisins comment faire pour les expulser. Seulement 15 % des 131 812 mesures d'éloignement prononcées en 2018 ont été réellement exécutées, rien qu'en France. L'hexagone a le régime social le plus avantageux pour les demandeurs d'asile. L'appel d'air vient d'abord de ce côté-ci de la Méditerranée.

Les négociations d'adhésion de la Turquie à l'UE ne sont pas prêtes de s'arrêter.

D'un autre côté, la France s'est retrouvée seule pour rejeter l'adhésion de l'Albanie et de la Macédoine du Nord à l'Union Européenne. Les négociations d'adhésion de la Turquie à l'UE ne sont pas prêtes de s'arrêter.

Que faut-il attendre du sommet de l'OTAN début décembre (organisation dont le président français a déclaré qu'elle était en état de mort cérébrale)?

Absolument rien. Il existe un consensus pour conserver la Turquie dans l'OTAN car l'ennemi principal de l'alliance atlantique sera toujours la Russie. Ni les États-Unis ni leurs alliés européens ne veulent perdre, sur le flanc sud, l'appui de la Turquie. Erdogan a lancé un autre avertissement à ce sujet. Il a acheté des missiles anti-aériens S400 à Moscou et s'est donc retiré du programme du chasseur bombardier F35 imposé par les États-Unis à ses vassaux. Il s'est du même coup dégagé d'un fiasco militaro-industriel retentissant.

Les quelques occidentalistes qui jugent que l'OTAN devrait plutôt défendre l'Europe contre les menaces venues du Moyen-Orient sont très minoritaires. Cette organisation reste sclérosée dans des schémas de la guerre froide, comme si Staline était toujours de ce monde.

La preuve éclatante est que ni l'OTAN ni l'UE ne se sont réellement opposées à l'invasion de la Turquie, et de ses supplétifs djihadistes, contre les Kurdes de Syrie. Oui, l'OTAN est bien en état de mort cérébrale. Il reste à en tirer les conséquences.



27/11/2019

correspondante à Istanbul, Anne Andlauer

Turquie: la répression se poursuit contre le HDP, le principal parti pro-kurde

En Turquie, la répression continue de frapper le principal parti pro-kurde, le HDP. Mercredi 27 novembre, plusieurs membres et cadres du parti, dont un ancien député, ont été placés en garde à vue.

Les principaux partis d'opposition, hors HDP, restent relativement silencieux face à ces arrestations. Le 26 novembre, ce sont trois maires du HDP – trois femmes élues en mars dernier et démis de leurs fonctions – qui ont été incarcérés, dénonce un élu du parti pro-kurde.

Ces trois derniers mois, les autorités turques ont démis de leurs fonctions 24 des 65 maires HDP et emprisonné 18 d'entre eux au prétexte de liens avec le terrorisme. Les deux anciens dirigeants du parti, dont le charismatique Selahattin Demirtas, croupissent en prison depuis trois ans, comme des milliers de ses militants.

La situation est devenue tellement intenable que le parti pro-kurde a réclamé, la semaine dernière, la tenue d'élections anticipées. C'est un défi lancé au président Recep Tayyip Erdogan, mais aussi aux autres partis d'opposition. Aux municipales du printemps, grâce au soutien tacite du HDP qui n'avait pas présenté de candidats dans les métropoles de l'ouest, l'opposition l'avait emporté dans cinq des six plus grandes villes turques, dont Istanbul.

Union de l'opposition

Mais l'alliance anti-Erdogan s'est essouffée, déplore Garo Paylan, député HDP de Diyarbakir. Il rappelle que son parti a été le seul



Une manifestante du droit des femmes brandit un drapeau du HDP, le mouvement pro-Kurde, le 1er septembre 2019. Yasin AKGUL / AFP

à dénoncer l'offensive récente d'Ankara contre les forces kurdes dans le nord-est de la Syrie.

« En s'unissant, l'opposition a réussi quelque chose de très important et d'inédit aux dernières municipales. Grâce à cela, nous avons privé le pouvoir de presque toutes ses grandes villes, décrypte-t-il. Erdogan l'a très bien compris et s'est donné pour objectif de faire éclater ce bloc d'oppo-

sition. C'était le but principal de sa dernière offensive en Syrie. Malheureusement, il a réussi, puisque tous les autres partis d'opposition au Parlement ont soutenu la guerre et se sont éloignés du HDP. »

Ainsi, alors que le HDP a perdu plus d'un tiers de ses maires en trois mois, la réaction des autres partis d'opposition n'est pas allée au-delà de quelques protestations verbales.



By Dorian Jones
November 27, 2019

Turkish Ally Accused of Widespread Rights Abuses in Syria

ISTANBUL - The New York-based Human Rights Watch claims it has "damning evidence" showing the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army is engaged in summary executions, pillaging, seizing properties, and preventing the return of people to their homes.

"Turkey is turning a blind eye to the reprehensible behaviors displayed by the factions it arms," said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. "So long as Turkey is in control of these areas, it has a responsibility to investigate and end these violations."

Last month Turkish forces and the SNA launched an offensive in northeast Syria against Syrian Democratic Forces, which are made up mainly of the Kurdish militia the YPG.

Ankara considers the YPG terrorists, but the militia was a cru-

cial ally of Washington's military effort against Islamic State.

HRW cites evidence that the SNA executed prisoners, seized the homes of local Kurds, and engaged in indiscriminate shelling of civilians.

The case of Hevrin Khalaf, a prominent women's rights activist, is highlighted. In October, Khalaf was executed after her car was stopped by a militia affiliated with the SNA.

HRW also says social media postings of videos put up by the militia appear to show the execution of women prisoners.

Ankara has so far not responded to the HRW report. But Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has praised the SNA for its "sacrifices" in Syria.

Turkey is facing growing international criticism for its use of militias, which critics claim have links to radical Islamic groups, a charge denied by Ankara.

"The problem is that those people are radicals in terms of their ideology, this is criticized by the western world," said international relations professor Huseyin Bagci of Ankara's Middle East Technical University.

"But Turkey has done it in the last eight years, so this is a choice by the president. He takes the risk. He lets them fight on the side of the Turkish army. We will see if it's like a hand grenade exploding in his hand or it will strengthen his position," Bagci added.

The SNA force is around three times larger than Turkish armed forces engaged in northern Syria. Ankara's reliance on the SNA comes as its armed forces are facing an unprecedented number of simultaneous military commitments.

"The Turkish army is already strained," said retired Turkish general Haldun Solmazturk, who now heads the Ankara-based 21st Century Turkish Institute. "From Iraq to Idlib to eastern Mediterranean Cyprus. An additional burden will have some serious impact on the Turkish army to meet all these challenges."

The SNA has also taken the brunt of casualties. As of November 15, 224 killed and 692 injured compared to Turkish



In this photo taken from the Turkish side of the border between Turkey and Syria, in Ceylanpinar, Sanliurfa province, southeastern Turkey, smoke billows from a fire in Ras al-Ayn, Syria, Oct. 20, 2019.

forces casualties of 11 dead and 90 wounded. Some analysts claim the relatively low number of Turkish deaths is a reason why the operation continues to enjoy strong domestic support among the Turkish public.

Ankara's heavy use of SNA forces made up of mainly Syrian Arabs is also widely seen as a tactic to dispel allegations Turkish forces are invading another country.

Analysts point out, given that Turkey once ruled the region when it was the Ottoman Empire, Arab nations remain nervous about any irredentist Turkish aspirations. The Arab League has strongly condemned the Turkish operation.

Ankara insists it is committed to Syria's territorial integrity.

"Our operations in northern Syria aim to clear terrorists from their strongholds, create safe conditions for the return of refugees robbed of their homes & lands," tweeted Fahrettin Altun, the Turkish president's communications head.

"Kurdish groups have forced many Arabs from their homes in areas under their control in northern Syria," said former Turkish ambassador Mithat Rende. "These towns and cities controlled by Kurds are Arab towns with Arab names, with Kurdish minorities."

Erdogan claims up to two million



Syrians who fled to Turkey to escape the civil war will be returned to a so-called "safe zone," that is being created in northern Syria along the Turkish border.

The Turkish president is looking to the international community for funding to pay \$20 billion for the building of hundreds of thousands of new homes in the "safe zone."

Next week Erdogan will press his case when he is scheduled to hold a meeting with French, German, and British leaders on the sidelines of the London NATO summit.

"We invite the international community to support us in helping our Syrian brothers and sisters to safely return to areas where they can live in peace regardless of their religious and ethnic identities," tweeted Altun Wednesday.

However, the actions of SNA forces are seen as fueling accusations Ankara is seeking to remove local Kurdish populations and replace them with Arabs considered more sympathetic to Turkey.

"There weren't many mistakes by the Turkish army, but there was a tactical mistake when it comes to public diplomacy in the communication," said former senior Turkish diplomat Aydin Selcen who served widely in the region. "It's a fact some of these militias have committed crimes, and this is being used against Turkey, that it's involved in ethnic cleansing."

Ankara vehemently denies any intention that it's seeking demographic changes in Syria. However, the latest findings by HRW can only add to questions over Turkey's plans for a safe zone and mass return of Syrians.

"Executing individuals, pillaging property, and blocking displaced people from returning to their homes is damning evidence of why Turkey's proposed 'safe zones' will not be safe," said Whitson.

Un consulat iranien incendié, plus de 35 manifestants tués : colère et violences dans le sud de l'Irak

Dans la ville sainte chiite de Nadjaf et à Nassiriya, la colère des manifestants est dirigée contre l'Iran, qu'ils accusent de tirer les ficelles du pouvoir en Irak.

Le sud de l'Irak était à feu et à sang jeudi 28 novembre, la mort de 37 manifestants victimes des forces de l'ordre ne faisant pas faiblir les attaques des protestataires contre des bâtiments officiels, dont le consulat d'Iran dans la ville sainte chiite de Nadjaf. Pour tenter de contenir la violence qui s'est déchaînée lors de l'une des journées les plus meurtrières en deux mois de contestation, les autorités ont limogé un général qu'elles avaient initialement dépêché pour « rétablir l'ordre » dans le sud de l'Irak.

Le mouvement qui conspu le pouvoir à Bagdad et son parrain iranien a franchi un palier, après des violences qui ont fait en deux mois plus de 390 morts et quelque 15 000 blessés, selon un bilan de sources médicales et policières compilé par l'Agence France-Presse (AFP).

A Nassiriya, ville dont est originaire le premier ministre, Adel Abdel Mahdi, 25 manifestants ont été tués et plus de 250 blessés en quelques heures, après l'arrivée des renforts de la police depuis Bagdad, selon des médecins. Mais les manifestants ne se replient pas : ils ont d'abord incendié un QG de la police puis encerclé le commandement militaire de la province. Ils ont ensuite formé par milliers un cortège funéraire en hommage aux manifestants tués dans le centre-ville, défiant un couvre-feu imposé plus tôt et criant qu'ils resteraient là « jusqu'à la chute du régime ».

Des dizaines de combattants tribaux en armes se sont, eux, déployés sur l'autoroute venant de Bagdad, déterminés, ont-ils dit, à empêcher l'arrivée de plus de renforts. Evoquant des « scènes de guerre » à Nassiriya, Amnesty International a accusé les forces irakiennes de se livrer à « une violence consternante » et appelé la communauté internationale à intervenir pour « faire cesser le bain de sang ».

La répression a été lancée après la nomination, jeudi, d'un commandant militaire pour « restaurer l'ordre » dans la province. Quelques heures plus tard, le premier ministre irakien, Adel Abdel Mahdi, est finalement revenu sur sa décision et a limogé le général Jamil Al-Chemmari, après que le gouver-



Les forces de l'ordre dispersent les manifestants à Nadjaf, dans le sud de l'Irak, le 28 novembre. ANMAR KHALIL / AP

neur de Nassiriya avait menacé de démissionner si ce commandant militaire n'était pas démis de ses fonctions.

Plus au nord, dans la ville sainte chiite de Nadjaf, visitée chaque année par des millions de pèlerins iraniens, des centaines de manifestants ont brûlé puis investi le consulat iranien dans la nuit de mercredi à jeudi, aux cris de « Iran dehors ! » et « Victoire à l'Irak ! ». Dix manifestants ont été fauchés par des balles, selon des médecins, alors que la commission gouvernementale des droits humains a fait état de deux autres protestataires tués à Bagdad.

Bagdad a accusé des personnes « étrangères aux manifestations » et voulant « saper les relations historiques » entre l'Iran et l'Irak d'avoir incendié le consulat. Téhéran a réclamé « une action décisive ».

A Kerbala, l'autre ville sainte chiite, située au sud de la capitale irakienne, des affrontements ont opposé des manifestants aux forces de l'ordre, dont 19 membres ont été blessés en soirée par un tir de grenade, selon une source de sécurité.

Pour les manifestants, le système politique conçu par les Américains qui ont renversé Saddam Hussein en 2003 est à bout de souffle dans un des pays les plus riches en pétrole du monde, mais aussi l'un des plus corrompus. Et, surtout, le pouvoir est sous la mainmise de l'Iran, qui a pris l'avantage face aux Etats-Unis, et de son puissant émissaire, le général Ghassem Soleimani. Ce dernier est parvenu à réunir les partis irakiens pour resserrer les rangs autour de M. Abdel Mahdi, un temps sur la sellette.

Depuis le 1er octobre, début de ce mouvement de contestation inédit depuis des décennies, les manifestants réclament le renouvellement du système et de la classe dirigeante dans un pays où un habitant sur cinq vit sous le seuil de pauvreté et où, officiellement, 410 milliards d'euros ont été détournés au cours de ces seize dernières années, soit deux fois le PIB.

Revenant à la charge, le turbulent leader chiite irakien Moqtada Al-Sadr a prévenu que, si le gouvernement ne démissionnait pas, « ce serait le début de la fin de l'Irak ».

"ETAT DE MORT CÉRÉBRALE" OTAN : une bombe à fragmentation et à retardement

Au travers de l'OTAN, Donald Trump applique la stratégie de Steve Bannon : semer le désordre en Europe !

Le président des Etats-Unis n'a pas commis une « erreur » ou une « folie de plus » comme je l'entend si souvent en décidant de retirer ses troupes du nord-est de la Syrie. Il agit de manière délibérée, en ayant soupesé les avantages en termes de calendrier politique et en termes de stratégie géopolitique, d'une décision qui est dans la droite ligne de sa stratégie isolationniste et de son esprit belliqueux avec l'Europe à qui il a déclaré la guerre économique. Cessons d'être naïfs...

Depuis des mois il a démontré son intention de mettre à exécution sa volonté initiale de se désengager de la région. Certains pensent qu'il ne mesure pas les conséquences de son acte. Bien au contraire. Il agit par calcul.

Le 6 octobre restera comme le déclenchement de son plan machiavélique au travers du feu vert donné au président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan, de franchir la frontière syrienne et d'éradiquer les Kurdes : « La Turquie va bientôt mettre en œuvre son opération prévue de longue date dans le nord de la Syrie. Les forces armées des États-Unis ne soutiendront pas cette opération et n'interviendront donc pas, et les forces américaines, après avoir vaincu le "Califat" territorial de l'EI, ne se tiendront plus dans les environs immédiats. »

En lâchant la bride à son partenaire historique dans l'OTAN, au détriment de ses alliés européens dans l'alliance Atlantique, il met cyniquement fin à l'ordre planétaire post-Seconda Guerre mondiale, pour assouvir sa soif d'isoler les Etats-Unis d'Amé-



rique du reste du monde. Chacun de ses conseillers qui a osé se dresser face à cette stratégie, a été mis à l'écart; ce fut le cas de Jim Mattis, de Herbert Raymond McMaster, de John Bolton ou encore du général Joseph Dunford. La chambre des représentants qui condamne son attitude par un vote qui fera date, 129 républicains lâchant Trump et votant avec les démocrates, le fera entrer en rogne sans pour autant le détourner de ce chemin délétère. Tout au plus fera-t-il un crochet pour calmer les esprits.

Que le calcul de Trump soit irresponsable est un fait. Qu'il soit le fruit de je ne sais quel coup de sang est une bien crédule pensée.

Pour se disculper de toute responsabilité au plan international dans ce qui s'annonçait comme un génocide passible d'une procédure devant la CPI, il brandit ensuite la menace de sanctions économiques contre la Turquie. Le mal était fait. Et il le savait. Comme il savait qu'Erdogan avec qui il est dans la duplicité n'en avait que faire.

Les terroristes de Daesh se sont retrouvés dans la nature. Ceux capturés par Erdogan sont distillés dans les démocraties européennes à coup de retours annoncés bruyamment, sur le ton de la menace, par un mem-

bre éminent de l'OTAN, sur lequel le président Trump ne tarit pas d'éloges.

Peu lui en importe, pire tant mieux pour nourrir ses noires arrières pensées. Ils iront semer la haine et la discorde en Europe comme il le verbalise d'ailleurs publiquement en répondant à un journaliste qui lui pose la question : « Ils vont s'échapper en Europe, c'est là qu'ils veulent aller, ils veulent rentrer chez eux. »

Donald Trump qui sait parfaitement qu'Erdogan use de la menace permanente d'islamiser l'Europe, entend par son geste irresponsable et inhumain, participer à la déstabilisation de notre continent. Il n'a cure de l'anéantissement de l'effort de son armée depuis 5 ans dans la région menaçant les combattants Kurdes, gardiens de plusieurs camps de détention avec des milliers de djihadistes de Daesh. Impossible pour eux d'assumer cette mission au service de la coalition comme ils le font depuis des années, tout en combattant les forces turques qui les agressent aujourd'hui.

On parle de plusieurs centaines de prisonniers dispersés dans la nature par la faute de ce lâchage américain.

Le plan sournois se déroule au mieux. D'autant que le timing est

parfait pour permettre au président américain de faire passer au second plan l'enquête des démocrates qui solidifient chaque jour un peu plus la procédure de destitution qu'ils ont engagée contre lui. Il sait que la procédure n'ira pas au bout, ayant l'assurance du Sénat et que c'est une bataille d'opinion. Détourner l'attention suffira.

Feindre un désaccord avec la Russie ne peut d'ailleurs que servir cet objectif conjoncturel, sa relation avec Poutine étant l'un des marqueurs de ce que lui reprochent ses opposants. Il n'a donc vu aucun inconvénient à voir les Russes se déployer à la frontière Syro-turque.

5 jours à peine après avoir livré nos alliés kurdes à la Turquie et par voie de conséquence céder la Syrie à l'alliance entre Bachar el-Assad et les Russes, Donald Trump envoyait 2000 soldats de plus en Arabie Saoudite, en pleine tension avec l'Iran. Il niait toute contradiction et soulignait bravache que l'Arabie Saoudite payait ainsi son tribut.

Une incohérence de plus ? Bien au contraire. Il trace son chemin.

L'OTAN, n'en déplaise à son secrétaire général Jean Stettenberg, ressemble à un canard sans tête, qui navigue de contradictions en contradictions, obéissant aux injonctions américaines en s'asseyant sur la solidarité entre alliés, célébrées dans un article 5 qui se retrouve vidé de son sens.

L'armée américaine est devenue un corps de mercenaire au service des plus offrants, au gré de ses intérêts à court terme, en lieu et place d'une armée au côtés de ses alliés de toujours.

Georges Washington doit se retourner dans sa tombe...

Turkey Refuses to Back NATO Plan Until Group Supports Incursion in Syria, Sources Say

The alliance is seeking approval by all 29 member states for a plan to defend Poland and the Baltics in the event of a Russian attack

Turkey is refusing to back a NATO defense plan for the Baltics and Poland until the alliance offers Ankara more political support for its fight against Kurdish YPG militia in northern Syria, four senior alliance sources said.

Ankara has told its NATO envoy not to sign off on the plan and is taking a tough line in meetings and in private conversations, demanding the alliance recognize the YPG as terrorists in the formal wording, the sources said.

Turkey's NATO delegation was not immediately available for comment. Turkey's defence and foreign ministries did not respond to requests for comment.

The dispute, before NATO holds its 70th anniversary summit in London next week, is a sign of divisions between Ankara and Washington over Turkey's offensive in northern Syria against the YPG militia, which it regards as terrorists with links to Kurdish militants on Turkish soil.

NATO envoys are seeking formal approval by all 29 member states for the military plan to defend Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in the event of a Russian attack.

Without Turkey's approval, it could be harder for NATO to step up its defences in the Baltics and Poland quickly.

"They (the Turks) are taking eastern Europeans hostage, blocking approval of this military planning until they get concessions," one of the diplomatic sources told Reuters.

A second source called Turkey's behavior "disruptive" as NATO tries to show it is united after U.S. President Donald Trump voiced scepticism about the alliance and French President Emmanuel Macron suggested it was experiencing "brain death".



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks at a ceremony in Istanbul, November 27, 2019. CREDIT AFP

Asked about the issue, NATO's spokeswoman Oana Lungescu said: "NATO has plans for defending all allies. NATO's commitment to the safety and security of all allies is unwavering."

Turkey began its offensive in northern Syria after the United States pulled 1,000 troops out of the area last month. Ankara's NATO allies fear the incursion will undermine the battle against Islamic State militants.

COLLECTIVE DEFENCE

The plan for the Baltic states and Poland, drawn up at their request after Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, has no direct bearing on Turkey's strategy in Syria, but it raises issues about security on all of NATO's frontiers.

Under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's 1949 founding treaty, an attack on one ally is an attack on all, and the alliance has military strategies for collective defence across its territory.

Turkey made its demands before its offensive in northern Syria but the issue has come to a head because of next week's summit, at which security documents are to be approved.

NATO envoys still hope for a compromise because Ankara also needs leaders to approve a separate, upgraded military plan detailing how NATO would defend Turkey in the event of an attack, two of the diplomatic sources said.

Macron, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will meet on the summit's margins to discuss Ankara's Syria operation.

"Everyone is criticising them (the Turks), but if they give in, it will be at the cost of non-interference in their Syria strategy," one of the diplomatic sources said.

Les mouvements kurdes en Irak : Entre gouvernement régional autonome et groupe insurgés

En septembre 2017 s'est tenu le référendum sur l'indépendance du Kurdistan irakien. L'approbation écrasante des électeurs pour l'indépendance s'est heurtée à l'offensive des forces de sécurité irakiennes à la fin du mois de septembre et jusqu'à la moitié du mois d'octobre, visant à reprendre la ville de Kirkouk, « Jérusalem des Kurdes », et rappelé au Kurdistan irakien qu'il est avant tout une région autonome d'un gouvernement fédéral situé à Bagdad. Mais alors, si la région du Kurdis-

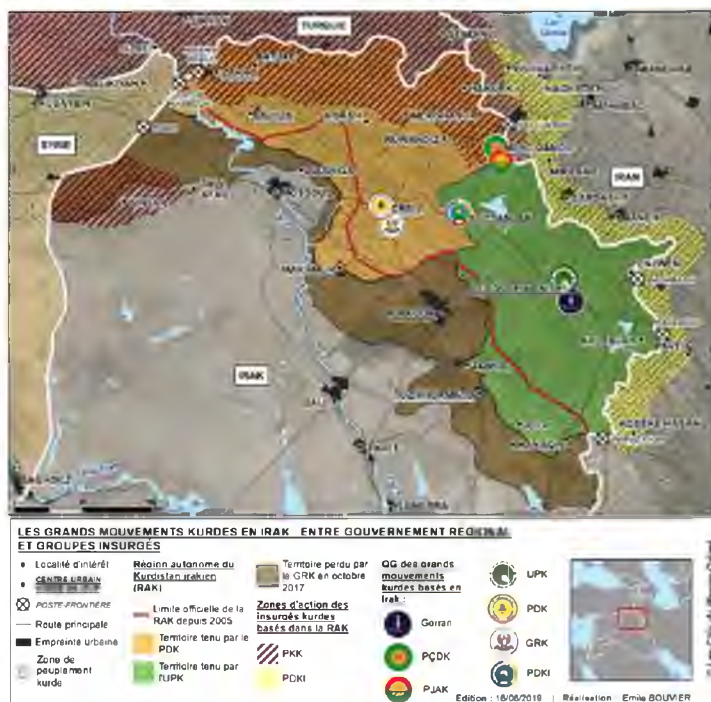
tan irakien est une région autonome, pourquoi chercher l'indépendance ? Pourquoi les partis kurdes irakiens ont-ils tant de mal à s'entendre alors qu'ils partagent le dessein d'un Kurdistan uni et indépendant ? Contre quels groupes kurdes les Turcs et les Iraniens lancent-ils des attaques en plein Kurdistan irakien, alors que ce dernier est une entité légale et reconnue internationalement ? C'est à ces questions, entre autres, que cet article va tâcher de répondre.

1. La région autonome du Kurdistan irakien (RAK), une première historique dans l'épopée kurde

En 1991, la première guerre du Golfe prend fin avec la défaite de Saddam Hussein, chef de l'Etat irakien. Une série de soulèvements se propage alors à travers le pays, notamment au Kurdistan irakien, qui avait subi trois ans plus tôt des actions à caractère génocidaire (1) de la part du régime irakien lors de l'Anfal. Des affrontements meurtriers opposent les forces irakiennes aux Peshmergas (2), les forces paramilitaires kurdes irakiennes. En raison des nombreux déplacements de population consécutifs aux affrontements, la communauté internationale fait du nord de l'Irak une No Fly Zone, à la suite de la résolution 688 du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies et de l'opération américaine « Provide Comfort ».

Après plusieurs semaines de combats, les Peshmergas et les forces irakiennes parviennent à un relatif équilibre des forces. Décidant de prioriser ses efforts dans le centre et le sud de l'Irak, le gouvernement de Bagdad décide de retirer ses forces du Kurdistan irakien ainsi que son personnel administratif en octobre 1991. La région devient ainsi autonome de facto.

Deux grands partis politiques kurdes émergent de la mêlée : le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK), dirigé par le clan Barzani, et



ral de Bagdad, qui souhaite récupérer certains territoires sous contrôle kurde et obtenir, surtout, le contrôle de la force militaire kurde irakienne des Peshmergas.

Enfin, la montée en puissance soudaine et brutale de l'Etat islamique à partir de 2014 fait vaciller l'Etat irakien et met fin à ces querelles. Les Peshmergas, initialement débordés par Daech, reprennent progressivement le contrôle de plusieurs territoires avec l'appui de la Coalition internationale, dont une grande partie en-dehors de la RAK, au premier rang desquels la ville de Kirkouk, dont la région regorge de champs d'hydrocarbures dont le GRK profitera jusqu'à ce que Bagdad en récupère le contrôle en 2017.

2. La RAK, hôte de partis kurdes irakiens historiques et de groupes insurgés kurdes étrangers

Aujourd'hui encore, le PDK et l'UPK sont les deux grands partis politiques kurdes irakiens se partageant la RAK ; le PDK a en revanche toujours dominé, avec une aisance plus ou moins forte, la scène politique kurde irakienne.

Fondé en 1946 par le général Moustafa Barzani, ce parti jouit en effet d'un grand prestige en raison de son fondateur et de ses héritiers, qui se sont illustrés de nombreuses fois à l'occasion des multiples rébellions kurdes du XXème siècle. Le parti est dirigé par Masoud Barzani, fils

l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan, dirigé par le clan Talabani. Après des élections non concluantes en 1992 et une crise économique et politique sans précédent au Kurdistan irakien, les deux partis s'affrontent de 1993 à 1996, avant de parvenir à un statu quo.

Le Kurdistan irakien, malgré sa montée en puissance pétrolière, restera un élément de second plan jusqu'en 2003, où les Kurdes se joignent aux Américains dans leur lutte contre Saddam Hussein. La nouvelle Constitution établie en 2005 consacre le caractère fédéral de l'Etat irakien, désormais composé

de régions autonomes et de gouvernorats. Ce nouvel Etat reconnaît l'existence d'une région autonome du Kurdistan irakien, ainsi que toutes les lois passées en son sein depuis les élections de 1992 que le régime de Saddam Hussein refusait d'admettre. Finalement, aucune autre région ne se formera et le Kurdistan reste, aujourd'hui encore, la seule région autonome d'Irak, constituant ainsi une entité politique définitivement singulière.

Après le retrait américain d'Irak en 2011, les tensions montent entre le Gouvernement régional du Kurdistan (GRK) et le gouvernement fédé-

du général précédemment cité, depuis 1979. La famille Barzani règne en maîtresse du PDK et de la RAK de manière générale, à tel point que certains journalistes ou chercheurs la comparent à une mafia.

En effet, Président du Kurdistan d'Irak de 2005 à 2017, Masoud Barzani s'était entouré de son neveu comme Premier ministre, Nechirvan Barzani, aujourd'hui devenu Président de la RAK (3) à la place de son oncle. Le futur Premier ministre pressenti est Masrouf Barzani, fils de Masoud Barzani, dont il a également été le chef des services de sécurité et de renseignement durant sa présidence (4). Les Barzani sont également présents au sein de la législature kurde irakienne, à l'instar d'Adham Barzani, cousin de Masoud, qui siège au Parlement du Kurdistan comme député du PDK.

L'UPK est quant à lui issu d'une scission du PDK survenue en 1975, et fondé par Jalal Talabani, une figure incontournable de la scène politique kurde irakienne, morte en 2014. Jalal Talabani a occupé le poste de Président kurde de l'Irak, de 2005 à 2014. L'UPK compte également Fuad Masum comme figure importante dans ses rangs ; ce dernier a succédé à Talabani comme Président de l'Irak de 2014 à 2018, après avoir été Premier ministre de la RAK de 1992 à 1994.

Le troisième mouvement kurde irakien légal est incarné par le mouvement Gorran. Fondé en 2009 par Nawshirwan Mustafa, leader incontesté de l'opposition au PDK et à l'UPK jusqu'à sa mort en 2017, le parti est aujourd'hui divisé en deux factions rivales, nées des désaccords internes au parti sur la succession de Nawshirwan Mustafa.

En plus de ces partis légaux, le Kurdistan irakien accueille également plusieurs groupes kurdes qui, en plus de ne pas être irakiens, sont par ailleurs considérés comme des mouvements insurgés par leurs pays d'origine respectif.

Le PKK est ainsi très présent dans les montagnes du nord de l'Irak, qu'il considère comme sa base arrière et depuis lesquelles il organise la guérilla en Turquie, en Iran et, dans une moindre mesure, en Syrie. Le QG du PKK est situé sur le mont Qandil, au cœur d'une région particulièrement difficile d'accès de la chaîne des monts Zagros. C'est aussi à Qandil que sont basés l'émanation irakienne du PKK, le Parti pour une solution démocratique au Kurdistan (PÇDK) et la filiale iranienne du mouvement, le Parti pour une vie libre au Kurdistan (PJAK). Le PKK contrôle également le camp de réfugiés de Makhmur, aujourd'hui pratiquement devenu une véritable ville, où il expérimente la mise en pratique de ce que ses militants appellent la « révolution sociale kurde » et ses détracteurs « un mini Qandil ». Les préceptes démocratiques, écologistes et féministes d'Abdullah Öcalan y sont effectivement mis en application, à l'indifférence du GRK qui n'y voit pas là, à raison, une grande menace.

Le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan d'Iran (PDKI) est également basé dans la RAK, à Koysanjak, et mène depuis 2016 une insurrection armée particulièrement vivace contre les forces iraniennes depuis les montagnes du Kurdistan irakien, au grand dam des autorités du GRK qui exigent régulièrement du PKK et du PDKI qu'ils cessent leurs activités insurrectionnelles.

3. La RAK, une épine dans le pied stratégique pour Bagdad

La RAK, malgré sa faible urbanisation et l'emprise territoriale massive occupée par les montagnes, est une manne financière pour l'Irak. En effet, le Kurdistan irakien contrôle l'intégralité de la frontière irako-turque, et avec elle ses points de passage transfrontaliers. Ces derniers représentent des sources de revenus particulièrement substantiels, notamment celui de Faysh Khabour, par lequel passe un pipeline connectant les champs d'hydrocarbures de Kirkouk à la Turquie et au complexe portuaire turc de Ceylan, ouvert sur la Méditerranée, par lequel le pétrole est ensuite exporté vers l'Europe.

Même privée des imposants champs d'hydrocarbures de la région de Kirkouk, la RAK possède encore des réserves substantielles constituant l'essentiel de ses revenus : près d'un tiers des réserves de pétrole irakiennes se trouve sur le territoire de la RAK. En 2013, avant que le GRK ne prenne Kirkouk, les revenus tirés de l'exploitation des champs pétrolifères représentaient près de 80% des revenus totaux de la région autonome, et doivent donc certainement représenter la même proportion aujourd'hui, Kirkouk et son pétrole ayant été perdus en 2017 car récupérés, par la force, par Bagdad, pour des raisons économiques évidentes.

Le Kurdistan irakien apparaît ainsi comme une entité unique en son genre, dont le modèle a inspiré bien des mouvements kurdes au Moyen-Orient. Perchée sur un équilibre économique et politique relativement précaire, la RAK est parvenue jusqu'ici à tisser des alliances opportunes adéquates et à opposer une forte résilience face aux crises quasi-permanentes auxquelles elle a dû faire face depuis sa création officielle en 1991. A bien des égards, la RAK apparaît comme le laboratoire de ce à quoi un Kurdistan indépendant et unifié pourrait ressembler un jour. Toutefois, les pays voisins s'assureront, à n'en pas douter, que cette possibilité ne devienne jamais une réalité.

Notes :

- (1) Lors de la condamnation le 23 décembre 2005 à la Haye de l'homme d'affaire néerlandais Frans Van Anraat pour son implication dans la fourniture de substances chimiques au régime de Saddam Hussein, le tribunal affirme pour la première fois que les Kurdes ont bel et bien fait l'objet d'un génocide.
- (2) « Peshmergas » signifie « celui va au-devant de la mort ». Le terme, s'il désigne de manière générale un combattant, est avant tout utilisé par les

Kurdes irakiens, parfois les Iraniens, et de manière générale les mouvements kurdes barzanistes, tel le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan de Syrie (PDKS), soutenu par le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan irakien de la famille Barzani. Il est donc incorrect de parler des Peshmergas du PKK, par exemple.

(3) Nechirvan Barzani est devenu président le 10 juin 2019 et n'a donc pas encore formé son gouvernement.

(4) Le Conseil de sécurité de la Région du Kurdistan (CSRK) centralise les services de renseignement du PDK et de l'UPK ainsi que les unités antiterroristes.

A lire sur Les clés du Moyen-Orient :

- Jalal Talabani, du militant au chef d'Etat
- Les Barzani
- Kirkouk au cœur de la nouvelle crise irakienne
- Le rapprochement entre Erbil et Ankara comme grille de lecture des dynamiques kurdes au Moyen-Orient (2/2)
- Le Kurdistan irakien, îlot de tolérance religieuse au Moyen-Orient
- Kurdistan d'Irak : crise politique à l'heure de la guerre contre Daesh
- Limites et confins, Compte rendu du colloque « Le Kurdistan, une entité territoriale en construction », 2 et 3 octobre 2012 à Lyon
- Kirkouk, histoire d'une ville disputée

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Turkish intelligence kills PKK's top female operative in Iraq -report

Turkish intelligence has killed a top operative of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in an operation in the northern Iraqi town of Sinjar on Nov. 19, Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency reported on Thursday.

Beraat Afşin, a senior figure in the group, which has been fighting for autonomy in Turkey for more than three decades, was on Turkey's most-wanted terrorists list, Anadolu said.

Turkish authorities had placed a 4 million lira (\$693,000) bounty for the capture of Afşin, who joined the PKK in 1997, Anadolu said.



Turkey started Operation Claw against the PKK in northern Iraq in May and has been sending armed drones to conduct targeted strikes on PKK members since then.

Turkey first proved it could carry out targeted assassinations from the air when it hit the convoy of PKK commander Zaki Shingali in Sinjar and killed him in August 2018.



November 28-2019

In first foreign trip since taking office, Kurdistan Region PM meets Turkish FM

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) – Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani arrived in Ankara on Thursday, where he met with Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu.

This marks the first official foreign visit by the top Kurdish official since he took office in July 2019. A high-level delegation is accompanying Barzani on his trip.

Barzani held a joint press conference with Cavusoglu after their meeting, affirming ongoing cooperation between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Turkey. Barzani called for both countries to develop ties further, especially in the economic arena.

He also said during the press briefing that he had discussed the situation in northern Syria, where Turkey and its proxy Syrian mili-



Prime Minister Barzani and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu hold a joint-press conference in Ankara, Nov. 28, 2019. (Photo: Kurdistan 24)

tias launched an offensive last month against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), aimed at establishing a so-called "safe zone" along the Turkish border. Two separate ceasefire deals brokered by the US and Russia appear to have had few lasting effects.

Ankara considers one of the main components of the SDF, the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), to be the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) and designates both as terrorist organizations.

The PKK is an armed group that

Kurds in Turkey formed after decades of state repression to fight for expanded rights for them in the country. They are currently based in the Kurdistan Region's rugged Qandil Mountains.

They have also been present in small numbers in the district of Sinjar (Shingal), in Iraq's Nineveh Province, when the Islamic State overran the area and committed mass atrocities against the Yezidi (Ezidi) religious minority. Ezidis have since formed their own armed groups to defend their people, including one that is said to be allied with the PKK, called the Shingal Resistance Units (YBS).

Erbil has previously called on the PKK and Turkey to cease their fighting inside the Kurdistan Region, which has led to the displacement of dozens of villages in

border areas and killed tens of civilians, mainly by indiscriminate Turkish bombings.

In response to a reporter's question on the KRG position on the alleged continued PKK presence in Shingal, Barzani pointed out that the area is currently under the

control of Iraqi forces but affirmed Erbil's opposition to the PKK's presence in either Shingal or the Kurdistan Region.

Ankara has also said it aims to resettle Syrian refugees currently residing in Turkey within the "safe zone," many from other parts of

Syria. This has raised concerns by locals of forced displacement and demographic change.

Barzani voiced his support for Turkey's cooperation with the United Nations as part of preparations for a resettlement plan. The UN has said that its refugee agency had

established a team that is studying the Turkish proposal to ensure a "voluntary, safe and dignified return" for Syrians displaced by nine years of civil war.

Editing by John J. Catherine



8-11-2019

Zhelwan Z. Wali

Resettled Arabs confiscate Kurdish farmlands in Kirkuk

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region - Kurdish farmers continue to have their land confiscated in Kirkuk for Arabs resettled during the Baath era, according to local villagers.

"I feel like this tractor is running over my body," said Kurdish farmer Dashti Agha as he watched his land being plowed in the village of Palkana, which is south of Kirkuk in the town of Sargaran.

Last week, Kirkuk court took 50 dunams of farmland from Agha and gave it to an Arab who returned to the region last year after lodging a complaint to claim ownership of the land.

Agha says he showed documents, including land deeds, to Iraqi forces to prove the land is his but was unsuccessful in retaining his property.

There are 38 villages in Sargaran town. 12 of these villages are subject to land disputes, according to the local council.

Arabs from elsewhere in Iraq were brought into the disputed areas of Kirkuk largely between 1970 and 1978. The Arabization of the province has been a historical flashpoint between Baghdad and the Kurds.

After 2003 and the fall of the Baath regime, Iraq began a policy of de-Arabization within the framework of Article 140 of the constitution, which aims to reverse the demographic changes begun by Saddam Hussein during the Al-Anfal campaign.



Kurdish farmer Dashti Agha watches his land being plowed by Arab settlers. Photo: Rudaw TV

Lands that had been confiscated from Kurds and Turkmen were returned, while the Arabs who had been resettled were given financial compensation.

However, they have now come back with the support of the Kirkuk governor Rakan al-Jabouri, who issued 14 decrees seizing land owned by Kurds and giving it to Arabs before Iraq's Federal Court rescinded his decrees in December.

Kurdish locals in the area have alleged that a "re-Arabization" of the region is underway since federal forces took control of disputed territories on October 16, 2017.

"I did my best to stop them. But they [the Arabs] called the [Iraqi] Army. Shortly afterwards, two groups from the intelligence service of the Iraqi army arrived on the scene. We spoke on the matter. I insisted that they had no rights to use my land," Agha told Rudaw.

"This issue is not just on the farmlands, but the households as well. It will go beyond Palkana village to others in the region," said Mohammed Amin, another farmer.

Qadir Abbas, head of the Sargaran town's Local Council, says the best solution is for Agha to launch a legal appeal.

"The Kurdish farmer can appeal in court, as Arabs have done," Abbas said. "By doing so, the court will look into both appeals and will make a final decision. Whoever is rightful, the court will decide in his favor."

Abbas added that the Kurdish farmer has the official deeds to the land, unlike the agricultural contracts issued to Arabs under the ex-Baath regime in order to enact demographic change in the area.

Abbas urged the Iraqi parliament, Prime minister and Fed-

eral Court to find a "swift solution" to the issue.

Villagers lay partial blame on the Kurdish parties, who they say have given no support to affected farmers.

Hatam Taii, a spokesperson for Arabs in Kirkuk, told Rudaw English that they have "official proof" and documents from the 1940s and 1950s that the area belongs to the Shammar, a large Arab tribe.

The lands of the 12 disputed villages were taken away from Kurdish farmers by the Iraqi government in 1975 on grounds that they were prohibited oil zones. Two years later in 1977, under Decree No. 949 issued from the the Baath Supreme Revolutionary Council, they were given to Arabs resettled in the region.

The Iraqi Agriculture Ministry has now formed a committee to resolve the matter at hand after the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) called on them to end the land disputes in Sargaran town.

"We are trying to end such disputes in a legal and constitutional way," Faris Issa, in charge of the KRG representative office in Baghdad, said.

"We have asked Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi to help halt the confiscations. He is not happy with the situation," he added, describing the KRG as also taking the situation seriously.

Thousands of pro-Kurdish party members detained in Turkey since 2015 - report

Pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) deputy Mehmet Rüştü Tiryaki on Thursday said thousands of members of the party have been detained since 2015, Mezopotamya news agency reported.

Following the collapse of a peace process between the AKP government and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 2015, Turkish authorities have intensified a crackdown on the HDP, which it accuses of harbouring sympathies and acting in the interests of the PKK, an armed group that has been in war in Turkey for over three decades.

16,300 HDP members have been detained and 3,500 of those were imprisoned, Tiryaki said, according to Mezopotamya.

The Turkish police on Wednesday carried out simultaneous raids in several cities across Turkey and detained various people including HDP politicians, trade unionists



and human rights activists, the news agency said.

The aim of the detentions was to spread fear to the society and curb the ones who oppose the government, said Selvi Turgut, a member of the Human Rights Association (IHD).

"These practices bring uncertainty. Most of the people were released on probation," Turgut said.

Some 450,000 of HDP members are now on probation and they are banned from travelling abroad and forced to report to police stations, according to Turgut.

 **REUTERS** November 26, 2019

Reporting by
Tuvan Gumrukcu; Editing by Dominic Evans

Erdogan says Qatar backs Turkey's plans to settle Syrian refugees: NTV

ANKARA (Reuters) - Qatar could support Turkey's plans to settle more than a million Syrian refugees in north-east Syria after its offensive against Kurdish militia in the region, broadcaster NTV quoted President Tayyip Erdogan as saying on Tuesday.



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan greets lawmakers from his ruling AK Party during a meeting at the parliament in Ankara, Turkey, November 26, 2019. Presidential Press Office/Handout via REUTERS

Turkey launched a military incursion against the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia last month, seizing a 120-km strip of land along its southeastern border. Since launching its offensive,

Turkey has urged Western allies to back its plans to build new towns in northeast Syria, where

it says up to half of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees it currently hosts could be settled.

It has called for an international donors summit to back the plan. Western officials say they would be reluctant to fund any project which involved involuntary returns or changes to Syria's demographics - something Ankara denies it is planning.

Speaking to reporters on his return flight from a visit to Doha, Erdogan said he presented his plans to Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, adding that "Mr Tamim liked our projects", according to NTV.

Asked whether Qatar will help fund the plans, Erdogan said: "They are at the point of: 'We can carry out these efforts together'. There really isn't another way."

Qatar's Red Crescent Society said last week it had opened a housing project in partnership with Turkey's AFAD emergency relief authority near the northern Syrian city of Al Bab, which Turkish-backed forces seized from Islamic State two years ago.

Relations between Turkey and Qatar have been close in recent years. Ankara supported Doha

after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed ties with Qatar in 2017, accusing it of funding militant groups. Doha denies the charge.

Erdogan said that he had also presented the plans to Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump, adding that he would renew his

call for a donors meeting at the NATO summit in London next week. He said that realizing the plans would be "an example to the world".

The Turkish offensive was met by a chorus of criticism from Ankara's Western allies, who say the operation may hinder the fight against Islamic State. Turkey has rejected those con-

cerns and said it will continue fighting militants.

Ankara views the YPG, the main component of the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), as a terrorist group because of its link to Kurdish insurgents on its own soil. It has been infuriated with U.S. support for the group, and has repeatedly urged its allies to stop backing the militia.



REUTERS

November 27, 2019

Reporting by Dominic Evans; Editing by Gareth Jones

Turkey must halt Syrian rebel abuses, Human Rights Watch says

ISTANBUL (Reuters) - Turkey's Syrian rebel allies have summarily executed civilians during Ankara's military offensive in northeast Syria and looted property belonging to Kurdish families displaced by the fighting, Human Rights Watch said in a report on Wednesday.

The group called on Ankara to investigate what it said were human rights abuses and "in many cases potential war crimes" in territory which Turkish forces currently control, and hold those responsible to account.

Turkey says it plans to settle more than a million Syrian refugees in a "safe zone" which it says will be established by the military operation, but Human Rights Watch said its findings showed the region was not secure.

"Executing individuals, pillaging property and blocking displaced people from returning to their homes is damning evidence of why Turkey's proposed 'safe zones' will not be safe," said Sarah Leah Whitson, the group's Middle East director, in the statement.

Asked about the Human Rights Watch report, a spokesman for the Turkish foreign ministry



Turkey-backed Syrian rebel fighters drive their military tank near the border town of Tal Abyad, Syria October 24, 2019. REUTERS/Khalil Ashawi/File Photo

pointed to earlier media reports about Syrian rebels forming a commission to investigate the reported abuses, as well as military courts for prosecution.

Last month the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces accused a Turkey-backed force of ambushing and killing a Kurdish politician, Hevrin Khalaf, and several other civilians in the first

week of the offensive in northeast Syria. The rebel force denied it was responsible for the killing.

Human Rights Watch said it had researched the case of three Kurdish Red Crescent aid workers who disappeared in territory controlled by the rebels, "including the apparent unlawful killing of at least one of them".

The group also interviewed five

Kurdish civilians who said that the rebel forces were occupying their homes and had arbitrarily prevented them from returning.

"Turkey is turning a blind eye to the reprehensible behavior displayed by the factions it arms," Whitson said. "So long as Turkey is in control of these areas, it has a responsibility to investigate and end these violations".



27 Nov, 2019

Turkey refusing to sign NATO defense plan for the Baltics, pressing alliance to label Syria's Kurds as 'terrorists' – report

Ankara has reportedly been black-mailing NATO, refusing to sign the proposed defense plan for the Baltics and Poland unless the alliance officially recognizes Kurdish-led militia in northern Syria as a “terrorist group.”

Agreeing on a new NATO defense plan for the eastern European countries has escalated from a formality into a true diplomatic battle, Reuters reported Tuesday, citing four senior sources within the bloc.

“[The Turks] are taking eastern Europeans hostage, blocking approval of this military planning until they get concessions,” one of the sources said.

Turkey's envoy had been instructed not to sign off the plan – which has to be unanimously approved by all the NATO members – until the alliance recognizes Syria's People's Protection Units (YPG) as terrorists.

The YPG is the core group within the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) militia, which has recently become the target of a new Turkish incursion. While the group has been a long-standing US ally and fought against Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS), Ankara regards it as an offshoot of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) – regarded both by the US and Turkey as a terrorist organization.

Poland and the three Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – have solicited increased funding and military presence from NATO, arguing without evidence that they face an imminent



NATO troops during the Silver Arrow military exercise in Adazi, Latvia, October 5, 2019. © REUTERS/Ints Kalnins

threat of aggression from Russia.

The deadlock over the defense plan is threatening to spoil the planned festivities at NATO's 70th anniversary summit in London. However, Ankara appears adamant that it will only green-light the plan if it receives concessions from the bloc.

“Everyone is criticizing them [the Turks], but if they give in, it will be at the cost of non-interference in their Syria strategy,” one of the sources said.

Turkey's reported intransigence, if confirmed, only adds to NATO's current woes, as US President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized alliance members for failing to live up to their budgetary commitments. Only seven of NATO's 29 members are currently

spending at least two percent of their GDP on the military – and while Poland and the Baltics are among them, Turkey is not.

However, Turkey has the second-largest military within the alliance, and occupies the strategic position on its eastern flank, in reach of both Russia and the Middle East. For all that, Ankara has had a rocky relationship with the US recently, due to Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 air defense systems as well as its military operation in northern Syria.

Turkey might have taken Trump's withdrawal of US troops as tacit approval for its 'Operation Peace Spring,' but Washington has maintained that the Kurdish-led Syrian militias are still its “allies” and repeatedly urged Ankara to show restraint in its assault against the SDF.

Police intervene in commemoration for slain Kurdish lawyer Elçi

Turkish police intervened in lawyers in Ankara gathered to commemorate prominent human rights lawyer Tahir Elçi on the fourth anniversary of his killing, Cumhuriyet newspaper reported on Thursday.

Police prevented lawyers from opening banners to commemorate Elçi in front of the Turkish capital's courthouse on the grounds that the gathering was unauthorised, Cumhuriyet said.

Tahir Elçi, former president of the southeastern province of Diyarbakır Bar Association, was shot dead during a gun battle between the police and unidentified gunmen in Diyarbakır four years ago.

The prominent human rights lawyer was delivering a speech to advocate peace during Turkish security forces' operations in the province's Sur district, targeting members the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), an armed group that has waged a decades-long insurgency in Turkey for Kurdish self-rule.



Elçi had become a target of numerous death threats following his statement on a television program that the PKK is not a terrorist organisation. He was later prosecuted for the statement and was facing trial, despite having denounced PKK's violence. Several lawyers, including a delegate of French lawyers, also gathered in Istanbul for commemoration, according to Cumhuriyet.

"We take the lives and struggles of all our murdered colleagues, especially Tahir Elçi, as a reference. We will never forget him," the daily quoted one of the lawyers as saying.

Tahir Elçi's murder remains unsolved and his perpetrators have yet to be found.

Police intervene in commemoration for slain Kurdish lawyer Elçi

Tension rose Thursday between the Russian army and Turkish-backed Syrian opposition factions near the town of Ain Issa, considered a self-governed Kurdish administration in the northeast of Syria.

Moscow announced that Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Army General Valery Gerasimov held talks with his Turkish counterpart, General Yasar Guler, on the developments in Syria.

"During the talks, they exchanged viewpoints on the situation in Syria," the Russian news agency Tass said on Thursday.



Russian patrols in Syria. AP Photo/Baderkhan Ahmad

Russian Foreign Ministry spo-

keswoman Maria Zakharova said that Moscow and Ankara

maintain constant contacts that help them iron out differences

arising during the Syrian operation.

"Our militaries and diplomats are in contact almost around the clock, which helps us resolve issues," she told reporters.

On October 22, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, signed a memorandum on joint actions in northeastern Syria.

Turkey and Russia began joint patrolling in the area on November 1.

Separately, Russia failed to block funding for a new team that will identify culprits behind toxic attacks in Syria after member states from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons approved next year's budget for the watchdog.

On Thursday, 106 OPCW member states voted in favor of the new budget, while only 19 countries including Russia and China voted against.

"In light of this result the budget for 2020 is adopted," the Conference of States Parties chairman said.

Moscow and its allies were trying to block the budget of the OPCW if it included funding for the new Identification and Investigations Team (IIT).

The IIT team is currently looking to determine the party responsible for an attack in the Syrian town of Douma in April 2018,

after a probe found that chlorine was used.

The United States accused Russia of a "cover-up" of the use of chemical weapons by Syria.

"The Syrian cover-up is never going to work because the international community has the courage of its convictions. Unfortunately Russia has played a central role in this cover-up," US ambassador to the OPCW Kenneth Ward said.



30-11-2019
Karwan Faidhi Dri

Kurdish commander, 2 security force members killed by ISIS in Diyala

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region — Islamic State (ISIS) remnants attacked Kurdish security forces (Asayesh) in Diyala province's Kolajo sub-district near the Iranian border late on Friday, killing a commander and two of its members.

After initial mortar shelling on the village, the men were attacked while investigating the source of the mortar fire.

Four other members and three civilians were injured.

Located in Kifri, south of Kirkuk, Kolajo has been attacked by ISIS sleeper cells multiple times. It is regarded as a disputed area between both Erbil and Baghdad.

The disputed territories have become a hotspot for ISIS activity amid a security vacuum.

"ISIS combat power remains in restricted terrain and unpopulated areas where there is little to no local security presence," said a recent report by the Pentagon Inspector General.

Halo Mohammed, Rudaw's reporter at the scene, said that the attack killed two Asayesh members, Jum'a Abd and Mahmoud Jum'a, and severely injured the commander, Simko Ali, who then died early on Saturday.



Commander Simko Ali, Jum'a Abd and Mahmoud Jum'a were killed by ISIS fighters after an attack in Kolajo on November 29, 2019. Photos: social media

He added that four members of Asayesh and three civilians, a woman and two children, were injured in the attack.

Qubad Talabani, deputy prime minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), expressed his sadness over the loss of the Asayesh members.

"I am saddened by the martyrdom of two members of Garmiyani Asayesh, and I wish speedy recovery for those injured in tonight's attack on Kolajo," he tweeted.

A funeral has been held for Ali, his coffin draped in Kurdistan's flag flanked by a crowd of mourners.

Rahman Khorshid, Major Ali's cousin spoke of the commander's bravery and the continued fight against ISIS.

"Iraq and the US often say in the media that Daesh is over. We celebrated our victory over them. However, every day we see the martyrdom of brave men like Simko by Daesh," he said, using the Arabic acronym for ISIS.



He was a fearless man who had been injured three times but kept fighting. He returned to the front lines despite a head injury. He did not abandon his colleagues" Khorshid said of his cousin. "If there was an attack on Asayesh at midnight, Simko would go there."

He added that one of the commanders of ISF was impressed by Simko, who was respected by Arabs as well as Kurds.

"Even Arabs asked him to go and protect them," he said.

Kifri is in Diyala province, 188 kilometers southeast of Erbil between the Kurdish city of Kalar and Tuz Khurmatu.

ISIS remnants attacked the same forces in Kifri on July 31, killing four and injuring eight.

At least four Italian soldiers were wounded in the area while conducting anti-ISIS operations in early November.

The area was also frequently attacked

by ISIS fighters before the group was declared defeated in Iraq in December 2017.

Concern over the revival of the terror group has increased since the start of Operation Peace Spring in Syria, which has seen ISIS militants break out of prisons run by Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

A number of suspected ISIS fighters were arrested at the Iraq-Syria border last month, prompting the deployment of additional Iraqi troops to boost security.

The latest Pentagon inspector general report covering July 1 to Oct 25 said that the Islamic State continued to cement and expand its command and control structure in Iraq, enabling the group to stage more attacks.

"ISIS in Iraq conducted both attacks of opportunity, such as improvised bombs and hit-and-run attacks, and attacks designed to intimidate or gain influence,

such as assassinations, kidnappings, and sniper attacks," the report read, citing the Combined Joint Task Force-OIR (CJTF-OIR) which leads the fights against ISIS.

According to CJTF-OIR, 124 clearance operations were conducted against ISIS during the reporting period, in which Iraqi forces killed approximately 13 ISIS fighters and captured approximately 123 fighters.

The report says that "Diyala province and areas of southeastern Ninewa province, in particular, experienced increased ISIS activity, while ISIS activity in Anbar, Kirkuk, and Salah ad Din provinces had subsided."

Blaming Iraqi forces for lack of forces in these areas, the report says that Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) "operations in Diyala were limited in part due to the province's "close proximity" to the Iranian border."

Passes d'armes entre Macron et Erdogan : de l'Union européenne au rôle de l'OTAN, une relation tumultueuse

Les retrouvailles entre Emmanuel Macron et Recep Tayyip Erdogan au sommet de l'OTAN, les 3 et 4 décembre, risquent d'être fraîches. Vendredi 29 novembre, le président français a été confronté à une nouvelle charge de la part de son homologue turc, qui l'a accusé d'être en «état de mort cérébrale». Une énième pique qui ne risque pas d'améliorer les relations déjà houleuses depuis plusieurs mois entre la France et la Turquie.

Reprenant les propos du président français à propos de l'Otan, Recep Tayyip Erdogan a déclaré lors d'un discours à Istanbul : «Fais d'abord examiner ta propre mort cérébrale. Ces déclarations ne siéent qu'à ceux dans ton genre qui sont en état de mort cérébrale».

Après cette attaque d'une rare violence, l'Élysée a rapidement annoncé que l'ambassadeur turc à Paris allait être convoqué au quai d'Orsay. «Ce n'est pas une déclaration, ce sont des insultes», a estimé la présidence française.

L'union européenne, source du problème

Cette querelle entre les deux chefs d'État ne date pas d'hier : dès le début de l'année 2018, le malaise était palpable au palais présidentiel de l'Élysée lorsqu'Emmanuel Macron avait déclaré face à son homologue turc que les «évolutions récentes» en Turquie dans le domaine des droits de l'homme excluaient toute «avancée» dans les négociations d'adhésion de ce pays à l'Union européenne. Ce sujet avait déjà été à l'origine de tensions entre Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-2012) et Recep Tayyip Erdogan en 2011, alors que ce dernier occupait le poste de Premier ministre.

Quelques mois plus tard, en novembre 2018, tandis que la disparition de Jamal



Cette querelle entre les deux chefs d'État ne date pas d'hier [LUDOVIC MARIN / POOL / AFP]

Khashoggi défrayait la chronique, le ministre de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères Jean-Yves Le Drian avait regretté le «jeu politique particulier» du président turc dans cette affaire, des propos jugés «inacceptables» par Ankara.

Puis, le 24 avril dernier, tandis que la France organisait pour la première fois une journée de commémoration du génocide arménien, le président turc avait vivement critiqué l'initiative de son homologue français. «Adresser un message aux 700.000 Arméniens qui vivent en France ne te sauvera pas, Monsieur Macron. Apprends d'abord à être honnête en politique, si tu ne l'es pas, tu ne pourras pas gagner», avait-il déclaré lors d'un discours devant les responsables de son parti.

Des divergences concernant la Syrie

La rupture était définitivement consommée en octobre dernier, lorsqu'Emmanuel Macron a reçu la porte-parole des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS) pour lui témoigner de la solidarité de la France et lui exprimer ses préoccupations quant à une possible intervention militaire turque en Syrie. Or, l'une des

principales composantes des FDS n'est autre que la milice kurde des Unités de protection du peuple (YPG), qu'Ankara voit comme une extension du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), son ennemi intérieur depuis de nombreuses années.

Une offensive turque contre les YPG - qu'Ankara qualifie de «terroriste» - avait bien eu lieu le 9 octobre dernier dans le nord-est de la Syrie, ce qui avait valu à l'ambassadeur turc à Paris d'être convoqué dès le lendemain au ministère des Affaires étrangères. C'est d'ailleurs à la suite de cette intervention qu'Emmanuel Macron avait déclaré à l'hebdomadaire *The Economist* que cette offensive unilatérale était l'un des symptômes qui montraient que l'Otan était en «état de mort cérébrale».

Ces vives tensions interviennent une semaine seulement avant un sommet de l'Alliance à Londres. Emmanuel Macron, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Angela Merkel et Boris Johnson doivent se rencontrer en marge de ce sommet pour parler de la Syrie.



30-11-2019
Karwan Faidhi Dri

Two explosions in Kirkuk injure 16 civilians: health official

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region— 16 people have been injured following two explosions in Kirkuk mid-Saturday, according to health department officials.

The first explosion took place in Ahmed Agha market in the city's downtown, while the second targeted a bridge in the south of the city. Both bombs were placed in trash cans, according to a military commander.

Both areas are busy hubs for job-seekers.

Karim Ali, head of the health department told Rudaw that "as the result of both explosions, 16 people were injured."

Saad Harbiya, the commander of Kirkuk Operations Command, told reporters at the scene that there were no human losses.

"Thankfully, only a few people were injured slightly," he told Rudaw.

Six people remain in hospital, according to the commander.

The explosions "do not affect the morale of the people of Kirkuk," he added.

No one has claimed responsibility for the explosions.

Harbiya thanked the people of Kirkuk for "cooperating" with security forces, promising to arrest the perpetrators. He also said that their forces have arrested and killed several ISIS cells recently.

Kirkuk, disputed between the Kurdish



The explosions occurred in busy areas of the city. Photo: Rudaw

Regional Government and Baghdad, has been a hotspot for jihadist attacks in recent months.

Islamic State (ISIS) remnants attacked Kurdish security forces (Asayesh) with mortars late Friday, killing three, including their commander, and injuring seven others in Kolajo, Diyala province.

The latest Pentagon inspector general report said that the Islamic State continued to cement and expand its command and control structure in Iraq, enabling the group to stage more attacks.

"ISIS in Iraq conducted both attacks of opportunity, such as improvised bombs and hit-and-run attacks, and attacks designed to intimidate or gain influence,

such as assassinations, kidnappings, and sniper attacks," the report read, citing the Combined Joint Task Force-OIR (CJTF-OIR) which leads the fights against ISIS.

The Iraqi Security Forces remain "largely unwilling or incapable of holding terrain in the mountains and central and southern wadis of Kirkuk province," it said.

ISIS mortar fire on a Kirkuk soccer field was said to have killed six people and injured nine on August 25, the report added.

A series of explosions shook the city on May 30, killing at least four people and wounding 23 others.

Dark days for Kurdish politics, but worse for Turkish - scholar



Turkey's pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) this month discussed its strategy to counter the Turkish government's escalated crackdown against Kurdish politicians, as well as October's military operation in north Syria against Kurdish-controlled territories near the Turkish border.

Some members called on the party to withdraw from parliament after the government removed 24 HDP mayors in southeast Turkey following local elections in March. The government says the HDP politicians harbour sympathies for the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been fighting inside Turkey for more than three decades.

Prominent historian and political scientist Hamit Bozarslan answered Ahval's questions on the future of the Kurdish political movement in Turkey and what the Turkish state aims to achieve with its aggressive moves in Syria.

Hale Akay: Mr. Bozarslan, you had predicted turbulent times for Turkey. This year, the local elections created some hope within the opposition. But after the elections, Turkey's military operation in northern Syria last month and the dismissal and arrests of HDP's mayors have quickly done away with that atmosphere of hope. Most recently, last

week HDP called for early elections. How do you view the current situation?

B: Where we are first and foremost shows that the government is truly stuck. But this doesn't mean that they cannot remain in power. I assume that the most important goal of Erdoğan and the nationalist-Ergenekonist coalition that has formed around Erdoğan is, one way or the other, to eliminate any and all alternatives (to their rule) in Turkey.

One of the most important ways they can do this is by eliminating the HDP, which has almost become the only opposition. The (main opposition Republican People's Party) CHP has unfortunately emerged as its majesty's opposition. Just (CHP leader) Kılıçdaroğlu's description of (Turkey's military operation in the northern Syrian area of) Afrin as "very beautiful" alone shows that CHP cannot form an alternative to the AKP at this point. This leaves only the HDP, and the HDP has been carrying the Kurdish movement in Turkey. I think that, despite everything, the ones who hold up democracy and carry it upon their shoulders in Turkey are the HDP. The elimination of the HDP both strengthens the coalition around the AKP – or, Erdoğan – and aims to defang the opposition.

A: The HDP has faced pressure to withdraw from parliament and municipalities. But the

party, instead of withdrawing, called for general elections. Was that a correct strategy?

B: I cannot say anything on the HDP's strategy, because they make their own decisions. But I believe that any and all positions won under authoritarian, radically authoritarian or antidemocratic regimes must be held on to.

This is true for Turkey, it is true for Russia, and it is true for some other cases. The positions must not be abandoned. With the arrest of HDP members, with their removal from parliament tomorrow, the government will have a legitimacy problem, not the HDP.

Secondly, there is one aspect that is of the utmost importance for me: The Kurdish movement is not a movement that only exists or can only reproduce itself through elections anymore. There is a phenomenon of consciousness among Kurds. There is a phenomenon of resistance, a phenomenon of a reading of history, a conception for the future, and a geographical conception.

These are not things that can be ended with, let's say, firing or arresting mayors. We are talking about quite an important accumulation here. The pluralisation of the Kurdish field, Kurds being able to establish means of production, forming mechanisms of socialisation ensures the perpetuity of "Kurd-

ishness.” As such, there is a necessity not to focus solely on mayors or parliament members.

A: Some people have a negative outlook. They say the Kurdish political movement has no room left to manoeuvre in Turkey, so, in the future Kurdish politics in Turkey too will focus on northern Syria, and the balance will shift in part to the YPG-PYD, which will become the leading group in Kurdish politics. Is this how you see things?

B: I mean, it is also impossible to know that from what can be seen right now. I think that Turkish politics is in a much worse position than Kurdish politics. Turkey’s fundamental problem is that, let’s say, among the Turkish community and the Turkish identity, an alternative cannot take form. That there is no alternative that could work with the HDP, to advance Turkey’s issues, or at least could see and accept these issues.

Secondly, it must be remembered that the Kurdish movement has existed for almost a century. The 1980s need to be remembered. I believe the 1980s were the darkest period in Kurdish history. It was even possible to ask whether Kurds could really have existed, or whether they could have lived. I believe it was the time period that created the most trauma. After that, came the 1990s. The Kurdish movement has the ability to weather such intense pressures.

We of course cannot know what will happen tomorrow. We do not know what will happen in Rojava. Tomorrow Russia could betray the Kurds, turn over Kobane to the Turks. All these alternatives must be taken into consideration. But, at least I believe, the thing that I’m most interested in now is the collapse of politics in Turkey. Politics is failing among Turks, not among Kurds.

A: Another view is that the actor currently in charge of the state in Turkey aims to bring the Kurdish issue back to what it was around the 1980s. Some say they want to erase the Kurdish political movement completely. They want to bring back the perception that Kurdish politics equals the PKK. They want to make the issue back into a matter of security, and security alone. Is this how you see it, or does the mind that runs the state have a different aim?

B: I suspect there is no mind that runs the state really. I mean, one of the most frightening phenomena in Turkey is that there is no more state mind. The state has completely lost its institutions, and turned into a “rogue landmine,” so to speak. The period after 2013 clearly showcases this. Even

more, the period after 2015, when we see that those heading the state had engaged in serious crisis engineering, and this crisis-system engineering took upon the task of establishing a certain pragmatic line. But this pragmatism would last for two, three months. Then it would need a new period of crisis.

If we can talk about a state in Turkey right now, I absolutely do not believe that those running the state have any rational strategy or mind. There is the strategy of a rogue landmine. And I do not know how long it can go on.

Other than that, what you say is right in this sense: Erdoğan’s narrative, the pro-AKP media’s narrative, the nationalist media’s narrative, the Ergenekon and its extensions in this form or that, all believe that there is no Kurdish issue in Turkey. They openly state that the Kurdish issue, or rather the issue they do not see as the Kurdish issue, is merely a problem of terrorism, a problem of terrorism that has its roots abroad, and has no other aspect than the security issue.

Turkey in the 2000’s is not the same as Turkey in 2007, or the 1980’s. It is impossible to answer these questions. We could be facing much more intense politics of violence tomorrow – both in the country and abroad. One must be prepared for all these, but right now, the way the sovereign powers – let’s not even talk about the state - read the problem in Turkey is a completely security-based reading.

Even beyond security-based, it is a social Darwinist reading. Social Darwinism has a reading of history that sees societies as biological species separate from each other. And in this reading, oftentimes Kurdishness is perceived as a phenomenon that threatens Turkishness almost biologically. The same thing was at the foundation of the Armenian genocide.

In Turkey’s current reading of Rojava (the Kurdish-led autonomous regions in northern Syria) this comes out very clearly. Let’s say for instance we look at this “east of the Euphrates” business. The taboo of “east of the Euphrates” comes up in the reports by Randall in 1925 as well ... Such themes are re-emerging almost a century later. As such, one must be prepared for terrible days, but at the same time, the 1980s are not destiny.

A: We are talking about politics determined by however many different actors, especially regarding Kurdish politics. I mean, who exactly is governing Turkey right now?

B: It is also not possible to answer that, because in Turkey there is this phenomenon of absolute cartelisation. This cartelisation phenomenon was analysed by our esteemed colleague Umit Cizre in the 1990s.

The Susurluk phenomenon (in which a lethal car crash exposed links between state officials and organised crime) was the most lucid example of this cartelisation. And now, there is this intense counter-cartelisation taking place. Because on one hand there is the AKP, which emerges as a radical nationalist Islamist movement. On the other hand, I believe that we are seeing a serious level of paramilitarisation in Turkey, the paramilitarisation of the state.

There are phenomena such as police and gendarmerie paramilitary groups and (the private defence consultancy) SADAT. These show that it is no longer the one army that is loyal to the centre and the chain of command structure. There are numerous paramilitary forces. Among these forces, everybody knows this, are the (ultranationalist) Grey Wolves. There is probably a national socialist tendency that presents itself as nationalist. As such, it is very, very difficult to answer in its entirety the question of who governs the state.

Erdoğan says he does. This is true in a sense. It is true in a sense, because in Turkey there is this führerpraktik like in 1930s Germany, as in what the leader rejects does not get accepted. But at the same time, going hand in hand with this praktik, is the phenomenon of pluralisation of state mechanisms or powers that have the capacity to use force. It probably won’t be possible to keep these under control in the future.

A: So, can this strange alliance be sustainable?

B: This alliance is currently sustainable. The base reason for this, the primary reason is of course radical nationalism. A radical nationalism that extends into social Darwinism. That is why Eurasianists can easily act together with the (far-right) Nationalist Movement Party. Tomorrow maybe Good Party forces could join that somehow.

I think Islamists who yearn for an Ottoman nostalgia can come together on the basis of radical nationalism. This radical nationalism is enough to perpetuate this coalition, in one way or the other, for now.

The second factor is the grand phenomenon of profiteering. Susurluk showed how big this profiteering phenomenon had become. Profiteering through war in the 1990s was

calculated as reaching tens of millions. Right now there is the profiteering phenomenon again, and everybody in one capacity or the other can get a share of it.

This profiteering is both economic and symbolic at the same time. Looking at how the Sancak family entered the weapons industry, or how SADAT developed, these are interesting in that they show how important this profiteering is. This nationalist-radical nationalist basis, and this profiteering phenomenon is very probably enough to sustain this coalition for now.

A: So, right now are we completely stuck? We are talking about a self-sustaining coalition. At the same time, looking at the opposition side, the balance there will not change as can be seen. And in the end, there is the Kurdish movement that is trying to keep its gains. What could change the balance?

B: It is not possible to answer that right now. I mean, we cannot know what will happen in the future. Research into Turkey's society is extremely limited. The population in Turkey has been completely stupefied, especially after 2013. This phenomenon of stupefaction I believe turns up in certain radical authoritarian antidemocratic regimes as well. The removal of cognitive, mental capacity.

In 2013, people who criticised (Islamist preacher) Fethullah Gülen would go to prison. Today all the relations a la Fethullah are out in the open. People who sided with Russia in 2015 would be thought of as traitors. Today the nature of the relationship with Russia is clear.

With that said, it is not possible to make a prediction for what the social reaction will be tomorrow, or how young people will react, or where the search for a new path leads. But the picture in 2019 and 2020 is dark. Because the governing coalition is set to continue, because the opposition is nowhere to be seen. There is the Kurdish movement, which cannot carry Turkey through. The Kurdish movement can in fact carry Kurdistan, and the conception, resistance and awareness of Kurdishness. But there is no Kurdish movement to also carry Turkey on its back.

A: So, do you agree with the view of some in the CHP and HDP bases who say the CHP has not changed its Kurdish policies that much, but the parties' alliances in various elections has created links between the young voter bases of both parties?

B: The Istanbul elections have shown this to be true in practice. But this sentiment expressed only through elections does not produce results. Looking at Turkey just now, you'd think that you were looking into a country where the Istanbul elections did not happen. Because the opposition outright refuses to come out as the opposition.

I want to return to Kılıçdaroglu's Afrin comments. Kılıçdaroglu does not see or know that Afrin has turned into a "Jihadistan" and that there is an ongoing ethnic cleansing in Kurdistan. So he can say "there are beautiful things happening in Afrin."

I cannot fathom how this would speak to the Kurdish movement. Even if Kurds do vote

for the CHP in elections in the future, this can only emerge as a tactical approach or an approach borne out of a lack of alternatives. It does not create an alternative for who will be in government.

A: Right, my last question: Do we have any reason to be optimistic? Especially for the near future?

B: For optimism, there is the phenomenon of history. In many countries, when the night was darkest some alternatives were able to emerge. We know this from the history of authoritarian states and systems, from totalitarian states. We can only read into the future from the horizon of 2020 now.

For this reason, research into Turkey's population must increase. Efforts for young people and their sensibilities must increase. For instance, let's say Algeria. Since the 1990s it had been experiencing dark times. Most probably the Algerian revolution will not succeed. But still, it created this year-long experience of struggle. We saw this in the Sudan too, as well as other places. For that reason, what the future promises us cannot be seen right now.

It is for sure that the AKP, Erdoğanism and the Erdoganist coalition have taken the whole of Turkish society captive. This nationalism phenomenon is of the utmost importance. It can be used as a profiteering mechanism with ease. But how social dynamics will change tomorrow, that is not possible to see from now.



By Adam Lucente
29 November 2019

ISIS Families Escaping al-Hol Camp as Kurdish-Turkish War Rages On

AL-HOL, Syria – Chain-link fence surrounds the al-Hol camp for ISIS-affiliated families in eastern Syria. The camp is a sprawling tent city with a population much bigger than the eponymous town next to it. It houses families of ISIS fighters in sections for Syrian, Iraqi and foreign citizens, as well as displaced people who were living in ISIS territory.

When Turkey invaded northeast

Syria last month, Kurdish-led forces guarding al-Hol reduced their presence there to head to the border and fight. Since then, neither the forces nor the fence can keep the ISIS families inside, according to a Kurdish official responsible for the foreign section of the camp.

"We can't control them," Elul Rizgar told InsideOver. "The fence around the camp is weak." Some ISIS families are escaping

al-Hol in the chaos that followed Turkey's invasion of northeast Syria, including foreigners who still cling to ISIS ideology.

The Al-Hol camp is in the Hasakah province in a desert area near the Iraqi border. The latest UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for October puts the population at 68,744 people. Some healthcare providers stopped operations in the camp due to the conflict be-

tween the SDF and Turkey, but food, water and winter preparation services are continuing, according to the report. In previous months, the camp suffered from contaminated water, dirty bathroom facilities and other poor living conditions.

The residents are divided into Syrian, Iraqi and foreign sections, in part to keep the different nationalities from fighting each other. The majority of the resi-

dents are women and children, but some men live in the Iraqi and Syrian sections. Male ISIS fighters are in prisons elsewhere in northeast Syria. Soldiers in the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) who are both Kurds and Arabs staff the camp's security centres and the checkpoints leading up to it.

In October, Turkey began its long-planned military operation against the Kurdish-led and US-backed SDF that controls most of northeast Syria after defeating ISIS there. Turkey considers the Peoples' Protection Units (YPG) – a Kurdish group that leads the multi-ethnic SDF – to be the

Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militant group in Turkey. Turkey plans a "safe zone" penetrating Syrian territory where it seeks to remove the YPG and also resettle Syrian refugees currently in Turkey, which Kurds say is an attempt at ethnic cleansing.

Turkey, along with its Syrian rebel allies, attacked the SDF after the US announced it would remove its troops from Syria, where they were supporting the SDF against ISIS remnants. The US later sent troops back to Syria.

'Security situation getting worse'

Faced with fighting a NATO army and receiving unclear support from the US and the Syrian army, SDF and Kurdish Asayesh security forces reduced their presence around al-Hol following the Turkish attack. There were 400 SDF and Asayesh members near al-Hol before the war with Turkey, but now there are only 300, according to Rizgar.

"The security situation has been getting worse since the Turkish invasion," said Rizgar, sitting in her office near the camp entrance. "The residents have been burning tents and killing each other."

The weak fencing around the camp is allowing residents to escape, according to Rizgar. "They can cut it and go through," she



said. The escapees make use of the largely barren desert area around al-Hol, and are also assisted by ISIS sleeper cells in the area.

"They escape through smugglers and ISIS sleeper cells outside the camp," said Rizgar. "They walk, then they go by car." Numbers on the total number of escapees since the conflict with Turkey vary, but some foreigners have escaped, raising the risk that they'll return to their home countries and carry out attacks. Mahmoud Kro, a Kurdish official in the camps department in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, which is the autonomous government in SDF territory, said that 120 individuals have escaped al-Hol since the Turkish invasion. "120 people escaped – Syrians, Iraqis and foreigners," Kro, in Hasakah, told InsideOver via WhatsApp. "Around 40 foreigners of different nationalities."

A similar number of people tried to escape but were arrested, according to Kro. In late October, the pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that German, Turkish and Uzbek ISIS families tried to escape al-Hol, but were

arrested. There have been other successful escape attempts since the war with Turkey broke out, according to the SOHR. Rizgar said that 120 families escaped in the same timeframe, but were arrested in the Hasakah province and returned to the camp. She said others escaped successfully, but that she is unsure of how many total individuals.

Regarding ISIS fighters in Kurdish prisons in Syria, US envoy to Syria James Jeffrey said that more than 100 have escaped since the US withdrawal announcement and Turkey-SDF war.

US President Donald Trump as well as Syrian Kurdish leaders have repeatedly asked European countries to take back their citizens from Syria who are accused of joining ISIS. Few have returned so far, though. Some countries, like Austria, Denmark and Albania have taken back some children of alleged ISIS members, according to the UN report. The UK also took back some children in November. "Infidels have to have their heads cut"

Two SDF guards watch the

fence allowing access to the foreign section of al-Hol, where residents of Pakistani, Russian, Tajik, Dutch and various other nationalities live. There is a small market staffed by Russian women near the entrance. Most of the women wear the black full-body cover that ISIS demands, but some now show their faces. Many ask for their picture not to be taken.

The level of Arabic-language knowledge varies among the foreign residents. Some barely speak it, while others can converse in standard Arabic, which is derived from the classical Arabic used in the Quran. The children here dress as Syrian youth do. Their future is unclear as the offspring of parents whose countries largely do not want them back.

Many of their mothers still share ISIS' extremist ideology. Aysha Mohammed Amin came from "Turkistan" – the name some Chinese Uighur Muslims use to refer to their homeland– to Syria in 2014 to join ISIS with her husband. She is the mother of two children and arrived in the camp in February from Baghouz – ISIS' last Syrian stronghold.

Amin said that life under ISIS was “free” from the repression she faced in China.

“The Islamic State gave us freedom for the hijab and to educate our children in a good way, thank Allah,” she told InsideOver in Arabic. “The hijab was forbidden in Turkistan...and we couldn’t read the Quran there.” Muslims in China face considerable repression, and more than a million are currently in internment camps.

Amin’s beliefs go far beyond wearing Islamic clothing and reading the Muslim holy book, however. She said she agreed with ISIS’ brutal punishment of people they deemed to be non-believers. “If they are infidels, they have to have their heads cut,” she said when asked if she witnessed anything bad in ISIS territory.

Many of the women maintain that life under ISIS was good, raising the risk that escapees



will continue ISIS activity once they are out. Shugufta Parawir moved from her native Pakistan to ISIS territory in Syria in 2016 to follow her husband. In February, she came to al-Hol by way of Baghouz.

“Women had more respect and had to cover,” she told InsideOver in English on life under ISIS. “In our country, women go out uncovered and exposed.” “Women should only expose themselves to their husbands.”

Adding to Kurdish officials’ fears, some residents have a lukewarm view of Turkey. Um Zahra, from the desert Anbar province in Iraq, said she fears both Turkey and the Syrian government taking control of the camp, but that the former would be better. “We fear them both, but Turkey would be better than the (Syrian) regime because the regime would kill us,” she told InsideOver.

In the town of al-Hol next door,

some residents fear the glutton of ISIS members so close by. “They’re all ISIS,” Mohammed Qasim, a barber on the town’s main street, told InsideOver. “The camp scares us.” ‘A danger to the whole world’

Kurdish commanders repeatedly said they may need to abandon al-Hol if a war with Turkey came to fruition. Now that they are fighting Turkey, the top SDF commander Mazloum Kobani said that fighting ISIS is a “second priority.” But officials in al-Hol say they are committed to staying and guarding the ISIS-affiliated families as best they can. Rizgar said the families continue indoctrinating children, and that if they aren’t in al-Hol, will carry out attacks elsewhere. “Here there is also terrorism,” said Rizgar on why they continue protecting the camp. “They hit us here or there.” “They’re a danger not just to us, but to the whole world, especially Europe.”