



General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 May 2022

English only

Human Rights Council

Fiftieth session

13 June–8 July 2022

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples, a non- governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[19 May 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Turkey's disinformation about its war against Kurdish people benefits from international silence

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan keeps rallying nationalist support against the Kurdish people hoping to divert people's attention from the socio-economic problems facing the country.

President Erdoğan's propaganda about securing the borders and fighting terrorism has no other objective than the neutralisation of the Kurds.

Crimes against humanity and war crimes have since become part of the everyday life of the Kurdish people. If the UN, European Union and the NATO continue to turn a blind eye to Erdoğan's aggression, we will see increased bloodshed, displacement, and instability throughout the Kurdish area (Turkey – the Syrian Arab Republic - Iraq) and the Middle East.

ISOLATE THE KURDS

The anti-Kurds policy is materialized by the establishment of more Turkish military bases in Iraqi Kurdistan and by the construction of high and wide walls dividing Kurdish population living in Turkey from those living in the Syrian Arab Republic or Iran (Islamic Republic of).

Turkey builds a wall over 150 kilometres on the border with the Islamic Republic of Iran. A total of 240 kilometres are planned. Out of the 911 km Syrian-Turkish border 828 km of a wall of three meters high and two meters wide has been built.

Due to pressure from Turkey, the Iraqi central government and the Kurdish regional government signed an agreement on 9 October 2021, providing for the disarmament of the Yezidis, who were able to defend themselves after the ISIS genocide in August 2014 with the support of the Kurdish fighters from Rojava/North and East of the Syrian Arab Republic, while neither the government in Baghdad nor the one in Erbil were able to save the Yezidis from ISIS. Following the agreement the Iraqi government started to build the 250 kilometres long wall between Sinjar and Rojava.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN TURKEY

The European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, (PACE) and the Human Rights Association (IHD), as well as other international NGOs have already denounced the severe repression exerted by the Turkish authorities not only against the opponents in Turkey, but especially against the Kurds in Turkey and also beyond its borders.

Democratically elected people are dismissed and power is transferred to paramilitary forces. Elected Kurdish mayors belonging to the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) have been arrested, stripped of office and replaced by government trustees.

The Statement by the Foreign Affairs Spokespersons of the HDP states: "Turkey's prisons continue to be centers of ill-treatment and torture. According to the statement made by İHD on 29 April 2022, there are 1517 ill prisoners, 651 of whom are seriously ill. Unfortunately, the number of people dying in prison is continuing to increase day by day". (1)

The aim of the strategy of persecution, arrests, torture and discrimination is clearly to target the people who demand democracy and freedoms. Through the policy of oppression, all those who oppose the racist, sexist, patriarchal government of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP-MHP) are to be homogenised and assimilated into their ideological vision of "one nation, one flag, one language".

TOTAL CENTRALISATION OF POWER

On 9 July 2018 the Turkish state system turned to a centralised presidential system under its President Tayyip Erdoğan control.

The parliament has lost most of its power, the judiciary is politicised and institutions are mostly functionless. Separation of powers is undermined. The economy is ruined because most of the state budget money is invested in militarism for the purpose of expansionist policy and the economy is ruined. President Erdoğan achieved to get the unlimited and uncontrolled power and his authoritarian practices prevails.

This ramping up of aggression on all fronts has been interpreted as part of Erdoğan's campaign for the crucial general and presidential elections that must take place by June 2023 which coincides with the 100 years' anniversary of the modern Turkish state.

THE WAR AGAINST KURDISH PEOPLE GOES BEYOND TURKISH BORDERS

In recent times, continuously and systematically, Turkey has been invading, and effectively colonising, large Kurdish inhabited areas of its sovereign neighbouring states Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic

President Erdoğan's main goal and ideological conviction is to destabilise the region, occupy Kurdistan and carry out a genocide against the Kurdish people. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the new attacks aim to occupy South Kurdistan as a whole – including the oil-rich regions of Mosul and Kirkuk.

On 17 April 2022, the Turkish state started a new comprehensive attack on the Kurdish people and their self-defence guerrilla forces (HPG) in South Kurdistan (North Iraq). The heavy air raids, artillery bombardments and ground attacks have so far focused on the regions of Zap, Metîna and Avaşîn. Hundreds of war planes, armed drones and helicopters and thousands of Turkish soldiers are reported to be involved in the operation. Latest reports state that heavy air raid, artillery shelling and movement of Turkish ground troops continue in the area.

In 2021 already, the Turkish army attacked these regions for months while resorting to the use of chemical weapons over 300 times. This resulted in emptying dozens of border villages, burning thousands of hectares of forest, and destroying thousands of trees.

TURKEY VIOLATES IRAQI SOVEREIGNTY

Turkey invokes the right of self-defence, as recognised in Article 51 of the UN Charter, 'to counter' an 'imminent terrorist threat'. Under international law, the right to self-defence exists if an armed attack against another State occurs. Turkey is committing gross violations of international law without any legal basis and without the consent of the Iraqi authorities, as stressed by the Iraqi Foreign Affairs Ministry, who underlined that Turkey cannot invoke a UN Charter article for self-defence without Iraqi approval.

On 20 April, the Iraqi Foreign Affairs Ministry stated that: "The Foreign Minister presented the file of the presence of the PKK since 1984 and confirmed that what is rumoured about the existence of an agreement allowing Turkey to penetrate northern Iraq is incorrect. There are only minutes of a meeting between Baghdad and Ankara before 2003 allowing the latter to penetrate to a depth of 5 km only, and for limited days, in coordination with the Iraqi government". (2)

The Turkish military operations have taken a great toll on the civilian population of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and the ecology of the area. The Community Peacemaker Teams (CPT), formerly known as The Christian Peacemaker Teams, has extensively documented all Turkish military incursions into the territories of KRI. The 14 June 2021 report concluded "while Turkey claims to target the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), in Operation Claw-Lightning, the reality is that civilians living in the border regions are most critically impacted by Turkey's bombings." Furthermore the report continues: "As a result of the Military Operation Claw-Lighting, more than 1500 civilians fled their homes in Avashin and Kani Masi regions". (3)

NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC / ROJAVA

Previous Turkish invasions into the autonomous region of North and East Syria were carried out using jihadi mercenaries and followed by ethnic cleansing and “Turkification”.

President Erdoğan also wants to distract from his domestic failures by re-launching his crusade against Rojava /Autonomous Administration of North and East of the Syrian Arab Republic (AANES) and occupy all the remaining areas within the Syrian Arab Republic where Kurdish people live free, with their Arab, Armenian, Assyrian, Turkmen, and Circassian allies. There is a clear desire to occupy the entire region and to impose Turkish ruling not in only over Efrîn, Serê Kaniyê, and Girê Spî, but over the rest of North and East of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Turkish troops and their jihadi proxies are setting Kurdish villagers’ fields ablaze while ‘ethnic cleansing’ of Kurds in Afrin, Serê Kaniyê, and Girê Spî continues apace.

TURKISH THREATS AGAINST YAZIDIS

On 18 April 2022 a post held by the Yazidi Ezidkhan Asayish (local security forces of the Yazidi’s) in the Du Gure village of the Sinune sub district of the Shingal province was attacked by a force of the Iraqi army in line with attacks carried out by the Turkish occupation forces in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Turkey is regularly targeting the Sinjar region of the Yazidis. The return of Yazidi refugees has slowed to a halt amid fears of Turkish airstrikes. Since 2017, near 80 Yazidi people have been killed by Turkish airstrikes, 64 of them were from the Sinjar Resistance Units which is formally affiliated to the Popular Units, according to a high ranking military officer in YBS. (4)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The genocidal policy developed by President Erdoğan against the Kurdish people has to be stopped both on Turkish soil, where all the fundamental rights of the Kurdish people are denied, and in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq where the Turkish army acts in violation of the Principles of the UN Charter.

Recalling to every single State its responsibility to protect, the Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l’amitié entre les peuples calls upon the international community and in particular the Human Rights Council not to be fooled by the disinformation and propaganda of the Turkish authorities and to take all necessary measures to stop President Erdoğan’s well-documented genocidal policy against the Kurdish people.

(1) <https://hdp.org.tr/en/more-prisoners-lose-their-lives-in-turkeys-prisons/16362/>

(2) <https://ina.iq/eng/18954-mofa-denies-turkey-claiming-of-military-ops-coordination-with-iraq.html>

(3) <https://cpt.org/2021/09/05/iraqi-kurdistan-updates-turkish-military-operation-claw-lightning>

(4) <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/02/turkish-attacks-stop-displaced-iraqi-yazidis-returning-home#ixzz7TSG6FbR5>