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TURKEY: IN GREAT DIFFICULTY, THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO USE THE KURDS AS SCAPEGOATS

Turkey's economic situation continues to deteriorate, with inflation at 19.89% at the beginning of November, according to the statistical institute TÜİK (<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=The-Rates-of-Real-Profits-Created-by-Means-of-Financial-Investment-October-2021-37376&dil=2>) – a figure that observers and the opposition say is largely underestimated. The HDP again called for an increase in the minimum wage, while handing over a 514-page report on poverty and working conditions in the country to the Labour Ministry. On the 30th, the

Turkish lira collapsed to an all-time low of 13.47 to the dollar, after the Turkish president made further senseless statements opposing any interest rate hikes (CNBC). Since 2018, the Turkish currency has lost half its value. As for unemployment, it is (officially...) at 15%.

Despite this crisis, the growing rumours of an illness that would weaken him, and the polls that credit his party, the AKP, with only 30% of voting intentions for the 2023 elections, the Turkish president maintains his line. The economic crisis is the fault of “dark forces that want to weaken the

country”. At home, he is trying to maintain the image of a leader who stands up to the West, a way of flattering his MHP allies – without hesitating to back down if the consequences appear too serious. Thus the ten Western ambassadors declared “*personae non gratae*” last month were not expelled in the end... (*Le Figaro*)

The government also continues to use scapegoats to divert attention from its own responsibilities. Syrian refugees, blamed for the economic crisis, are accused of stealing labour from Turkish citizens and living in luxury at their expense. After an altercation in

Istanbul during which a resident complained that he could no longer afford bananas, while “Syrians buy kilos of them”, young refugees posted videos on social networks ridiculing these accusations: they showed themselves eating bananas while laughing. Calling the videos “provocative”, the government decided to expel 11 of them from Turkey. The HDP, one of the only parties to defend them, denounced the decision in a statement on 2 February: *“Both the government and some opposition parties are complicit in the propaganda, which makes migrants look like the cause of the economic and social crisis. False propaganda against migrants who were employed in conditions of slavery, whose labor was exploited, who did not even have life guarantees, paves the way for new lynching attacks”.*

The government is trying to muzzle all dissenting voices. Complaining about the economic situation on social networks can now lead to prison... Journalists are particularly targeted, but also members of the academic community, whether students or teachers. *Le Monde* gives the example of Can Candan, a documentary filmmaker and teacher at Boğaziçi University for 14 years, who on 11 October was refused entry to the campus by order of the rector appointed by Mr Erdoğan. Candan had been fired on July 16 for “insulting his superiors and the university administration by sharing content aimed at causing personal humiliation”. In fact, he was accused of posting content denouncing the government’s takeover of the university. Candan continued to visit the campus until he was prevented from doing so. The university, where 6,000 students have been expelled by simple decree and the LGBT club closed, continues to struggle. Every week, about 100 teachers gather under the rector’s windows with their backs turned in protest,

and students run a *YouTube* channel. On 4 November, the rector decided to close the university’s publishing house: better to prevent any academic publication than to allow critical content to be published...

The other scapegoats of the government remain the Kurds. Although the Kurdish language is no longer officially banned in Turkey, it is de facto banned because the authorities use all possible means to prevent its teaching and use. Similarly, the “K-word”, “Kurdistan”, remains banned and dangerous to pronounce. At the end of October, a shopkeeper from Siirt, Cemil Taşkesen, had dared to declare to the candidate of the far-right İYİ party Meral Aksener: “This place where you are standing is Kurdistan”. He had been arrested on 29 October. He was finally released after protests and a campaign of support from many pro-Kurdish organisations, including the HDP, on social media. On the 6th, a researcher from Elazığ University, Hifzullah Kutum, was arrested after being suspended by his university for a *Tweeter* post containing the word “Kurdistan”. His post wished a happy birthday to the “September Revolution” (in Iraqi Kurdistan), accompanied by a picture of Mustafa Barzani and ended with “Biji Kurdistan” (Long live Kurdistan). When asked about this message, Kutum replied that the word “Kurdistan” and the flag in the tweet were used officially in relations between Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government (SCF - *Stockholm Center for Freedom*). The question of the use of the word “Kurdistan” in Turkey to refer to neighbouring Iraqi Kurdistan, with which Turkey has official relations, was also raised when Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar denied its existence in an exchange in parliament on the 17th. He had, however, visited the country in January...

On the 25th, another Kurdish shop-

keeper, Hacı Tunc, was arrested for using the “K-word”, this time in Van (*Kurdistan-24*).

The recurrence of these imprisonments led one of Van’s deputies, Murat Sarısaç, to formally put several parliamentary questions to the Turkish Vice-President, Fuat Oktay, on the 16th: *“Is it illegal to use the term ‘Kurdistan’ to refer to a geographical, cultural and historical area where the Kurds have been living for millennia? If so, what is the reason for this ban?”* Ironically, back in 2019, the *Bianet* website had posted a page entitled *“Who can or cannot say ‘Kurdistan’ in Turkey: a guide”*

(<https://bianet.org/english/freedom-of-expression/210526-who-can-and-cannot-say-kurdistan-in-turkey-a-guide>). It recalled that some AKP leaders had used the word without consequence during their meetings...

The Kurdish language also continues to be discriminated against. On the 16th, singer Mem Ararat reported that one of his concerts, scheduled for 4 December at the Neşet Ertaş Cultural Centre in Ankara, had been cancelled by the authorities, even though most tickets had already been sold, because it contained songs in Kurdish. The municipality replied that the cancellation was due to false information on the declaration of the show, namely a different name, Mehmet Esen. However, this was the singer’s real name, Mem Ararat being his stage name... (SCF) The situation seems not to have changed much since 1999, when the singer Ahmed Kaya had to go into exile in France after announcing that a song on his future album would be sung in Kurdish. Is this a coincidence? The grave of Kaya, who died in France in 2000 and is buried in the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, was desecrated on 13 November... (*Le Figaro*). Many elected officials, including the mayor of Paris, Mrs. Hidalgo, her

deputies, Senator Rémi Féraud, and personalities from civil society condemned this desecration. On 16 November, the anniversary of his death, at the call of the Kurdish Institute, a large crowd gathered at his grave in the presence of his family.

In addition, arrests and convictions of HDP members continued. Earlier this month, the two former HDP co-chairs in Batman, Fatma Ablay and Ömer Kulpu, accused of PKK links, were sentenced to 20 months in prison for “propaganda for a terrorist organisation” and using an “illegal banner”. On the 7th, a mob attacked the HDP building in Kayapınar (Diyarbakir) with Molotov cocktails, without causing any casualties. The HDP building is located near a police station, but the nearby surveillance cameras were damaged after the attack... (WKI)

In Diyarbakir, the co-chairman of the Kurdish solidarity association MEBYA-DER, Şeyhmus Karadağ, was sentenced to six years and three months in prison for his press conferences. On the 8th, also in Diyarbakir, 14 people were arrested in early morning police raids, including 4 trade unionists, in education (*Eğitim Sen*), health (*SES*), civil service (*Tümbel Sen*) and engineering (*TMMOB*). Not surprisingly, these are the unions most active in opposing the authoritarianism of the government. The previous week they had been referred to a disciplinary committee and were facing suspension without pay. Among the charges: having participated in demonstrations; having Kurdish newspapers or music on their computers (*Union syndicale Solidaires*).

As a particularly scandalous example of the AKP’s instrumentalization of the judiciary, on the 16th, Başak Demirtaş, the wife of imprisoned Kurdish leader Selahattin Demirtaş, was sentenced in Diyarbakir to 30 months’ imprisonment, along with her doctor, for “presenting a falsified medical report”. In fact, it was a typo on the date of a medical leave document, dated 14 instead of 11 December 2014! According to the defence, which plans to appeal, the court had initially decided that the hospital’s register showing the dates Başak Demirtaş had visited it should be examined. This would have immediately proved the error. But the court preferred to pass sentence without examining it... (*Kedistan*) At the same time, the HDP submitted its preliminary defence in the closure investigation against it. The General Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation must respond within one month. The HDP will then have another month to file its main defence. Meanwhile, lawyers and some defendants boycotted the sixth session of the “Kobanê trial” for 106 defendants. The judge ordered the filing of a criminal complaint against the lawyers (WKI).

On the 17th, police special forces arrested in morning raids 27 people in Cizir and Silopi (Şırnak) and issued warrants for 6 others they could not find. The reason for the arrests was not given. During the raid, police officers abused two minors (*RojInfo*). The following week in Izmir, two participants in anti-ISIS demonstrations were sentenced to 10 months in prison and a third to 6 months, all for “propa-

ganda for” and “belonging to a terrorist organisation”. On the 26th, police arrested six HDP members in Istanbul and 17 people in Adana for social media posts criticising the government. In Batman, police raided the home of a journalist, terrorising her family with their weapons and insulting the children. In Ankara, 17 people were arrested for protesting against the economic situation. Finally, former HDP MP Leyla Guven, already sentenced to 22 years and 6 months in prison, received an additional 5 years for “propaganda for a terrorist organisation”: in a speech in February 2020, she had endorsed Abdullah Öcalan’s calls for peace (WKI).

Finally, the Turkish authorities continue their policy of isolating prisoners. The best known case is that of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, for whom his lawyers have made hundreds of requests for visits without result, the last one having been refused at the end of November. The last contact with the outside world for Öcalan, who has been in solitary confinement for years, was a brief telephone conversation with his brother, Mehmet, in March 2021 (WKI). But Öcalan is not the only one to suffer from this policy. Earlier this month, Selahattin Demirtaş in a tweet protested the restrictions put in place under the pretext of the pandemic: “*The Justice Ministry is working to turn these restrictions into a permanent usurpation of rights, turning the crisis into an opportunity [to isolate detainees]*”. Başak Demirtaş had already indicated on Fox TV in early October that she had not been able to visit her husband in prison for 19 months.

IRAQ: FAILED DRONE ATTACK ON PRIME MINISTER, STUDENT PROTESTS IN KURDISTAN

On the morning of 7 November, an attack using three armed drones targeted the residence of Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi in Baghdad's high-security "Green Zone", where official buildings and foreign embassies are located. Kadhimi escaped unharmed from the assassination attempt, while seven of his guards were injured (AP).

The attack was not immediately claimed, but the pro-Iranian militias of the *Hashd al-Shaabi* ("Popular mobilisation") were clearly singled out. While in the 2018 elections they had benefited from their participation in the victory over ISIS, in October they were sanctioned for their responsibility in the repression of the 2019 protests. For weeks, denouncing imaginary fraud, they had been rejecting the preliminary results that made them lose two-thirds of their seats in parliament. They encamped themselves at one of the entrances to the Green Zone and repeatedly tried to force their way in. On the 5th, one such attempt escalated when security forces used tear gas and live ammunition, killing one militiaman in the ensuing exchange of fire. On the 8th, two security officials told *Reuters* on condition of anonymity that the *Kataib Hezbollah* and *Asaib Ahl al-Haq* groups had carried out the attack in tandem.

In any case, this serious escalation exposes Iraq to a real risk of an intra-Shiite civil war... Kadhimi quickly appeared on television to call for calm, but it was still necessary to wait until the 30th for the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to announce the final results after a recount.

These confirmed the victory of the Shiite leader Moqtada Sadr with 73 seats. Despite corrections giving it back some seats, the "Reconquest Alliance", the political wing of the *Hashd al-Shaabi*, remains the big loser, dropping from 48 to 17 seats. Unsurprisingly, it rejected the results and declared its intention to have them annulled. In Kurdistan, the KDP lost 2 of the 33 seats previously announced. A senior KDP official, Hushyar Zêbarî, former Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, denounced a "political manipulation".

These results must be ratified by the Federal Court so that the new parliament can hold its inaugural session and elect the President of the Republic, while the – expectably quite long – negotiations to form the future government will begin...

In the territories disputed between Kurds and Arabs, the terrorist organisation ISIS continues to take advantage of the security vacuum between Iraqi and Kurdish lines and is increasing its attacks in a worrying way. Moreover, their general situation remains poor. The collapse of basic services has provoked numerous demonstrations, such as in Kirkuk where waste is accumulating due to a lack of budget, with 500 tons not being collected out of the 700 tons produced daily... The third week of the month saw demonstrations from all sides: graduate students demanding jobs, shop owners protesting against a new tax, citizens protesting against the unfair distribution of provincial projects, wounded police officers demanding the allocation of land as for active officers... The security situation is so bad that after 10 years of

work finally completed, Kirkuk "international" airport could not open, no company except *Iraqi Airways* wanting to land there! Moreover, corruption is rampant. On the 22nd, the brother of the interim governor Rakan Al-Jabouri was sentenced to 9 months in prison, as were three other defendants, all appointed to their posts by Al-Jabouri, who is himself the target of several investigations for corruption... (WKI)

This same Al-Jabouri is still conspicuous by his support for the return of the anti-Kurdish policy of the Saddam Hussein era. On 1^{er} November, when the Kurdish schools in Kirkuk opened for the new school year with the Kurdish flag raised and the Kurdish anthem played, the director of the Provincial Education Department, Ali Tuma, launched an investigation into the principal of one of the schools. The following night, Iraqi Security units raided his home, which he had already left for the Kurdistan Region On the 4th, several Arab Iraqis tried unsuccessfully to occupy land belonging to Kurdish farmers near Sargaran (Kirkuk) with the support of a military unit, that the Kurdish farmers were able to prevent from entering their village. In Daquq, Iraqi soldiers raided the home of a known Kurdish activist. On the 22nd, an Iraqi military unit raided a Kurdish village where it checked the farmers' title deeds, telling them that their land was registered in the name of Arab tribal leaders...

ISIS attacks are too numerous to report. In Kirkuk, they resumed at the end of October after a few weeks of relative calm, with an attack on a peshmerga base near Makhmour that left two dead. On

1st October, the jihadists kidnapped two civilians, and on 3 October, a new attack in the same area targeted both Peshmerga and Iraqi soldiers, without causing any casualties, while in Daquq, mortar fire killed two soldiers and wounded several civilians. In the west of the province, snipers shot dead four coal miners. Kurdish officials keep denouncing the failure of the federal government to coordinate joint security operations in the region. In Kirkuk, the Turkish-backed Turkmen Front and Sunni Arab lawmakers rejected at a press conference Al-Kadhimi's orders to transfer a division of peshmerga to the Iraqi Ministry of Defence, which should allow joint operations...

Other attacks took place the following week, notably in Makhmur, while the Peshmerga Ministry announced that it had finally been able to carry out a joint operation with Iraqi forces near Nineveh. On the 12th, mortar fire hit Daquq, where pro-ISIS graffiti was found in two Kurdish neighbourhoods, prompting a security raid. Some residents suspected a provocation to increase tensions... On the 22nd, a ISIS drone was discovered in Kirkuk during a search in the Ryad district. On the 28th, five peshmerga were killed in Germyan when their vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device, and five others were injured in clashes. Other clashes occurred in Khanaqin, where one Iraqi soldier was killed on the 4th and four jihadists on the 12th, in Tuz Khurmatu, where two fishermen were shot by snipers on the 8th, and where a tunnel was destroyed from the air by an Iraqi F-16 on the 25th...

In Makhmur, on the 13th, a French commander of the International Coalition led a meeting between Peshmerga and Iraqis on (finally)

security cooperation. On the 25th, the Iraqi-Kurdish Joint Command announced the seizure of four *Katyusha* rockets ready to be launched on the centre of Makhmur.

Adding to the general tension, Turkey continued its operations on Iraqi territory. On the 23rd, the Peshmerga Ministry reacted by denouncing a recent statement by the Turkish Defence Minister, Hulusi Akar, according to which "there is no Kurdistan of Iraq". Indeed, questioned in the Turkish Parliament on the 17th by an HDP MP on the use of chemical weapons by the Turkish army in Iraqi Kurdistan, Akar, unhappy that she had used the word "Kurdistan", had cut her off and declared: "I have to say one thing, [...] there is no Kurdistan, neither in Turkey nor anywhere else". When HDP MP Garo Paylan asked him if there was no Iraqi Kurdistan, Akar replied "No" (*Duvar*). The Peshmerga Minister, recalling that his Turkish counterpart had visited Erbil in January and had met several political leaders there, asked ironically: "Can he tell us where he came and what the name was?" Meanwhile, in Kirkuk, Arshad Salih, a Turkish-backed Turkmen Front politician, said that Kirkuk was Atatürk's "heritage" to the Turkmen population, raising the ire of the city's Kurdish population...

In Erbil, the Presidency of the Kurdistan Parliament led a meeting on the 3rd with the leaders of the 12 parties represented in the assembly. The aim was to discuss the Parliament's electoral law and the drafting of a new constitution for the Region. Iraqi Kurdistan is currently using a draft constitution adopted in 2009, but since then political disputes have prevented any progress. After each party representative gave his or her views

on the formation of the constitution drafting committee, the Speaker of Parliament asked them to submit it in writing. The new constitution could be approved by referendum. The organisation of the next parliamentary elections in Kurdistan was also discussed, including the updating of the electoral lists and the organisation of the Kurdistan High Electoral Commission (*Kurdistan Parliament*).

On the 23rd, for the third consecutive day, more than 5,000 students demonstrated in Suleimaniyeh in front of their university to demand the reinstatement of their stipends (monthly assistance of US\$40-66), which have been suspended since the 2014 financial crisis and never reinstated. One of the demonstrators said: "There are students among us who cannot go back home to the provinces because they do not have the money to travel, others do not have enough to eat three meals a day". To disperse the students, who were blocking the road to Kirkuk, the security forces, after warning shots with live ammunition, used tear gas, water cannons and electric batons (*AFP*). The violence of the dispersal, shown in videos posted on social networks, provoked reactions of indignation as far as the Iraqi President and the PUK. The next day, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) announced that it would allocate funds to the Ministry of Higher Education to improve the situation of the students.

But the issue of financial aid seems to be only one part of the problems of higher education in Kurdistan. According to the testimony of another student, it is only "what set the fire": "We demand [also] better services. We demand an end to political influence on university affairs. We demand a better education system" (*Rûdaw*).

ROJAVA: NEW TURKISH THREATS AND CHAOTIC SITUATION

The general situation in Syria remains chaotic, with constant clashes between the regime and the opposition and their respective supporters, Russia and Iran, or Turkey, especially in the Idlib “de-escalation zone”, as well as in Afrin. Throughout the month, Turkish artillery fire and bombardments on the territories of the Autonomous Administration of North-Eastern Syria (AANES) followed each other almost daily. As a sign of growing tension, all the protagonists have sent large reinforcements to the front lines this month.

Moreover, the resurgence of ISIS throughout the country is clearly seen. The Russian air force struck the jihadist organisation in the Syrian desert throughout the month, sometimes with up to 50 strikes in a single day: on 28 November, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) counted 560 strikes since the beginning of November, some in response to very deadly attacks. Finally, Israel again struck regime, Iranian or pro-Iranian militias positions (Lebanese Hezbollah...), as on the 3rd in the suburbs of Damascus.

On the health front, despite the regime’s disinformation, the SOHR estimated that 140,000 people were infected with COVID-19 from the 1st to the 5th alone, with 1,102 deaths, for a total of 5,500,000 infected people, of whom 5,120,000 recovered and 43,135 died. This is 16 times the official figure of 2,600. The saturation of hospitals is causing fears of an impending humanitarian catastrophe. After the Turkish parliament

voted on 26 October to authorise military operations in Syria and Iraq for two more years (a vote immediately denounced by Damascus), the Turkish media filled with threats of a new invasion of the Eastern Euphrates, causing fear among the inhabitants. Turkey increased the pressure from the beginning of November by deploying hundreds of additional fighters in its occupation zones and organising manoeuvres very close to the territories controlled by the AANES and its Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The latter, while denouncing provocations aimed at dragging them into a conflict, also reinforced their lines and deployed new weapons, notably near Tell Tamr (Hasakeh), a Christian town near the strategic M4 road that the occupiers and their mercenaries have been attacking for months. On the 5th, only a few hours after the passage of an American patrol, the Turks bombed two villages in the area, without causing any casualties. Further shelling followed on the 6th and 7th. On the 9th, a Turkish drone killed three members of the same family in their vehicle near Qamishli (VOA), including an 82-year-old man (AFP). In the afternoon, hundreds of residents demonstrated against the intensification of Turkish attacks.

Asked the same day by *Al-Monitor* about the risks of a new Turkish attack, SDF commander Mazlum Kobanê said that since the previous Turkish invasions, the geostrategic situation in Syria had changed. Two agreements now constrain Turkey: the Putin-Erdoğan agreement of Sochi, and the US-Turkey agreement of October 2019: “*In my opinion, unless Turkey gets approval from*

Russia or the US, Erdoğan cannot launch such an action. And as far as I know, there is no such approval”. He also said that he had received official US assurances: “*The US has said that it is opposed to any attack by Turkey against us and will not accept it*”. On the 11th, American soldiers were said to have visited Tell Tamr to possibly establish a base there... But it is worth noting that the Pentagon has also stated that cooperation with the SDF is “*exclusively*” about the fight against ISIS, and that the unpredictable Turkish president is adept at “*poker games*”...

Kobanê also pointed out that ISIS was taking advantage of the economic downturn and called on “*the international coalition and all counter-terrorism powers*” to immediately help AANES in this regard, again calling on the US to exempt AANES from the “*Caesar*” sanctions...

On the 15th, after ten days of precarious calm, Turkish artillery fire hit the Abu Rasin area (Hasakeh), without causing any casualties. On the 17th, strikes targeted several villages in Shirawa (Afrin) where regime forces had recently deployed to reinforce their frontline against the Turks. On the 20th, the Turks again targeted the M4 road east of Ain-Issa (SOHR), violating the ceasefire “*13 times in three days*” (WKI). A SDF infiltration operation was met with more artillery fire; one Turkish soldier was killed. On the 23rd, the SDF and the Syrian army hit a Turkish checkpoint near Azaz, cutting off the Azaz-Afrin road. On the 27th, a car bombing in Manbij killed three civilians and injured five, including two members of the *Asayish* (Kurdish Security) (AFP).

Besides, the Turkish *jandarma* guarding the border continue their exactions: two young men trying to enter Turkish Hatay from Idlib were shot dead on the 13th, a woman was severely beaten north of Hasakeh, a civilian killed with a broken neck on the 28th north of Hasakeh: since 2011, they have murdered 492 Syrian civilians, including 45 women and 90 minors... (SOHR)

Another, more low-noise, act of Turkish warfare is the withholding of water. The Dutch NGO *PAX for Peace* published a well-documented report on the 4th, combining field research and satellite images: since 22 May, the "Syrian National Army" (despite its name, a mercenary organisation of Ankara) has built three dams blocking the flow of the Khabur River towards the AANES region (<https://paxforpeace.nl/news/blogs/killing-the-khabur-how-turkish-backed-armed-groups-blocked-northeast-syrias-water-lifeline>). These dams deprive farmers of water at a time they need it the most. Increasing the impact of an already severe drought, they constitute for PAX a violation of international humanitarian law (AFP) and complete the water blockade exerted by the Turkish dams on the Euphrates, which have reduced its flow from 500 to 200 m³/s... Finally, the pro-Turkish jihadists stole on the 25th the electricity poles supplying the Allouk pumping station to bring electricity to their own settlements, thus causing a two-day blackout and leaving 500,000 people in Hasakeh and the surrounding area without water. The power supply to Allouk was restored on the 30th (SOHR).

These violations have hardly elicited any reaction from the international community. They are all the more serious as they impact a region already facing

COVID, deprived by Damascus of its vaccine quota, and lacking screening kits since the first week of the month...

In the Turkish-occupied areas, abuses continue, too numerous to report here. Arbitrary arrests are still used to obtain ransoms. On the 2nd, the military police in Raju (Afrin) prepared lists of about 100 civilians to be arrested in the village under various pretexts (SOHR). In the last two months, more than 300 people, including 25 women, have been abducted, and some of the victims tortured to death (*RojInfo*). For November, the "Afrin Activists Network" estimated the number of kidnappings at 71 and 3 deaths, one of them under torture... (WKI) The uprooting of olive trees also continues, as on 1st in Bulbul (65 trees). Olive crops are stolen; on the 12th, olives from over 1,000 trees were looted in Batran (Afrin). According to the SOHR, by October, pro-Turkish factions had already looted nearly 30,000 olive trees. They are now imposing on villages "taxes" in tanks of olive oil, sometimes several hundred for one village. In total, eight villages in Afrin had to provide 2020 tanks. The sharing of this loot continues to provoke regular fighting between factions...

In addition to this violence, there are now Russian strikes or artillery fire from the regime targeting Turkish settlements there. Indeed, after the Turkish threats of a new invasion, the Damascus army has strongly reinforced its front line with men, armoured vehicles and artillery...

Finally, the resurgence of ISIS is increasing. Assassinations and attacks continue, with a worrying return to more conventional attacks. On the 5th, a SDF fighter was found tortured to death in Raqqa. On the 8th, jihadists fired rockets at the SDF HQ in

Busayra (Deir Ezzor) (SOHR). On the same day, the SDF destroyed a vehicle bomb near Hasakeh, apparently intended for an attack on the Sinaa prison, where thousands of jihadists are held. On the 21st, another SDF member was killed in Deir Ezzor. On the 28th, a bomb killed a woman and a child in Manbij and injured five people (SOHR).

In addition, the situation in Al-Hol camp, which still houses 60,000 detainees, 93% of whom are women and children, remains difficult. The authorities are continuing their programme of gradual releases. On the 7th, 48 families from Deir Ezzor were able to leave, followed the next day by 48 families, the 43rd group to be released, a total of 8,690 people since the summer of 2020 (ANHA). On the 13th, three Iraqis including a woman were murdered inside the camp. 78 people have been murdered in Al-Hol this year, 10 of them beheaded (*Al-Monitor*). On the 21st, the *Asayish* (Kurdish security) carried out a new security operation in the camp, arresting 14 detainees. On the 24th, a new group of 190 detainees was allowed to leave the camp under the guarantee of tribal leaders. On the 30th, a new security operation by the *Asayish* targeting the Syrian internees' section led to the discovery of automatic weapons... On the same day, *Amnesty International* launched a new appeal for the repatriation of the 27,000 children present in Al-Hol...

At the same time, Russia continues to blow hot and cold towards the AANES. On the 2nd, the Russian military conducted manoeuvres near Kobanê; on the 8th, a Russian general threatened to bomb Manbij if the SDF persisted in refusing to allow his armoured vehicles to enter... The Russians also seem to want to limit the Iranian presence in northern Syria. In parallel, there

were rumours of discussions between Damascus and a delegation of the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), a source of which indicated that as a sign of goodwill, the AANES had offered to pay Damascus 75% of the revenues from oil fields located on its territory. On the 11th, Sergei Lavrov, warning the Kurds against

American promises that would push them towards separatism, offered Russia's good offices for talks with Damascus: "*We [...] are ready to do our best to ensure that their [the Kurds'] legal interests are taken into account [...] within the framework of the activities of the Constitutional Committee [in Geneva]*" (*Asharq Al-Awsat*). At

the end of the month, SDC President Ilham Ahmad led a SDC delegation to Moscow to meet Lavrov. Russia expressed its readiness to support new negotiations between Damascus and the AANES (WKI). All previous attempts to hold talks had stumbled upon the intransigence of the regime...

IRAN:

AS THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE 2019 PROTESTS APPROACHES, THE AUTHORITIES ARE STEPPING UP THEIR REPRESSION

The economic situation of the Iranian people is getting worse and worse as the cost of living increases. For months, protests have been going on throughout the country, with no sign of abatement. For example, teachers, especially in Kurdistan, are demanding payment of salaries that have not been paid, sometimes for months, and their increase. Despite the permanent risk of lethal repression, they marched on 11 November, supported by Kurdish opposition parties who demand, among other reforms, the right to teach in languages other than Persian (WKI).

In Esfahan, protests over water shortages have been gathering hundreds of people, including farmers, for weeks. These marches, although peaceful, were repressed on the 25th and 26th by tear gas and live ammunition. Several videos show the death of at least two demonstrators, including an elderly woman "killed in cold blood" according to a witness (*Reuters*). Security forces arrested 120 participants. Ahmad Alam al-Huda, a particularly conservative mullah, declared: "*The water problem will not be solved by demonstrations, but by prayers for rain*"... The water shortage is also affecting Iranian Kurdistan, with the regime modifying the courses

of several rivers entering neighbouring Iraqi Kurdistan.

As the anniversary of the November 2019 mass protests against the tripling of fuel prices approaches, the authorities are seeking to discourage public commemorations by all means, including those of the families of the victims of the fierce crackdown. It is estimated that 1,500 people were killed and more than 4,000 injured during the crackdown, and that 7,000 people were arrested. According to HRANA, the human rights activists' news agency, relatives of victims were arrested, the Internet was sometimes cut off to prevent coordination, and access roads to cemeteries were closed under the pretext of "work". In London, beyond the reach of the regime, the International Peoples' Tribunal on Iran held four days of hearings, which allowed relatives of victims to testify (WKI).

On the 21st, the families of the 176 victims of the crash of *Ukrainian International Airlines Flight 752*, shot down by the Revolutionary Guards in January 2020, gathered, carrying photos of their loved ones, demanding that those responsible be court-martialled (HRANA).

Finally, on the morning of the 23rd, the first hearing of the trial of

Hamid Noury, which began last August, was held in Stockholm. This former prison officer, known to the prisoners as Hamid Abbassi, is being prosecuted for "war crimes" and "murder". He is accused of having participated in the mass executions of political prisoners in Iran, which on the orders of Khomeini, according to the opposition, claimed tens of thousands of victims from July 1988 to early 1989 (CNRI). The regime continues to this day to deny the reality of these massacres, whose victims were buried in secret mass graves. According to the prosecution, Noury was at the time assistant to the deputy prosecutor at Gohardasht prison in Karaj, near Tehran. He denies any involvement, but Kenneth Lewis, a lawyer for the civil parties, told AFP: "*He says he wasn't there, but we have 58 people who say the opposite*". So did Reza Falahi, who told AFP: "*When I was on death row, I had several opportunities to see him, and I saw that every time the names of (prisoners) were read out, he followed them to the execution room. [...] He would come back 45 minutes later, and the scene would be repeated several times a day*"...

Noury was arrested in November 2019 on his arrival at Stockholm airport, and has been held ever since in Sweden. It was an ex-prisoner of Gohardasht who made his arrest possible: he had lured him

to Sweden by promising him a cruise... (AFP) The feeling of impunity is so strong in Iran about these crimes that the defendant came without any concern. For this first trial of an Iranian official in this crime against humanity case, the Swedish justice system arranged for the entire court to be transferred for 10 days to Albania, where there are many members of the Iranian opposition whom the court wanted to hear. The trial will continue in December.

Concerning COVID, the situation remains as appalling as ever. On 1st November, the NCRI opposition, which compiles its own figures from regional data, counted more than 468,500 deaths due to the coronavirus in 547 cities, a figure that had risen to more than 483,200 by the 30th. This same day, the daily *Jahan Sanat* stated: "No restrictions have been imposed yet because of the new Omicron variant; people are left to their own devices, as they have been for the past two years"...

However, the regime's forces continue their repression unperurbed. On the 2nd, they shot a man without warning near the border in Urmia. Veisi Badini, a father of two, was grazing his cattle when he was targeted. He was seriously wounded and died bleeding to death because his killers did not allow anyone to treat him (HRANA). According to *Hengaw*, Iranian security forces also wounded a shepherd and his wife near Sardasht on the 4th, and killed a cross-border porter (*kolbar*) near Baneh, Mohammed Khudayeh, and a trader, Farhad Zandi, falsely accused of smuggling (WKI).

On the 17th, a 15-year-old *kolbar* boy, Soroush Rahmani, committed suicide by hanging himself after his mules were shot by regime soldiers. Originally from Paveh, the young man had borrowed money

to buy the animals, which he was now unable to pay back (HRANA). He had started working as a porter to pay for his father's medical treatment for cancer... (WKI) On the 19th, the Kurdistan Human Rights Association KMMK reported that 3 *kolbars* had been arrested in Marivan. On the 21st and 22nd, Iranian guards injured 2 more *kolbars* near Nowsud. Finally, five other porters were injured when their vehicle fell into a ravine in Ravansour (WKI). On the 30th, the *Washington Kurdish Institute* (WKI) reported that at least 6 *kolbars* had been injured by Iranian security forces in the previous week, including 4 ambushed in Nowsud and 2 others in Urmia and Piranshahr. Finally, three others were arrested on the 26th in Marivan.

Moreover, the terrible litany of arrests, convictions and executions has been enriched by new cases this month, as the regime has continued its relentless campaign of repression in Iranian Kurdistan. Already at the end of October, 7 people were arrested, including a father and son in Chaldiran, an environmental activist in Marivan and other Kurdish citizens in Oshnavieh, Sanandaj and Piranshahr. For the whole month of October, the *Hengaw* organisation counted 31 people arrested for political activism in Kurdistan...

On 3rd October, HRANA reported on the transfer on 27 October of three political prisoners from Urmia to an unknown destination. Two of them, Mohyeldin Ebrahimi and Mohyeldin Tazehvared, are death row inmates, so the transfer raises fears for their lives, even though they have both requested a retrial... Shot and wounded in October 2017 by an Iranian officer near the Iraqi border, Ebrahimi had been sentenced to death for smuggling alcohol, a verdict first

changed by the Supreme Court before being confirmed again by another court... The request for a retrial of the two convicts has not been answered.

On the 2nd, a 26-year-old prisoner, Khosro Jamalifar, accused of murder and awaiting verdict, was beaten to death with a baton by guards at Sanandaj prison. The event occurred after a quarrel with another prisoner. Jamalifar died from a blow to the head, partly because the prison nurse did not send him for treatment and he was simply returned to his cell, where he died.

The following week was marked by a series of arrests by the *Etelaat* (Intelligence) throughout Kurdistan: two young men in Oshnavieh, an inhabitant of Marivan and one in Piranshahr. In addition, the security forces arrested the ecologist and journalist Ihsan Parsa in Lorestan. In terms of convictions, Kurdish cultural activist Mahmoud Neromend was sentenced in Mashhad to 10 years in prison for "links with opposition groups", and in Saqqez, a woman was sentenced to one year in prison for membership of the PDKI. In Sanandaj, the trial of 7 activists who participated in the "Renaissance of Kurdistan" campaign started (WKI).

On 10 November, the *Etelaat* and the *Pasdaran* (Revolutionary Guards) launched a massive campaign of raids and arrests in Sanandaj, Baneh, Marivan and Saqqez, resulting in the arrest of 32 people. Human rights groups reported the use of large-scale military aircraft and forces in the Iranian raids in the Kurdish mountainous areas (WKI). On the 11th in Tehran, security forces arrested a 70-year-old Kurd, Omar Sharifi Bukani, and held him incommunicado. Already sentenced in 1992 to 7 years imprisonment for "belonging to an opposi-

tion party”, Bukani had served his sentence, and no reason was given for his new arrest. On the same day, at least nine residents of Baneh were also arrested in violent raids on their homes and held incommunicado. Again, no reasons were given for the arrests (HRANA). The crackdown contin-

ued the following week, with the number of arrests rising to 40, including 19 in Baneh. In Piranshahr, the authorities arrested three civil rights and environmental activists. Finally, on the 23rd, *Hengaw* reported that Kurdish activist Chya Aqabayeg had been sentenced in Bokan to 18

months in prison and 660 lashes for “propaganda against the government”, and that Kurdish political prisoner Shaker Behrozi, from Urmia, had gone on hunger strike after his death sentence was confirmed for the murder of a member of the *Pasdaran* – a charge he denies (WKI).

MIGRANTS:

KURDS TRAPPED AT BORDERS DIE IN THE CHANNEL AND IN BELARUS

This month has been marked by another crisis involving migrants at the borders of Europe or the UK, mostly Kurds. At the beginning of November, the situation on the Belarus-Poland border was in the news, and at the end of the month, the deadly shipwreck in the English Channel between France and Great Britain was the focus of attention. That many Kurds are among the migrants seeking a better life is certainly not new. One only has to remember how the photo of 3-year-old Alan Kurdi, found drowned on a Turkish beach in September 2015, shocked the world. But if Alan was originally from Kobanê, in Rojava (Syrian Kurdistan), this time there are more Kurds from Iraq. Among them, Maryam, 24 years old, who wanted to join her fiancé in England, drowned among the 27 victims of the 24 November shipwreck in the Channel. Baxtyar Anwar, 25, who died of exhaustion on his arrival in Germany from the Polish-Belarusian border, was a Kurd from Iran, but born as a refugee in Iraq. He thought he had found an “easier” way to Europe.

What led these young people to their deaths?

Maryam had tried twice to enter England legally, without success.

Desperate, she finally attempted the crossing and drowned. In unison, the French and British governments blamed the smugglers. A French maritime official blamed the “cynicism” of the traffickers “*who throw migrants into the water because it is a profitable business*”. But the associations accuse rather the blocking of borders, like Vincent de Coninck, former worker at “Secours Catholique”: “*It’s a disgusting hypocrisy to say that we are going to fight against the smugglers. They [the leaders] are the ones who made them! In the early 2010s, I knew a period when people were crossing without money. It is the over-security that made the networks*”. Finally, the *Brexit* has made family reunification almost impossible, as Maryam’s case demonstrates.

In Belarus, the trap that closed on entire families involved two governments: the Belarusian regime manipulated the migrants, luring them to its soil to put the European Union under pressure; the Polish government preferred to declare a state of emergency and send more than 15,000 soldiers to the borders to push them back rather than welcome them and thus appear to be giving in to Lukashenko. The Polish military pushed back migrants who had managed to cross into Belarus, and the European Union largely

let this happen, violating humanitarian law. The French President said: “*It is Europe’s deepest values – humanism, respect for the dignity of each person – that are in mourning*”. Certainly true. But while the *after-the-fact* statements were nice, no one in Europe offered to take in the refugees stranded between Poland and Belarus when there was still time. Mention should also be made of Turkey, whose national airline was involved in the transit of travellers to Minsk, and Russia, from where clandestine passages were organised to Belarus, and a myriad of travel agencies, from Baghdad to Beirut, which pocketed sums of money, sometimes extremely high, for transporting the migrants...

This traffic, as ignoble as it is, was only made possible because its victims existed. When Iraqi Kurdistan has for decades appeared to be the most stable part of the country, why do so many of its young citizens seem to want to leave it at any cost, asked David L. Phillips for the *Washington Kurdish Institute*? Since they did not appear to be in direct political danger, and were thus considered “economic refugees”, they had little chance of obtaining asylum. However, when asked, they did not answer in terms of “economic betterment”, but simply “survival”. Some Kurdish civil servants have not been paid for months. Many

young graduates say they have lost all hope of getting a job. Retirees have committed suicide because their pensions were so low...

The Iraqi government is largely responsible for the current desperation of Kurdish youth. After the September 2017 independence referendum, in which the "Yes" vote won by almost 93%, Baghdad stopped paying Kurdistan its share of the federal budget, before reducing it by authority from 17% to 12.6%, a share that has still not been paid. Finally, the economic structure of Kurdistan itself is very unbalanced, with 1.2 million civil servants out of 6 million inhabitants. This is partly due to the pre-eminence of the oil sector, which prevents the development of alternative sectors, but also to the delicate balance between the two main Kurdish parties, the KDP and the PUK, which are both allies and adversaries, with each

of which constituting an employment network for which civil servant posts allow their supporters to be rewarded... Often, one must belong to one of these networks to hope to find a public job. When, in 2014, Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki for the first time stopped paying Kurdistan its share of the budget, this system began to collapse for lack of autonomous finances. For some, extracting money from would-be migrants has become the only way to ensure their own livelihood. The mafia networks that bring migrants to Europe are partly Kurdish...

Interviewed in the Belarusian forest, some Yezidis explained that they were terrified at the prospect of having to return to their camps, where tents fires have already killed many members of their community... The instability of Sindjar, their region of origin, does not allow them to consider resettling there. *"We did not leave*

in search of luxury, but to escape miserable conditions", explained to AFP a Yezidi grandmother interviewed in Belarus. One of the reasons for this instability is the fight between Turkey and the PKK on Iraqi territory... In particular, Turkish drone strikes are incessant, including on the Makhmur refugee camp. More broadly, the incessant strikes by Turkish or Iranian drones or planes on the border areas of Kurdistan have certainly contributed to the general feeling of insecurity and lack of future that has pushed so many inhabitants to leave. The Kurds living in the disputed territories, for their part, are constantly being hit by ISIS or pro-Iranian militias, and put under the pressure of an Arabisation policy dating back to Saddam Hussein that is now making a comeback.

No, Kurdish migrants are not simply "economic refugees". They actually want to escape a life only made of insecurity.

CREATION OF A "CENTRE FOR SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION WITH UNIVERSITIES OF NORTHERN AND EASTERN SYRIA" (CSCUNES)

We are happy to announce that on October 24, 2021, the Center for Solidarity and Cooperation with Universities of North and East Syria (CSCUNES) was founded by a constitutive assembly of scholars from diverse backgrounds across the globe. Based in Paris, France, this center aims to support universities of Rojava and the north and east region of Syria (University of Rojava, University of Kobani, and University of Al-Sharq) for their advancement of educational and research programs.

Since the beginning of the Rojava Revolution in 2012, academics around the globe have been enthusiastically following the developments in Rojava and the

north and east region of Syria. Amid the ruins of war in Syria, the people of the region established several academic institutions, such as the University of Afrin (currently under the Turkish occupation), the University of Rojava, the University of Kobani, and most recently the University of Al-Sharq in Raqqa. Scholars from across the globe offered their support for these universities, and memorandums of agreement between these universities and global academic institutions were signed. Significant collaborations, thus, were developed. As an outcome of these collaborations, the Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Rojava was established in 2020.

This experience demonstrated that collaborations with diverse academic institutions and scholars are essential to the advancement of academic research and education programs for the universities in the region. Upon these academic interests, the need for a stronger coordination of solidarity and cooperation efforts with these universities became visible. In response to this need, the CSCUNES was established.

In coordination with the University of Rojava, the University of Kobani, and the University of Al-Sharq, this center intends to:

1. Introduce these universities to

the academic and research institutions in France, Europe, and around the world.

2. Recruit staff for scientific research and teaching in these universities.

3. Develop research and teaching collaborations with academic institutions in France, Europe and around the world.

4. Facilitate knowledge and student exchange programs with other universities and institu-

tions in France, Europe, and around the world.

5. Organize academic activities (such as panels, talks, seminars, exhibitions, and conferences) for knowledge exchange.

6. Assist the universities with their digital media platforms.

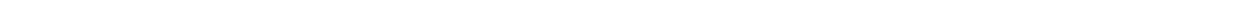
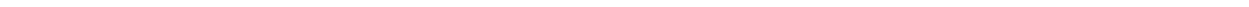
7. Assist the universities with the translation and interpretation projects and tasks.

8. Provide educational and infras-

structural resources to the universities (such as academic books, subscriptions to academic platforms, laptops, and other research and educational materials).

The center's website is under development, but in future, you can find more details on how to support this initiative <https://www.cscunes.com>. In the meantime, please send your inquiries to <mailto:cscunes@gmail.com>

Board of Directors



Selahattin Demirtaş: Edirne Prison is rocked by protests, do you hear?

Arrested in the Edirne Type F Prison since November 2016, former Co-Chair of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Selahattin Demirtaş has raised concerns that the restrictions imposed on family and attorney visits that were imposed due to the pandemic are still in place in prisons.

Sending a message from prison, Selahattin Demirtaş has made the following statement on his social media account:

"The restrictions imposed on family and attorney visits in prisons due to the pandemic are still in place.

"The Justice Ministry is making efforts to turn the restrictions into a permanent usurpation of rights, thereby turning the crisis into an opportunity.

"I am saying this more for other prisoners than us. The Edirne Prison has been rocked by protest slogans for the past 20 days. Do you hear?

"The leaders of the opposition who pay various visits; would you consider visiting the prisons with a population of 300 thousand?

"When you come to power, prisons will also be affiliated with you. You had better see the state of prisons on site

ahead of time. I have seen enough."

Başak Demirtaş slammed it on TV

Başak Demirtaş, the spouse of Selahattin Demirtaş, attended a program on Fox TV in early October and indicated that they had been unable to make a contact visit in prison for the past 19 months:

"Before the pandemic, we could make three non-contacts visits and one contact visit in a month, but we have been unable to make a contact visit for 19 months. Our daughters have been unable to hug their father for 19 months. We can

make only two non-contact visits in a month.

"It is impossible to understand this. I am sorry to say this, but this situation has turned into an arbitrariness. Both Selahattin and I have been vaccinated. We are in a state to have a contact visit, but even a non-contact visit can be held twice a month. There can be no explanation for this. I would like to call out to the Justice Minister: Why is our right to visit still restricted?"

The Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) launched a probe on the grounds of Başak Demirtaş's remarks. (AÖ/SD)



Washington Kurdish Institute
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November 2 2021

Kurdistan's Weekly Brief November 2, 2021

Iran

The Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDP-I) said the Iranian Consulate in Iraqi Kurdistan pressured Kurdish officials into reopening the Parvez Khan border crossing near Kalar city. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) previously closed the border crossing, which remains vital to Iran's economy, for over a week after striking truckers blocked the passage to protest transit fees.

The Iranian regime continued

its campaign of repression in Iranian Kurdistan (Rojhelat) by arresting seven people last week, including Mohammed Khalidi and his 16-year-old son, Ahmed Khalidi, near Chaldiran, an environmental activist in Marivan named Nawid Konaposhi, Sardar Karamat and Aziz Qadirtaj in Oshnavieh (Shinno), Shoaib Mahmudi in Sanandaj (Sena), and Hemin Arzan in Piranshahr. The Hengaw Organization for Human Rights reported Iranian authorities arrested a total of 31 Kurds for political activism in October.

Iraq

ISIS (Da'esh) terrorists killed two personnel from the Peshmerga's 2nd Brigade, 10th Infantry Division near Erbil Governorate's Makhmour District on Saturday night. The Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs released a statement following the attack that read, "We have warned several times about the resurgence of ISIS sleeper cells, their despicable and cowardly acts will not reach any goal and will nullify the myth of their uprising by the Peshmerga forces." Several other Kurdish officials and com-

manders then blamed the Iraqi government for failing to take serious steps towards implementing improved security co-operation and joint agreements to counter Da'esh's reemergence in the "Disputed Territories." With that said, however, a Da'esh assault on Diyala Governorate's Sharaban town last Tuesday nearly sparked a vicious cycle of sectarian reprisals.

Kurdish lawmaker Zana Khalid told Rudaw that the Kurdistan Parliament would convene to discuss the drafting of a new

constitution on November 3. Iraqi Kurdistan currently utilizes a draft constitution passed in 2009, but political disputes have hindered further progress on the 2009 document. The November 3 talks would attempt to forge an agreement between Iraqi Kurdistan's political parties on a new constitution for the region and set up a referendum to approve it.

Turkey claimed one Turkish soldier and four Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) members were killed during Turkish military operations in Iraqi Kurdistan last week. Concurrently, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey approved a motion that extended the Turkish government's authority to conduct cross-border operations in Iraq and Syria for two years, though Turkey's main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), joined the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) in voting against the motion. Meanwhile, 52 Kurdish parties and organizations in Europe demanded the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) investigate the PKK's claims that Turkish forces employed chemical weapons.

Syria

Turkey deployed hundreds of troops to northern Syria in preparation for a new invasion of Syria's Kurdish region after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with US President Joe Biden in Rome on Sunday. Before the meeting, an unnamed US official said President Biden would warn Erdogan against 'precipitous' actions. The White House then released a statement after the meeting that read, "President Biden reaffirmed our defense partnership and Turkey's importance as a NATO ally, but noted US concerns over Turkey's possession of the Russian S-400 missile system. He also emphasized the importance of strong democratic institutions, respect for human rights, and



the rule of law for peace and prosperity." Kurdish officials fear a new Turkish attack would target Manbij, Kobani, and Tal Rifaat. Turkey and its proxies also continued shelling Tal Rifaat, Ain Essa, and Zarkan. Concurrently, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) released a report claiming Turkey attacked Ain Essa 13 times in October and footage of an alleged Turkish spy confessing involvement in attacks on the SDF in Deir Ez Zor.

Turkey

A Kurdish shop owner named Cemil Taşkesen was briefly detained for using the word Kurdistan during Turkish IYI Party leader Meral Aksener's visit to the Kurdish city of Siirt. Before his arrest, Taşkesen argued with Aksener about Kurdish rights in Turkey and was quoted as saying, "Our lan-

guage is denied. Our identity is denied. Kurdistan is denied. The place you are in is Kurdistan." Taşkesen was freed after numerous pro-Kurdish organizations, including the HDP, launched a social media campaign to support him.

A Turkish court sentenced two senior Kurdish politicians and former co-chairs of the HDP in Batman, Fatma Ablay and Ömer Kulpu, to one year and eight months in prison. Ablay and Kulpu were accused of maintaining ties with the PKK and charged with "spreading terrorist organization propaganda" and the use of an "illegal banner."

Hakkari Province's governor, İdris Akbiyik, extended a ban on public activities, including rallies and protests, for two weeks. The ban was initially

imposed on the predominantly Kurdish province in 2016.

The HDP denounced the Turkish government's plan to deport 11 Syrian refugees for posting videos on social media that featured them eating bananas in a statement that read, "Both the government and some opposition parties are complicit in the propaganda, which makes migrants look like the cause of the economic and social crisis. False propaganda against migrants who were employed in conditions of slavery, whose labor was exploited, who did not even have life guarantees, paves the way for new lynching attacks." The Syrian refugees posted the videos, which the Turkish government labeled as "provocative," after displaced Syrians in Turkey were portrayed as living in luxury.

Kirkuk Minute November 4, 2021

Kirkuk

ISIS (Da'esh) terrorists resumed significant attacks in the disputed territories after weeks of relative calm. On Saturday, October 29, Da'esh terrorists attacked a Peshmerga position near Makhmur District, between Perdi and Dibis districts, killing two personnel of the 2nd Brigade, 10th Infantry Division. Kurdish officials continued to blame the Iraqi government for their failures in the coordination and implementation of joint security operations in the area. Earlier, Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhimi ordered the transformation of Peshmerga's 10th division to Iraq's Defense Ministry, part of the Baghdad-Erbil agreement to deploy joint forces and, hopefully, prevent further security chaos in the region. Furthermore, Da'esh launched two more simultaneous attacks on the Peshmerga and Iraqi forces on Wednesday, November 3. The Wednesday attack on the Peshmerga targeted the same area as Saturday's assault; there were no casualties in this attack. The Peshmerga Ministry said, after 30 minutes of clashes, the Peshmerga repelled the terror attack. At the same time, Da'esh intense mortar-shelling on Albu Shahab village of the Daquq district resulted in the death of two soldiers and the injury of a civilian. Near the Ab-basi subdistrict west of Kirkuk, Da'esh terrorists opened fire on six coal factory workers, killing four while the other two successfully escaped on Saturday. Politically, despite an increase in terror attacks, the Turkish-backed Turkmen Front and Sunni Arab lawmakers held a press conference, rejecting al Kadhimi's orders to transfer

a Peshmerga division to the Defense Ministry.

Several Arab personnel supported by Iraq's military attempted to occupy Kurdish lands near Sargaran district on Wednesday. The farmlands are disputed. It belonged to the Kurds, however, the former Iraqi regime redistributed it to brought-up Arabs as part of the Arabization policies in Kirkuk. Kurdish villagers prevented the military Humvees from taking over the lands. They protested the new Arabization policy imposed by the current acting governor, Rakan Saed.

On Monday, November 1, the school year officially started across Iraq. In Kirkuk, the head of the Education Department, Abed Hussein Ali Tuma, held an opening ceremony for the beginning of the school year in a high school. Accompanied by several guards and gunmen in the school, he demand all the journalists and reporters to leave the school. After the ceremony, the public denounced his behavior inside the school, especially as it occurred in front of hundreds of students. Following immense pressure from the people and the ministry, he apologized. Ali Tuma said he removed the reporters since he faces "terror threats." However, several activists launched a social media campaign demanding his removal. The Kurdish studies schools also held an opening ceremony for the school year, raising the flag of Kurdistan and singing the Kurdish anthem. However, the head of the Education department, Ali Tuma launched investigations against the Ali Mardan school principal named Taha Ali. On the same night,

National Security Department units raided Principal Taha's home, but he fled to the Kurdistan Region.

The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) concluded hand counts in 87 polling stations, matching the initial results. The IHEC said no change in outcomes has occurred as the hand counts matched the electronic results.

In October, Iraq's State Organization for Marketing of Oil (SOMO) released statistics regarding the exports, production, and sales of Kirkuk's oil. According to SOMO, Kirkuk fields exported 3,321,685 oil barrels in October. Far majority of these were via the Cihan Pipeline valued at 80,44 US dollar, but there were also 309,768 barrels to Jordan valued at 67,66 US dollar.

Khanaqin

On Sunday night, Da'esh terrorists attacked Iraq's 12th division by sniper rifle west of Jalawla (Golala), killing one soldier and wounding two others.

In a press conference, Khanaqin's Mayor Rebwar Rahman acknowledged that the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) had requested the return of the party's buildings in the town from the Iraq government. The building was taken on October 16, 2017. Mayor Rahman said, it's a legal right to return the offices of the KDP and that the matter is a political one and the Mayor's office is irrelevant to it.

Tuz Khurmatu

The quick reaction force (QRF)

announced the arrest of five terrorists after obtaining information in al Jamhuriya neighborhood. According to QRF, the terrorists had warrants out in Khanaqin and were hiding in Tuz Khurmatu after some time in the Salman Bag subdistrict.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) branch in Tuz Khurmatu denounced the "constant attempts and objections" to the results of the station polls in the Kurdish areas after a Kurdish candidate won for the first time in 17 years. The PUK did not say who but said "some" are attempting to annul the results in the stations where a Kurdish candidate of the PUK named Mala Shukur won a seat.

Makhmur

On Monday, November 1, Da'esh terrorists abducted two civilians in Sabiha village of Makhmur. According to the police, the village consisted of only eight homes and by the time the security forces arrived, the terrorists fled, kidnapping two civilians. The area has seen several cases of abduction and release on ransoms.

Shingal (Sinjar)

Several activists and journalists launched a campaign calling on the Iraqi parties and government to grant a ministry to the Yazidis in the next cabinet. The petitioners' statement said that Shingal is unstable and lacks primary services and having a cabinet member will bring more attention to the destructed region in the aftermath of the genocide they suffered.

Turquie : Can Candan, l'enseignant banni de l'université du Bosphore

Le cinéaste et maître de conférences est devenu un symbole de la répression qui vise le « Harvard turc », un campus en ébullition depuis que le président Erdogan, s'est mis en tête d'en prendre le contrôle.

Maître de conférences à l'université du Bosphore (Bogazici, en turc) à Istanbul, Can Candan a été déclaré « persona non grata » au sein de son alma mater, le « Harvard turc », où il a enseigné pendant quatorze ans. Son nouveau statut lui a été signifié au matin du 11 octobre, quand les gardes de sécurité postés à l'entrée du campus ont refusé de lever la barrière pour laisser entrer sa voiture.

Can Candan a eu beau expliquer qu'il avait un rendez-vous important avec ses étudiants, qu'il ne pouvait leur faire faux bond, le portique est resté clos. « Ordre du recteur », ont dit les gardes. Bientôt, des policiers en civil sont arrivés en renfort, suivis par des représentants des forces antiémeute positionnées derrière des boucliers en Plexiglas.

« Des collègues, des élèves, sont arrivés à la rescousse. Deux heures de palabres, sans résultat. Au bout d'un moment, je suis parti. Que faire ? Je n'allais tout de même pas me battre... », raconte l'enseignant de 52 ans, qui n'en revient pas. « Le recteur n'a pas trouvé mieux à faire qu'ériger un cordon de police entre moi et l'université. C'est contraire à l'esprit de Bogazici, axé sur l'ouverture et la tolérance, mais, surtout, c'est cruel... »
Sur le campus, un immense

parc fleuri et verdoyant qui surplombe le détroit du Bosphore sur la rive européenne d'Istanbul, Can Candan a son bureau, « pas encore vidé », ses rendez-vous avec les étudiants, sa banque, son médecin. La séance du cinéclub de l'université à laquelle il était convié le 25 octobre a été annulée. Un sale coup pour ce documentariste chevronné. Son long-métrage intitulé *Mon enfant*, un récit poignant sur les réactions des familles face au coming out de leurs enfants LGBT en Turquie, a été primé à de nombreuses reprises en 2013 – une époque où la parole était incomparablement plus libre qu'aujourd'hui.

« **Nous ne renoncerons pas** »

L'université du Bosphore, qui fut longtemps la pépinière de l'élite turque, est en ébullition depuis que le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, s'est mis en tête d'en prendre le contrôle, en janvier. La promotion, sur décret présidentiel, de Melih Bulu, un universitaire médiocre mais doté de bons états de service au sein du Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP, au pouvoir depuis 2002), a mis le feu aux poudres, suscitant un mouvement de contestation inédit de la part des étudiants et des enseignants.

Jusqu'ici symbole de l'excellence et de la liberté académique, le « Harvard turc » s'est



Can Candan, à Istanbul, le jeudi 4 novembre 2021. SABIHA CIMEN / MAGNUM PHOTO POUR « LE MONDE »

retrouvé mis au pas, comme les autres universités du pays, laminées par les purges qui ont suivi le coup d'Etat manqué de 2016. Plus de 6 000 enseignants ont été limogés sur décret, sans enquête ni possibilité de recours. C'est à ce moment précis que le président Erdogan s'est arrogé le pouvoir de nommer les recteurs, sans tenir compte de l'avis des établissements concernés.

« Autrefois, le recteur était élu par les enseignants et les autorités d'Ankara approuvaient, leur aval était une simple formalité. L'autonomie de l'université ne pouvait être remise en

question, c'est ce qui faisait sa réputation. Désormais, il est nommé par le président sans concertation aucune. C'est une entrave à la liberté académique, nous n'en voulons pas, nous ne renoncerons pas », affirme Can Candan, calme et souriant, malgré ses déboires.

« Donner de la visibilité » à la lutte

Tout a commencé le 16 juillet, lorsqu'il a reçu une lettre de licenciement, signée de la main du nouveau recteur, Naci Inci, un universitaire nommé par M. Erdogan en remplacement de Melih Bulu, licencié sans expli-

cations. Dans cette lettre, le documentariste a appris qu'il avait « insulté ses supérieurs et l'administration universitaire en partageant des contenus qui visent à provoquer des humiliations personnelles ».

Une allusion aux documents qu'il poste régulièrement sur les réseaux sociaux pour alerter l'opinion sur la mise au pas de Bogazici. « Les autorités disent que les contestataires sont en minorité, c'est faux. Les médias ont été bannis du campus et la presse progouvernementale se garde bien d'évoquer la protestation. Tout est fait pour étouffer l'information. Moi, je veux donner de la visibilité à cette lutte », explique le cinéaste.

Ses prises de vue, ses rendez-vous avec les étudiants, ses allées et venues sur le campus ont fini par alarmer le recteur, qui l'a banni de l'université. Ces dix derniers mois, Bogazici s'est transformé en camp re-

tranché. « Des caméras de surveillance ont été installées un peu partout et des policiers en civil n'arrêtent pas de filmer le campus avec leurs portables. Je me demande qui peut bien avoir intérêt à visionner ces images », s'étonne le réalisateur.

Malgré les intimidations, les arrestations, les interdictions, dont celle du club LGBT de l'université, fermé depuis janvier, la protestation continue. Des manifestations ont eu lieu récemment devant le tribunal de Caglayan, à Istanbul, où des étudiants sont actuellement jugés, les professeurs de Bogazici continuent de protester sur le campus et leurs élèves animent désormais une chaîne de télévision sur YouTube.

« Dégénérés LGBT »

Au fil des mois, Can Candan est devenu l'œil du mouvement, postant sur les réseaux

sociaux la geste des contestataires. Rien ne lui échappe, surtout pas le rituel joué chaque semaine par plus d'une centaine de professeurs, rassemblés sous les fenêtres du rectorat, le dos tourné en signe de mécontentement. Il passe aussi pas mal de temps à arpenter les couloirs des tribunaux où comparaissent les étudiants de Bogazici accusés d'incitation à la haine et d'insulte à la religion musulmane.

Sept d'entre eux sont actuellement jugés par un tribunal d'Istanbul pour avoir tenté d'exposer sur le campus un tableau jugé offensant envers l'islam. L'œuvre représentait la Kaaba, le site islamique le plus sacré en Arabie saoudite, ornée aux quatre coins de drapeaux arc-en-ciel, le symbole de la communauté LGBT.

Cette action risque de leur coûter cher. Jusqu'à trois années de prison pour ce que le ministère de l'intérieur décrit comme

« une insulte à la religion ». Pourtant, le délit de blasphème ne figure pas dans le code pénal et la Turquie n'est pas une république islamique, au grand dam de l'aile dure du camp islamo-conservateur. Les artistes incriminés sont « des vandales », a dit le président Erdogan, « des dégénérés LGBT », a renchéri le ministre de l'intérieur, Süleyman Soylu.

Can Candan veut croire que l'esprit de liberté qui caractérise Bogazici résistera à la fêrule présidentielle. Il lui arrive aussi d'avoir des idées noires : « J'ai parfois la sensation que nous sommes enfermés dans un cercueil à moitié enseveli sur lequel on jette des pelletées de terre. » La dernière décision du recteur, qui vient de faire fermer, jeudi 4 novembre, la maison d'édition de l'université, connue pour ses publications instructives et variées, ne fait que renforcer ses craintes.



November 8, 2021

Iran-backed militia staged drone attack on Iraqi PM – officials

A drone attack that targeted the Iraqi prime minister on Sunday was carried out by at least one Iran-backed militia, Iraqi security officials and militia sources said, weeks after pro-Iran groups were routed in elections they say were rigged.

But the neighbouring Islamic Republic is unlikely to have sanctioned the attack as Tehran is keen to avoid a spiral of violence on its western border, the sources and independent analysts said.

Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi escaped unhurt when three drones carrying explosives were

launched at his residence in Baghdad. Several of his bodyguards were injured.

The incident whipped up tensions in Iraq, where powerful Iran-backed paramilitaries are disputing the result of a general election last month that dealt them a crushing defeat at the polls and greatly reduced their strength in parliament.

Many Iraqis fear that tension among the main Shi'ite Muslim groups that dominate government and most state institutions, and also boast paramilitary branches, could spiral into broad civil conflict

if further such incidents occur.

Baghdad's streets were emptier and quieter than usual on Monday, and additional military and police checkpoints in the capital appeared intent on keeping a lid on tensions.

Iraqi officials and analysts said the attack was meant as a message from militias that they are willing to resort to violence if excluded from the formation of a government, or if their grip on large areas of the state apparatus is challenged.

"It was a clear message of, 'We can create chaos in Iraq - we

have the guns, we have the means,'" said Hamdi Malik, a specialist on Iraq's Shi'ite Muslim militias at the Washington Institute.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Iran-backed militia groups did not immediately comment and the Iranian government did not respond to requests for comment.

Two regional officials who spoke on condition of anonymity said Tehran had knowledge about the attack before it was carried out, but that Iranian authorities had not ordered it.

Militia sources said the commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards overseas Quds Force travelled to Iraq on Sunday after the attack to meet paramilitary leaders and urge them to avoid any further escalation of violence.

Two Iraqi security officials, speaking to Reuters on Monday on condition of anonymity, said the Kataib Hezbollah and Asaib Ahl al-Haq groups carried out the attack in tandem.

Turkey has resumed its threats of yet another large military operation against the Syrian Democratic Forces, the United States' top ally in the fight against the Islamic State.

Unlike in October 2019 when Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan got the go-ahead from then-President Donald Trump to invade a large chunk of the Syrian Kurdish region, Turkey is facing resistance from the international community.

However, as his poll numbers drop, Erdogan is growing increasingly reckless and could yet strike. Whether he does or not, thousands of Syrian Kurds live in constant fear of a Turkish attack that will cause further bloodshed and misery as they struggle with the impact of the worst drought in decades and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many continue to flee the region illegally in search of a better life. Dire economic conditions and instability offer succor to the Islamic State as it seeks to regain a foothold.

Mazlum Kobane, the commander in chief of the Syrian Democratic Forces, is seeking to steer what remains the most stable and freest part of the country through these turbulent times under the protection of the United States.

The Biden administration has pledged to keep its forces in Syria through its current term. But the recent debacle in Afghanistan has sown doubts, and there is growing recognition that the Syrian Kurds need to cut a deal

with Damascus and only Russia can help them get one. But can Russia, which allowed Turkey to invade the majority Kurdish enclave of Afrin in 2018, be trusted to act in good faith?

Al-Monitor sat down with Kobane, also known as Mazlum Abdi, at a military base in northeast Syria to talk about the challenges he and his people face. The 53-year-old looked fit and relaxed in dark blue combat fatigues worn by local counterterrorism forces. He chose his words carefully. Kobane clearly does not want to provoke Turkey, Russia or the Syrian government.

Al-Monitor: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is making fresh threats to launch another military operation against the Syrian Democratic Forces in northeast Syria, and daily there is speculation in the media as to where and when yet another Turkish invasion might occur. Do you believe that Erdogan will follow on his threats? He's certainly always done so in the past.

Mazlum Kobane: Erdogan has always sought the support of international actors before embarking on a military intervention here. He's made threats and continues to make threats. He insists he will intervene and will continue to insist. In doing so he is looking to prepare the ground for an operation. However, the existing situation in northeast Syria is different now. The balances have shifted. In the past instances, there were no binding agreements between Turkey and the international powers. Neither prior to the [October 2019] attack on Serekaniye [Ras al-Ain] or the [January 2018] attack against Afrin. But now there are two agreements in place: the agreement between Erdogan and Vladimir Putin that was signed in Sochi, and the agreement that was signed between the United States and Turkey in Ankara [in the wake of Turkey's October 2019 Operation Peace Spring against the Syrian Democratic Forces]. In my view, unless Turkey gets the approval of either Russia or the United States, Erdogan cannot take such a step.

And as far as I am aware there is no such approval.

Al-Monitor: Have Russia and the United States provided you with such guarantees?

Mazlum Kobane: Yes. The United States has given us such assurances. They were relayed to us officially. The United States said they were opposed to, and would not accept, any attack by Turkey against us. The US officials we spoke to also recalled the existing congressional sanctions against Turkey [over its acquisition of Russian S-400 missiles]. They informed us that during the last meeting between Erdogan and President Joe Biden [on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rome] that Erdogan was told that the United States would not accept any attack against us.

The Russians also told us that they had not made any deals with Turkey. They did say though that Turkish-backed [Syrian National Army] forces might attack us rather than the Turkish military per se. They actually gave us a date. They were supposed to attack us today [Nov. 5] but nothing happened.

Al-Monitor: Where were they supposed to attack?

Mazlum Kobane: In the Tell Rifaat, Serekaniye [Ras al-Ain] and Girespi [Tell Abyad] areas. Like I said, a Turkish attack does not seem likely in the current circumstances. Besides, the Russians told us that they had told the Turks that they would not accept an attack against us. However, they are unable to determine what Turkish-backed forces might do. They said they would not accept an attack by them either. But it remains to be seen what will happen in practice, on the ground.

Al-Monitor: Are you saying they are not standing as firmly against Turkey as the Americans are?

Mazlum Kobane: No not at all. This is a very critical point and requires proper clarification. The Russians said there was no question of them allowing Turkey to attack but that Turkish-supported

rebel groups might attack us without Turkey's authorization. But we believe that the Turkish-supported rebels would never initiate any attack unless Turkey were directly involved.

Al-Monitor: You said the balances in the northeast have shifted. This is also true in Turkey where Erdogan and his ruling Justice and Development Party, the AKP, are rapidly losing ground. Do you not believe that Erdogan might carry out an operation against you regardless of the factors you outlined so as to distract attention from economic woes and perhaps even as an excuse to delay elections that are due in 2023?

Al-Monitor: In the meantime, something rather significant occurred in Turkey. The main opposition party, the Republican People's Party, the CHP, launched a dialogue with the Kurds and, as witnessed during the 2019 municipal elections, forged a de facto alliance with them. Last month, the CHP sent a level delegation to Iraqi Kurdistan—a first. And more recently it voted against the government's motion in the parliament to authorize the deployment of Turkish forces in Syria and Iraq for a further two years. That's another first.

Mazlum Kobane: It's true that they opposed this bill for the first time. The consensus around Erdogan is fading. The alliance between the AKP and the far-right Nationalist Movement Party is also weakening. These factors combined with the resistance displayed by international powers against a Turkish operation will have emboldened the CHP. At the same time, the CHP is investing in the coming elections.

Al-Monitor: You mean it's trying to woo the Kurds?

Mazlum Kobane: Yes, but in any event it's a positive signal and an important step. And if the CHP is acting in this way this suggests that Turkey's internal balances are shifting. And this gives us hope.

Al-Monitor: Would you like to invite a CHP delegation to Rojava?

Mazlum Kobane: Why not? It would be a positive thing.

Al-Monitor: Economic conditions in Rojava are getting harder by the day. On the one hand, there are the embargos imposed by Turkey and sanctions imposed by the United States on the Assad regime. On the other hand, there is the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the most severe droughts in decades and Turkey's continued suppression of water along with its threats of an attack. Can these factors give the Islamic State a new lease of life?

Mazlum Kobane: DAESH [the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State] is active all across Syria. And these unfavorable economic conditions are impacting our struggle against DAESH. Its ability to regain ground is increasingly linked to economic conditions in Syria. There are way too many unemployed people. There is widespread poverty. All such factors diminish the authority of our administration. DAESH takes advantage of this. Therefore, the international coalition forces and all powers fighting against terrorism must take immediate steps to address the economic situation here. Bolstering the economy has become one of the pillars of combatting terrorism. We as the Syrian Democratic Forces say this openly. If we are to fight DAESH effectively we need to prioritize the economy.

Al-Monitor: Oil is a critical source of revenue for this region. The Biden administration, however, did not extend the Trump era waiver for the US oil company Delta Crescent to develop and market your oil.

Mazlum Kobane: Our demands are not limited to oil. Our demand is that the whole of North and East Syria be exempted from the United States' Caesar sanctions. A formal decision is required in this regard. Anyone who wants to do business here, to contribute to the economy here, should be allowed to do so.

Al-Monitor: And how has the Biden administration responded? Mazlum Kobane: They have been positive so far.

Al-Monitor: Then why is nothing happening?

Mazlum Kobane: We are waiting for them to fulfill their promises

Al-Monitor: Why not?

Mazlum Kobane: Damascus is not ready for this. However much they claim that there will be no return to the pre-2011 era their mentality remains unchanged. They need to be pressured. Plus, there's an issue of trust, particularly for Damascus.

Al-Monitor: Are they telling you to sever your ties with the United States?

Mazlum Kobane: Not exactly. They are telling us, "We do not want a state within a state. We do not want an army within an army." We have no such demands. Our project is autonomy and we are implementing it at this time. However, they want guarantees from us with regard to the aforementioned concerns. Severing our ties with the Americans is not their precondition. Their precondition is Syria's indivisible unity. Preserving its flag, its borders, its president. Their sovereignty. We are ready to offer guarantees on all these points. But they should be prepared to negotiate with us for our autonomy.

Al-Monitor: Would that include the Arab majority areas as well?

Mazlum Kobane: The Arabs have their demands too. There is a problem in their areas too. We did not seize those areas from the regime. Those areas rose up against the regime, then al-Qaeda and DAESH took over. We wrested those areas from DAESH. Damascus needs to enter negotiations with those areas as well.

Al-Monitor: Are the Russians sincere in their mediations efforts? Or do they simply want you to capitulate so they can get the lion's share of the oil pie from the regime as some claim?

Mazlum Kobane: We have good relations with Russia. For the past two years, we have coop-

erated on the ground within the framework of the [Sochi] agreement. This problem cannot be solved without Russia. I believe Russia could be more proactive and apply more pressure on the regime.

Al-Monitor: Why aren't they?

Al-Monitor: Where does Iran figure in this picture? Iran is after all an important player in Syria and, like Turkey, resists any political concessions for the Kurds. Don't they need to be a part of the solution as well?

Mazlum Kobane: Russia is here at the formal invitation of the government in Damascus. In my view, Russia's role is the determining role. And I believe that Russia will come round to our way of seeing things. They have no other choice.

Al-Monitor: But Russia also has a relationship with Turkey. It needs to keep Turkey on an even keel particularly in Idlib. And as you well know there's a lot of talk of Turkey making concessions to Russia on Idlib in exchange for Russian concessions concerning you.

Mazlum Kobane: I don't believe that's possible any longer. That's the difference today. Russia does not want more of Syria's territory to be occupied by Turkey. In fact, that is what the Russians told us they had told Turkey.

Al-Monitor: There are other recent developments that can affect your future. Various Arab governments, notably Egypt and the Arab Emirates, are seeking to bring back Syria within the Arab League and to restore the legitimacy of the Assad regime. It looks like Assad's not going away. Would you agree?

Mazlum Kobane: Yes, I agree.

Al-Monitor: Doesn't that concern you?

Al-Monitor: Does the United States have a strategy for Syria or for this region? We know it is working on one but nothing has been announced so far.

Al-Monitor: Where can an agreement be reached? In Geneva, Astana?

Mazlum Kobane: These platforms are losing their credibility. Everyone has lost faith in these processes. I don't believe we'll get anywhere through them either. However, if America and Russia and indeed the Arab countries commit themselves to brokering an agreement between our administration and the regime, and if an agreement is reached within certain parameters, this could facilitate a solution, serve as a template for the rest of the country. If no progress has been achieved through the existing platforms over the past 10 years, we say, "Come, let's try a new way."

Al-Monitor: And what of Idlib?

Mazlum Kobane: I believe that if a solution is brokered for our region, Idlib will be solved as well.

Mazlum Kobane: Should the peoples of Syria, its government and the international stakeholders reach a consensus, Turkey will be forced to withdraw. And should the Erdogan government lose power in Turkey, that will definitely facilitate this. The international powers and the US-led coalition need to interact with our administration here on multiple levels. For now, relations are limited to the military arena.

The activities of this administration, be they social, economic, running the prisons and so on, all of these are part and parcel of combatting terrorism. In other words, the Syrian Democratic Forces are not solely responsible for combatting terrorism. It is therefore imperative that [the international community] works to help empower the autonomous administration, its political wing and the economy. The international community needs to make a political shift in this direction. At the end of the day, the people here are evaluating the overall performance of this administration and not just its military performance. The big wars are over. Our main demand is that these countries recognize our administration.

Al-Monitor: Won't that escalate tensions between you and the regime?

Mazlum Kobane: The regime is not accepting any of our demands anyway. They reject the presence of the coalition forces here. Therefore, it's really not a problem for us. The bottom line is that the stronger we are politically and militarily, the stronger our hand will be when negotiating with the regime. We are focused on a solution. So we see no contradiction [between our demand for recognition and our desire for an agreement with the regime].

Al-Monitor: Actually, the United States did dip its toes into the political sphere when it mentored talks between the Democratic Unity Party and the Kurdish National Council linked opposition parties. But the talks are frozen. Why?

Mazlum Kobane: Let us say the talks have been paused. We are waiting for [US deputy envoy for Syria] David [Brownstein] to return. When the American representative returns, the talks will resume. We had some technical issues. Travel was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Then problems emerged in southern [Iraq] Kurdistan between the KDP [Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq] and the PKK [Kurdistan Workers Party]. Clashes erupted between them. This affected Rojava. But I believe that Turkey is opposed to these talks and it makes its opposition to them clear. Some other forces want to attach conditions to our talks with the Kurdistan National Council.

Al-Monitor: Are you referring to the KDP?

Al-Monitor: What are the KDP's conditions?

Mazlum Kobane: To be honest, I don't really understand what they are. Kurdistan's national unity is a strategic matter for us. We shall do our utmost to this end and will insist on achieving this

unity no matter the obstacles and despite Turkish resistance.

Al-Monitor: Can you hold elections here without sealing an agreement with the Kurdistan National Congress? We know you are planning to hold municipal elections in the near future.

Mazlum Kobane: We shall invite the Kurdistan National Congress to conclude an agreement with us. And if we manage to do this that would obviously be a good thing. But we cannot wait forever. We need to hold elections in this region, including in the Arab majority areas. Our goal is to hold elections in the first quarter of 2022. We can no longer put them off. We liberated these areas from DAESH. There were security problems there for a long while, particularly in Deir ez-Zor. So the conditions for an election did not exist. But we can no longer continue with this structure. The local people need to choose their own leaders, their own administration. This is of utmost importance to us. When we liberated these areas, we the Syrian Democratic Forces made a promise. We said, "We will let you run your own affairs." Holding elections is important for the autonomous administration's legitimacy as well.

Al-Monitor: There are a lot of complaints about corruption in this area these days. We know this is a matter of personal concern for you.

Mazlum Kobane: It is true that corruption has become an issue and that the people are unhappy about it. We are continuing with our investigations into corruption claims. We prepared various reports with the help of our security forces. We have made some progress.

Al-Monitor: Has anyone been arrested?

Mazlum Kobane: Tens of people including people within the administration. People who stole public property.

Al-Monitor: This administration continues to be inspired by the ideology of Abdullah Ocalan. Right?

Al-Monitor: One of the main tenets of Ocalan's ideology is preserving the environment. Yet this area is overflowing with litter and waste. Were Ocalan to see this he would undoubtedly be very angry. Couldn't you be doing more to address this problem?

Mazlum Kobane: This is a serious shortcoming. This is true. That is why we set aside funds to address this problem in our 2022 municipal budget. In the old days people used to show greater care; they would clean the area around their homes and collect their rubbish. There was such a culture. But the war took a lot from us. Everyone was focused on the war and the environment was no longer a priority. We have local communes, neighborhood organizations. They will work together with the municipalities to solve this problem.

Al-Monitor: To be fair you are also faced with a huge COVID-19 problem. Health officials I spoke to here complain that the United Nations is not doing enough to help and they don't seem to care.

Mazlum Kobane: There is an injustice. There is an allocation of vaccines for this region. The vaccines are meant to come via Damascus and the Yaroubiyah crossing in Iraq. But Damascus did not send us the vaccines. Only a few. And Damascus refused to let the vaccines be delivered via Yaroubiyah even though the UN had struck an agreement for this. The international community did not apply enough pressure on Damascus. We do know that the Americans tried. However, the only aid corridor [outside the regime's control] is via Bab al-Hawa between Turkey and Idlib.

Al-Monitor: Did you get COVID-19?

Mazlum Kobane: No.

Al-Monitor: I met with the prince of the Yazidis, Dasin Farouk Beg, in Erbil. He told me, "If you see General Mazlum, please tell him to rescue our girls from al-Hol camp."

Mazlum Kobane: Till this day, we have done what we can to help. We have been very sensitive to the Yazidis' plight from the very start. We rescued more families, children, women and girls than any others. But DAESH continues to strike fear in their hearts and this prevents them from coming forward and identifying themselves in the camps. It is also because they have borne children by DAESH and they don't want to leave their children behind. Yazidi society does not accept those children. It's a social and religious problem. However, I do not believe that there are that many Yazidis here now. Our female security personnel continue with their investigations at the camps. We have a Yazidi House that deals exclusively with their affairs. I hereby invite the prince via al-Monitor. If he comes to the camp this will have a positive impact.

Al-Monitor: There has recently been a lot of speculation about your status in several news organizations and on social media. It is claimed that you have been relieved of your duties. Who am I interviewing now? Am I interviewing the commander in chief of the Syrian Democratic Forces?

Mazlum Kobane: Do you have the slightest doubt? We pay no attention to such speculations and don't deem them to be worthy of a response. In a few days, the Syrian Democratic Forces' military council will be convening. The requisite messages will be delivered then.

Al-Monitor: So you remain the commander in chief of the Syrian Democratic Forces? Correct?

Mazlum Kobane: Yes.



November 09 ; 2021
By Goran Sabah Ghafour

Zakho, a Kurdish city with invisible wonders

According to Aramaic sources, the name Zakho originally comes from "Zakhota" ("victory") after a battle between Rome and Persia near the city that ended in victory for the Romans. But that is not the only theory about the origins of the city's name.

Karwan Omar, a local historian, told Kurdistan 24 that Zakho comes from "Zey-Kho-win" which means the river of blood, possibly a reference to the same battle. But Omar has another explanation, that is the more plausible: "Zakho comes from "Zey Khowak," which means "a curved place that engulfs water."

Besides its name, this Kurdish city, a few kilometers from the Kurdistan Region-Turkey border, has several other wonders.

Delal Bridge is the most famous site in Zakho, locally known as Pirdi Delal or Pira Delal, which means "beautiful bridge." It is an ancient bridge over the Khabur River spanning 114m (374ft.). It is 15.5m (50ft.) high. Large river stones were used to build the bridge. But when was that?

Omar says there is no reliable data confirming the precise time of its construction.

"Some believe that the bridge was constructed during the Roman era 27 BC-476 AD," he noted. "But much of the present structure dates to the Ottoman era, 1299 AD, which is much later."



Zakho's historic Delal Bridge. (Photo: Goran Sabah Ghafour/K24)

And some believe that the bridge was constructed during the Abbasid era, according to the local historian.

Delal Bridge is frequently featured in Kurdish literature and imagery. The site also attracts thousands of tourists every year.

"The bridge is a landmark attraction that brings tourists from both inside and outside Kurdistan," said Anwar Adil, a tourist expert who has his own tourism company. "People from Europe, Turkey, Iran, Baghdad, and other parts of the world visit Zakho's Delal Bridge."

Adil talked about the folktales about the bridge. There are many.

"Legend has it that the bridge was considered such a tre-

mendous and unique architectural feat by the ruler who had it built that the hands of the builder were amputated to ensure the bridge would remain unique," he said.

It could be because of these folktales that people around the world love to see it.

"I have seen the bridge from photos before, but now I am here actually to see it by my own eyes," said Dildar Azad, a local tourist from Sulaimani. "It is an amazing site."

Derabon resort in Zakho is another wonder. It is located in the triangle border area of Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. In this resort, a large spring flows from the mountains. There are several tourist amenities here, such as hotels, casinos, and restaurants.

"Derabon resort is important because it includes the conical tomb of an important Sheikh of the Yezidi community," said Omar. "This is why we have pilgrimage here."

Sharanish Fall is another wonder in Zakho that attracts even more tourists.

"This beautiful fall is more than a fall. It is like a national park too as various tall trees surround it," said Azad.

Kishani, Qubad Pasha Castle, the old market, Happy Theme Park, and Shivana are among other wonders in Zakho.

"Zakho is a small town, but tourists have a lot to check out," said Adil. "With more investments here, this town will flourish more, and that attracts even more tourists."



09 novembre, 2021

Crise migratoire : le Bélarus ne « se mettra pas à genoux » devant l'Europe selon Loukachenko

Nouvelle escalade de tensions mardi à la frontière entre le Bélarus et la Pologne. Le président Alexandre Loukachenko a assuré que son pays était prêt au bras de fer avec l'UE sur la question des milliers de migrants qu'il laisse massés de son côté de la frontière.

Nous ne cherchons pas la bagarre», a lancé Alexandre Loukachenko lors d'une interview dont des extraits ont été publiés par l'agence publique Belta. «Je ne suis pas fou, je comprends parfaitement où tout cela peut mener. [...] Nous savons bien où est notre place mais nous ne nous mettrons pas non plus à genoux», a-t-il ajouté.

La France a accusé le régime du président bélarusse Alexandre Loukachenko de chercher à «déstabiliser» l'Union européenne en organisant un «trafic de migrants». Le long de la frontière entre la Pologne et le Bélarus, 3 000 à 4 000 migrants errent depuis lundi dans des températures glaciales, premières victimes de cette crise diplomatique. Il s'agit principalement de Kurdes venus du Moyen-Orient.

Selon les garde-frontières de Minsk, ces migrants désormais entassés dans un camp improvisé côté bélarusse, non loin du village polonais de Kuznica, se trouvent dans un état physique et psychologique «extrêmement mauvais», en manque notamment d'eau et de nourriture. Au moins dix migrants sont morts dans la région depuis le début de la crise, dont



Des centaines de migrants massés côté Bélarus, à la frontière du pays avec la Pologne et l'UE, lundi. (REUTERS)

sept du côté polonais de la frontière, selon le quotidien polonais Gazeta Wyborcza.

Varsovie avait averti lundi d'une arrivée massive de migrants à sa frontière avec le Bélarus, théâtre depuis cet été d'une crise migratoire. Début septembre, la Pologne a décrété l'état d'urgence et déployé plus de 12 000 gardes à la frontière, qui a désormais

des allures de zone militaire.

Mardi en fin d'après-midi, le Premier ministre polonais, Mateusz Morawiecki, a également pointé du doigt la responsabilité du président russe Vladimir Poutine, qu'il accuse d'être complice de cette crise migratoire. Dans la foulée, Bruxelles a indiqué surveiller vingt pays, dont la Russie, pour leur possible rôle dans l'acheminement

de migrants vers le Bélarus.

Alexandre Loukachenko est accusé d'orchestrer l'arrivée de migrants et réfugiés en réponse aux sanctions européennes contre son pays après la répression brutale de l'opposition, que l'autocrate dément. L'Union européenne envisage d'ailleurs l'adoption de nouvelles sanctions contre Minsk.

The Other Side of the River: The reality of the Kurdish women's movement in Rojava

Stephen Applebaum speaks to Antonia Kilian about the making of her film, 'The Other Side of the River', which explores an autonomous territory in northeastern Syria that spawned a feminist revolution

The Kurdish liberation of the Isis-held city of Minbij, in northern Syria, in 2016, was just the kind of event that the German filmmaker Antonia Kilian needed to happen to spur her on. Since 2015, she had been planning to explore first-hand the reality of the Kurdish women's movement in Rojava

– a de facto autonomous territory in northeastern Syria that spawned a feminist revolution – but did not know how to navigate the “embargo” then in place on people entering the region.

“Step by step I was preparing,” she tells me from home, “but I had no idea if I would be suc-

cessful. I heard stories of people who had managed to cross, but it was not clear for me.”

Nevertheless, as she sat in a Berlin apartment watching a TV news report showing women throwing off their black burkas, revealing colourful clothes underneath, as they

ran towards female fighters who had helped to end Isis's three-year rule, she knew it was the moment. So began a journey that led to *The Other Side of the River*, an eye-opening, intimate and beautifully shot film set on both sides of the Euphrates that is currently playing in international film festivals.

Stop à la répression syndicale à Diyarbakir, ville principale des régions kurdes en Turquie

Lundi 8 novembre au petit matin, une nouvelle vague d'arrestation a frappé les forces d'opposition progressiste kurdes à Diyarbakir, ville principale des régions kurdes de Turquie. 14 personnes ont été placées en garde à vue, sans possibilité de voir leur avocat avant 24h. Parmi elles, quatre syndicalistes, dans l'enseignement

(Egitim Sen), la santé (SES), la fonction publique (Tümbel Sen) et l'ingénierie (TMMOB). Ces syndicats sont parmi les plus actifs dans l'opposition civile à l'autoritarisme du gouvernement Erdogan.

Il y a un an tout juste, c'étaient 30 enseignant-es dont 28 syndicalistes de Egitim-Sen qui étaient placés-es ainsi en garde à vue pendant 4 jours. Ces

mêmes enseignant-es ont du la semaine dernière passer devant une commission disciplinaire, à l'issue de laquelle certain-es seront suspendu-es sans traitement. Parmi les faits reprochés : avoir participé à des manifestations ; avoir sur son ordinateur des journaux ou de la musique kurde.

L'Union syndicale Solidaires tient à affirmer sa solidarité

avec les syndicalistes victimes de la répression et leurs camarades ainsi que toutes les autres victimes de la répression de l'État turc, et dénonce une fois de plus le silence assourdissant de l'État français et des instances européennes vis à vis des violations des droits humains en Turquie.



November 09, 2021
By Zana Omer & Sirwan Kajjo

3 Killed in Suspected Turkish Drone Attack in NE Syria

Turkey is being accused by Kurdish security forces of carrying out a drone attack Tuesday in northeastern Syria that killed three civilians in a car.

The strike took place in Qamishli, a city on the Syria-Turkey border that is controlled by the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

The three victims were from the same family, according to a statement by SDF's internal security forces, which also said the attack was "carried out by a Turkish drone."

Turkey has not commented on the incident, but Kurdish forces say the Turkish military has in-

creased targeted drone operations in northeastern Syria in recent months.

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Turkey views the SDF and its main component, the People's Protection Units (YPG), as an extension of the Turkey-based Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a militant group labeled as terrorist by Washington and Ankara.

The United States, on the other hand, distinguishes between the two Kurdish groups. In the war against Islamic State, the SDF has been a key U.S. ally. The reason for the strike on the civilian vehicle in Qamishli is

unknown, although local sources claim the victims were tied to a high-ranking YPG commander.

Following a massive military assault against SDF members, Turkish military and allied Syrian militias have been in control of sections of northeastern Syria since October 2019.

Tensions between the SDF and Turkish-backed forces have increased in recent weeks. Turkish officials have also hinted at a potential push into Kurdish-controlled territory in northeastern Syria.



November 9, 2021

Kurdistan's Weekly Brief Nov 9, 2021

Iraq

Iraq's Kurdish blocs met to discuss the drafting of a new constitution for Iraqi Kurdistan last week. The Secretary of Kurdistan Parliament, Muna Qahwachi, told Rudaw the parties were given two weeks to present their suggestions and observations regarding the formation of a new constitution committee. After forming the committee, the parties will negotiate to resolve disputed points and vote to approve the document before holding a referendum to replace Iraqi Kurdistan's draft constitution that has been in place since 2009.

ISIS (Da'esh) terrorists launched another wave of attacks in the "Disputed Territories" last week, including two on Peshmerga positions near Perdi and Makhmour and a third targeting Peshmerga near Kifri on Friday. Meanwhile, despite an ongoing failure to fully implement the Baghdad-Erbil security agreement, the Ministry of Peshmerga announced Peshmerga and Iraqi forces conducted a joint operation near Nineveh in a statement that read, "The operation was carried out with the support of Iraqi air forces and coalition aircraft in the upper Kushafi and Lower Kushafi areas, where

the area was completely searched and cleared out of ISIS and terrorist remnants." That said, additional Da'esh operations killed and wounded several Iraqi soldiers. Furthermore, Secretary General of the Ministry of Peshmerga Lieutenant General Jabar Yawar said Da'esh has conducted 206 terrorist attacks in the "Disputed Territories" in 2021.

Iraq's top Kurdish officials joined the international community in condemning the attempted assassination of Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhimi on Sunday morning. While no one has claimed res-

ponsibility for the assassination attempt, Iranian-backed militias remain the prime suspects due to the fact armed drones were used in the attack. Iranian-backed militias have recently gathered in front of Baghdad's Green Zone to protest the results of the nation's parliamentary elections held on October 10, threatened the Iraqi government, and made dubious allegations of voter fraud.

Syria

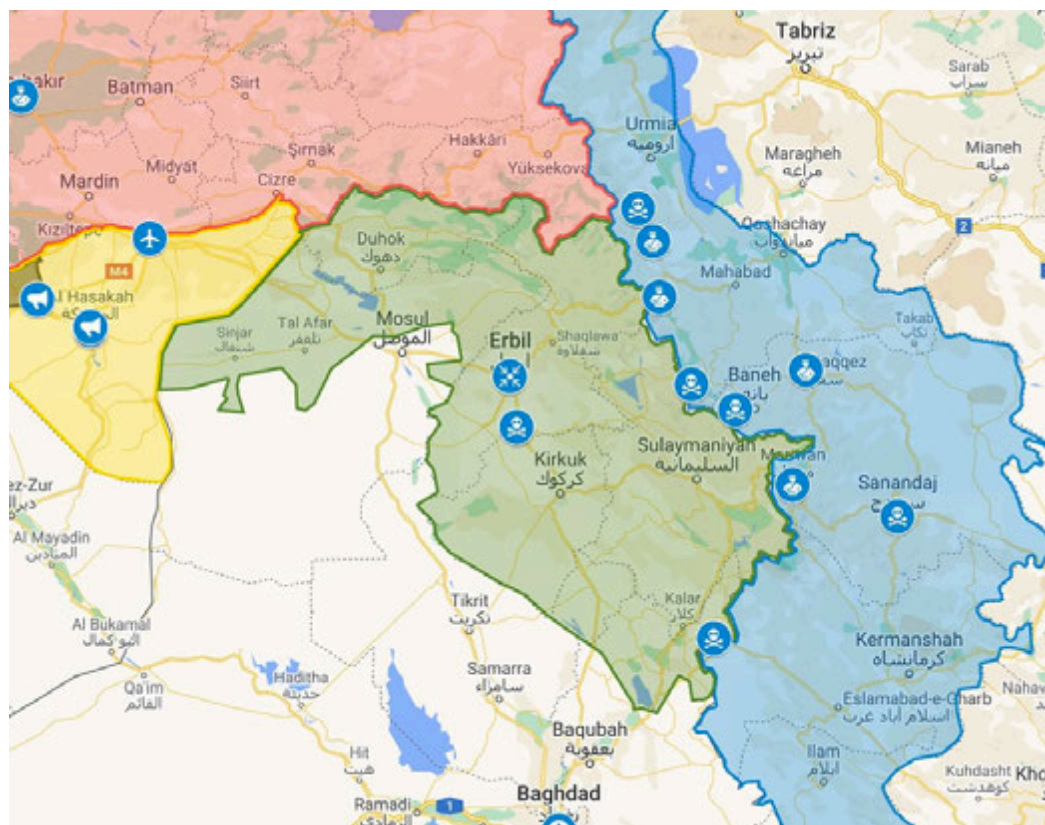
Turkey continued aggressive policies against the Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration of

North and East Syria (AANES). On Tuesday, a Turkish drone struck a vehicle inside a residential area west of Qamishli city. The attack footage showed one person dead inside the vehicle but no official comment has yet been made by the security forces. Furthermore, Turkish military and their Syrian proxies deployed dozens of military equipment near the Syrian Democratic positions of Ain Essa, Kobani, Manbij and Tal Tamer on Monday, which seemed to be a move in preparation for a new invasion. In a statement, the SDF said that “hundreds of mercenaries, accompanied by the Turkish occupation” tried to “provoke” the SDF on several occasions. “Our forces still maintain restraint and adhere to the de-escalation agreement on the one hand, and are ready for any emergency on the other,” read the SDF statement. Separately, the SDF held at least 7 funerals for their fallen fighters without releasing information of their causes of death. Politically, the AANES denied any “current” talks with the Syrian regime or surrender of any areas to the regime. The AANES described the allegations as “rumors” and “part of a war” on the region. The ANNES once again called upon the Syrian opposition to begin talks and said, “we are open to dialogue with all parties to resolve the Syrian crisis peacefully and democratically.”

The local security forces (Asayesh) announced the arrest of a Da'esh cell attempting to storm an al Haskah prison cell that holds terrorists. The Asayesh operation was conducted with US support in Deai Ez Zor on Monday where many weapons, explosives, and IED were seized.

Turkey

The Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK) released a report showing Turkey's inflation rate now stands at 19.89 percent. Amidst the rising consumer



prices that have hit Turkey's Kurdish provinces particularly hard, the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) continued pressing the Turkish government to raise the minimum wage and presented the Ministry of Labor and Social Security with a 514-page report on poverty and working conditions in Turkey. The Occupational Health and Safety Assembly (İSİG) reported work-related accidents caused 1,847 deaths in Turkey in 2021.

A mob stormed the HDP building in Diyarbakir Province's Kayapınar District and attacked it with several petrol bombs late Sunday, causing no reported casualties. The HDP building is located near a police station, and surveillance cameras at a nearby school were damaged after the attack. A court in Amed sentenced the co-chair of the Kurdish solidarity association MEBYA-DER, Şeyhmus Karadağ, to six years and three months in prison for holding press conferences to address dozens of families petitioning MEBYA-DER for information on relatives killed in Turkey's ongoing conflict with

the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). At the same time, Turkish police arrested at least 14 people, including HDP members and activists, on charges related to Kurdish activism on Monday.

Iran

The Hengaw Organization for Human Rights reported Iranian security forces shot and killed a Kurdish shepherd named Waisie Badini near Surkan. Iranian security forces also shot and wounded a shepherd named Azad Rabat and his wife, Shelier Qiran, near Sardasht. Concurrently, Iranian authorities killed a Kurdish border porter (kolbar) named Mohammed Khudaie near Baneh on Thursday and a Kurdish businessman named Farhad Zandi, who was falsely accused of smuggling contraband. Lastly, mines from the Iran-Iraq War wounded a Kurdish man named Hemin Ibrahim near Sardasht's Dowlahtu village and a 50-year-old woman near Qasir-e Shirin.

Iranian intelligence officers (Et-

tela'at) arrested two Kurdish teens, Sina Minaie and Abdullah Yousifi, in Oshnavieh (Shinno), a Kurdish man named Behnam Muradi in Marivan, and another named Anwar Shikha in Piranshahr. Moreover, Iranian security forces detained a Kurdish reporter and environmental activist named Ihsan Parsa in Lorestan.

Mashhad's Islamic Revolutionary Court sentenced a Kurdish cultural activist named Mahmud Neromend to ten years in prison for “ties with opposition groups” and “anti-government activities.” Simultaneously, Saqqez's Islamic Revolutionary Court sentenced a Kurdish woman named Fatima Karimi to one year in prison for membership of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI). At the same time, Iranian authorities held an initial hearing for seven Kurdish activists accused of “disruption of national security” and “membership of opposition parties” for participating in the “Reviving Kurdistan” campaign in Sanandaj (Sena).



November 9 2021
By Michael Knights

The Harrowing of Mustafa Kadhim

Militias' repeated targeting of Kadhim, including this week's attack on his home, emphasizes that Kadhim has done something right in his past two years as Prime Minister of Iraq.

In Old English, the word "harrowing" suggests a test of fortitude, of suffering through a trial, of being tempted and tormented. In Christianity, Christ goes through a harrowing after his death as he walks through hell on his way to resurrection. Iraq's premier Mustafa al-Kadhim certainly makes no pretensions to be anything more than a man trying his best, but he too is being harrowed as Iraq passes through its customary trial of elections, horse-trading, and government formation. In the latest twist of this long and winding tale, bombs dropped by drones struck Kadhim's house in the early hours of November 7, likely meant to intimidate politicians of all stripes, though thankfully leaving the premier himself unharmed.

This is not the first time that militias have targeted Kadhim and those close to him. Kadhim's first physical confrontation with Iran-backed militias came during the previous government formation process in April 2020, when nearly one hundred armed militiamen from the Iran-supported terrorist group Kataib Hezbollah (KH) surrounded Kadhim and his security detail at the Prime Minister's Guesthouse, a kind of hotel for government officials and visitors. At the time, Kadhim's position was head of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS). Though well-protected, his men were no match for a hundred militiamen, some carrying Rocket-Propelled Grenades (RPGs) designed to blow up armored vehicles and bunkers. There had been an altercation between Kadhim's guards and KH fighters some days earlier. Then, KH took the opportunity to seize a bodyguard, rough him up, and throw him in jail—sending a message to

the man who many expected would become the next prime minister. The intimidation did not work: Kadhim did become premier, even after KH's Hossein Moanes (Abu Ali al-Askari) warned that his appointment would be considered an act of war and would "burn what remained of the stability of Iraq."

Fast forward to June 2020, with Kadhim ensconced as prime minister but still living in the same villa by the Tigris River, owned by a famous writer and friend of Kadhim's. When Kadhim ordered the arrest of a KH terrorist, the militia sent another convoy of armed trucks to his house. They parked a twin-barreled anti-aircraft gun outside as they "negotiated" for the prisoner's release. Unknown to most Iraqis, Kadhim still did not release the KH member after this effort at intimidation. Instead, the militiaman was set free only months later, released by a cowed judiciary. Just weeks into his premiership, receiving shaky signals from his own military commanders, Kadhim was not ready to risk full-scale war with the militias.

Kadhim is now better protected than he was then. His security measures and international backup are designed precisely to deter or defeat the small army of militia forces available to attack him. This is why the militias sent drones against his house instead. Many people have expressed shock over the November 7 drone attack, but it is not even the first time that Kadhim's house has been attacked by drones. On March 4, 2021, militias correctly sensed the beginning of pre-electoral negotiations to sideline them after the upcoming October 10 elections. They responded by throwing unarmed drones at the houses of key political leaders, Kadhim included. A quadcopter struck his house, a forewarning of this week's armed drone attack.

As the earlier attacks on Kadhim's security detail in April 2020

showed, militias are as interested in hurting Kadhim's friends and colleagues as they are in hurting the Prime Minister himself. The Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) is Iraq's premier intelligence agency, responsible for countless arrests of Islamic State terrorists and other criminals. Yet the Iran-backed militias hunt them for sport in an effort to undermine Kadhim and the system he has established to protect journalists, protestors, and citizens from militia attacks. On March 21, 2021, militias assassinated INIS officer Mahmoud Laith Hussein in the Mansour neighborhood of Baghdad. On June 7, militias intercepted and killed senior INIS officer Nibras Farman in east Baghdad, who went down fighting with just a pistol in his hand. Civilians close to Kadhim have been kidnapped, tortured, and sometimes killed. His network is included in the broad swath of Iraqi people targeted by militias. Kadhim's affiliates are on the front lines of these attacks, and live with this daily fear.

Kadhim's step-by-step pushback against the militias is a frustratingly slow-burn strategy: one replacement of a compromised officer, one terrorism arrest, and one anti-corruption case at a time. But the arrests are building up, and the court cases are bearing fruit. Such work takes time, and Iraqis are rightfully impatient. Yet while any Iraqi prime minister can easily become a dictator and a death squad commander, Kadhim does not want rivers of blood in Baghdad if steadily chipping away can reduce the risk to ordinary people. This is why Iraq's security forces arrest militiamen instead of summarily executing them, even though they may later be released due to corruption and intimidation. Rule of law does still matter to some in Iraq, and they continue to believe they can win through it rather than by going beyond it. Kadhim is one of the Iraqis who continues to advocate for the rule of law, and the international com-

munity should recognize how rare it is to find a leader who chooses not to unleash brutality when he is under intense pressure to do so.

It is also quite fitting that this time, the Iran-backed militias bombed the front steps of Kadhim's modest house by the Tigris. It was on those exact steps that Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Qods Force, stood to offer Kadhim the premiership in 2018, were he to agree to bend the knee to Tehran and serve as their premier in Iraq. When he declined, they chose Adel Abdulmahdi instead, with his ruinous era of premiership lasting just two years. Kadhim did become premier afterwards, but not by Iran's hand, and despite the death threats of Iran and its militias. Now, as Iraq forms a new government after elections, the same militias have laid down a red line that the next premier can be anyone except Kadhim. That should tell us something.

As Iraqi writers Hamzeh Hadad and Muhammad Al-Waeli noted in a 2018 Fikra Forum piece, Iraq needs a leader with vision if the country is to recover. But I would argue it also needs a quietly brave leader with a conscience and a sense of responsibility. Watching Iraq nose-dive under Abdulmahdi and begin to recover under Kadhim has driven home to me the importance of the identity and character of Iraq's prime minister. In such a centralized system, a good premier is necessary, though not sufficient, to keep Iraq on the right path. Appointing such a leader is the vital first step that makes positive change possible. Whether Kadhim becomes prime minister again or not, the militia's efforts to tempt and torment him, and to drive him off his course, suggest he has done something right in these last two years, and that his example of staying the course against the militias should be emulated by future premiers, and supported by Iraq's friends.

Kirkuk Minute Nov 12, 2021

Kirkuk

ISIS (Da'esh) continued launching attacks, including a mortar attack on Friday on the Iraqi army's commando brigade in TaMour village of Daquq district, wounding a captain and a civilian. Furthermore, Da'esh terrorist sleeper cells wrote the terror group's slogan, "The Islamic State Exists", on walls in two Kurdish neighborhoods in the city. Some Kurdish observers accused non-Kurdish political sides of committing the act, which attracted the attention of the security forces leading to raids in the Kurdish areas. On Monday, the Iraqi troops raided the Kurdish neighborhood of Rahimawa and launched a search. There was no announcement of the results of the security operation.

On Monday, November 8, two IEDs exploded inside a training camp of the Turkish-backed forces called "Kirkuk Shield" in Taza subdistrict. The incident resulted in the death of two militants and the injury of two more. Kirkuk's Command Operation said the explosion was not a "terrorist" one but occurred by mistake during training. The interior ministry launched investigations into the types of explosives used in training within the camp by the Turkish proxies.

On Saturday, November 6, a scout of the Iraqi army raided the home of a known Kurdish activist named Rajab Kakai in the Daquq district. The activist, from the religious minority of Kakai, was taken by the military after a lawsuit by pro-Iranian militias in Mosul's Hamdania. According to Kakai, Iranian-backed militias attempt-

ed to take him in their custody, but public outcry prevented the army from turning him over. However, the militias investigated him for his "constant visits to US and European consulates." Kakai was freed later and he stated that the lawsuit had been withdrawn.

Despite completing its structure and renovation, Kirkuk's "international airport" remains closed and unable to attract any airlines to operate in it. The Iraq Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) has permitted the airport to run. However, no airlines other than the Iraqi one is willing to work in Kirkuk due to its security situation. In 2011, Baghdad agreed to reopen Kirkuk's airport and, yet, it remains closed after a decade and four years of construction.

As the Kurdish parties prepare to launch negotiations among themselves and the Iraqi parties to form the new government, the Kirkuk governorship and the Presidency will be the top two talking points between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The Turkish-backed Turkmen Front issued a statement rejecting any "talks" over the post of Kirkuk governor if it "excludes" them. The Turkmen-Front said the governorship is not for "Kurds only."

As the primary service has deteriorated in the past four years, the waste accumulation across the province has increased dramatically, leading people to protest and use social media platforms to express anger. The head of Kirkuk's municipalities, Faridon Adel, held a press conference stating that 500 tons of waste are left

daily on Kirkuk's streets since they can only pick 200 out of 700 tons daily. Adel said the cleaning budget had been cut in the municipality for a year and they are operating on their internal income.

On Sunday, November 7, the Iraqi oil ministry announced a suspension of the provision of 30,000 oil barrels a day to the Bazian refinery to produce kerosene for the government. The ministry said the kerosene production by refineries had reached surplus, and they will stop supplying oil to the Bazian refinery for a month. Bazian has been receiving 30,000 barrels a day to produce kerosene at 10 US dollars per barrel for eight years.

Khanaqin

The Security Cell announced the killing of four Da'esh terrorists on Friday near Kobashi village north of Jalawla (Golala) after the army's thermal cameras detected their movement.

Khanaqin's Mayor Rebwat Rahman said a delegation of Iraq's ministry of water resources visited the town and discussed the construction of a new dam on the Alwand river. The city has faced severe water shortage since Iranian dams were built and water was cut off from the town in recent years.

Tuz Khurmatu

Da'esh terrorists attacked the Peshmerga forces near Kifri last Saturday, but the Peshmerga ministry reported no casualties. On Sunday, November 7, a Da'esh IED near the same area hit a Peshmerga convoy, wounding one

member. The IED targeted the forces while they were conducting a security sweep in the area. Further, on Monday November 8, Da'esh terrorists sniped two fishermen in Amerli near the Zarga lake, killing them. Likewise, on Wednesday, Da'esh terrorists attacked the town center of Amerli late-night killing four civilians and two police officers after two hours of clashes.

Makhmour

The Ministry of Peshmerga announced Peshmerga and Iraqi forces conducted a joint operation near Nineveh in a statement that read, "the operation was carried out with the support of Iraqi air forces and coalition aircraft in the upper Kushafi and Lower Kushafi areas, where the area was completely searched and cleared out of ISIS and terrorist remnants." The following day, a French military commander, part of the US-led Global Coalition against Da'esh, headed a meeting between Peshmerga and Iraqi forces near Makhmour, discussing further security cooperation.

Shingal (Sinjar)

A delegation of Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration visited Shingal last Friday to investigate the re-displacement of the Yazidis from the town back to their camps in Iraqi Kurdistan. According to statistics released by the ministry, hundreds of Yazidi families returned to their displacement camps in a second wave migration after briefly returning to their homes. The Yazidi region continues to suffer under a security, political, and humanitarian crisis.



Washington Kurdish Institut Kirkuk Minute Nov 12, 2021

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13 novembre 2021
Par Christian Chesnot

L'eau, une "guerre à bas bruit" contre les Kurdes syriens

Un statu quo militaire précaire règne dans le nord-est syrien où la Turquie contrôle depuis octobre 2019, une bande de territoire frontalière. Le front est quasiment gelé, mais l'armée turque continue régulièrement de frapper les peshemergas kurdes du PYD, la branche syrienne du PPK, qu'elle considère comme un mouvement terroriste.

Cette semaine, les combattants kurdes ont accusé la Turquie d'avoir menée une attaque au drone contre une voiture dans la ville de Qamichli sous leur contrôle. Elle aurait tué trois personnes d'une même famille, dont un homme de 82 ans, affirme l'administration kurde.

Ce raid aurait en fait visé un responsable des Forces démocratiques syrienne (FDS), qui ne se trouvait pas dans le véhicule ciblé. Les FDS regroupent majoritairement des Kurdes du PYD, des membres de tribus arabes et des chrétiens assyriens. Elles ont participé aux batailles de Kobané et à Raqqa, qui ont permis la défaite de Daech.

Une guerre silencieuse mais dévastatrice

Aujourd'hui, une « guerre à bas bruit, silencieuse et dévastatrice », selon les mots de l'écrivain Patric Franceschi, est en cours dans les régions sous contrôle des Kurdes enclavés entre la Turquie et l'Irak. Et dans ce cas, ce n'est pas le changement climatique qui est en cause. prennent leurs sources sur son territoire.



Patric Franceschi à Paris à son retour du nord-est syrien. Crédits : christian chesnot - Radio France

« Depuis de nombreuses années, les Turcs ont construit des barrages qui leur permettent de contrôler le débit qui s'écoule en aval. Depuis quelques mois, ils ont diminué d'environ 80 % le volume d'eau qui parvient normalement à la Syrie et de 50 % des stations de pompage d'eau douce à la population. »

Ces derniers mois, le débit des eaux fluviales a été fortement réduit, selon des chiffres cités par l'ONU : 200 m³ par seconde, au lieu des 500 m³ habituels. Le niveau de l'Euphrate se trouve désormais si bas que les équipements de pompage et les canalisations ne sont plus opérationnels.

Tensions dans la population locale

L'ONG, Human Rights Watch, rappelait déjà l'année dernière que la Turquie et les forces locales qui la soutiennent avaient pris le contrôle de la station d'eau d'Allouk lors de leur offen-

sive dans le nord-est de la Syrie, en octobre 2019. Cette station d'eau, située près de la ville de Ras al-Ain (aussi connue sous le nom de Serekanîye en kurde), subvient normalement aux besoins de 460 000 personnes dans le gouvernorat d'al-Hasakeh, y compris les habitants la ville d'al-Hasakeh.

Cette réduction des volumes d'eau pour les usages domestiques et l'agriculture crée des tensions au sein de la population locale. Le prix du pain a déjà augmenté et les prochaines récoltes de blé sont d'ores et déjà menacées. Sur place, le spectre d'une famine est dans tous les esprits. Les agriculteurs sont aux abois pour trouver de l'eau d'irrigation.

« Les gens sont obligés de rationner l'eau, poursuit Patric Franceschi. Ils creusent des puits partout en espérant trouver une nappe phréatique. Les ONG internationales encore sur place organisent des distributions d'eau potable avec des camions citernes. »

Une dimension politique

Au-delà de l'urgence humanitaire, le problème est aussi politique, estime l'écrivain : « Tant qu'il n'y aura pas de pressions exercées par la communauté internationale sur Ankara pour empêcher cette guerre innombrable contre les populations, les Turcs continueront à faire ce qu'ils veulent. »

Cette région du nord-est syrien, que les Kurdes ont baptisé la « Rojava », souffre de son enclavement et du blocus imposé par la Turquie, ce qui pose des problèmes de ravitaillement. « Une lente asphyxie est à l'œuvre », assure Patric Franceschi, qui a pu mesurer le désespoir de la population sur place.

Les gens se disent : "Si personne n'intervient, il n'y a plus aucun espoir pour nous. On va être assoiffés, affamés, il n'y a plus de travail, les prix augmentent, il nous faudra alors quitter notre terre." Donc, il y aura des effets migratoires pour nous Européens.

Facteur aggravant : des années de forte sécheresse ont considérablement affecté le volume d'eau disponible dans toute la région. Cette pression de la Turquie sur les ressources hydrauliques est une nouvelle calamité pour les populations du nord-est de la Syrie.

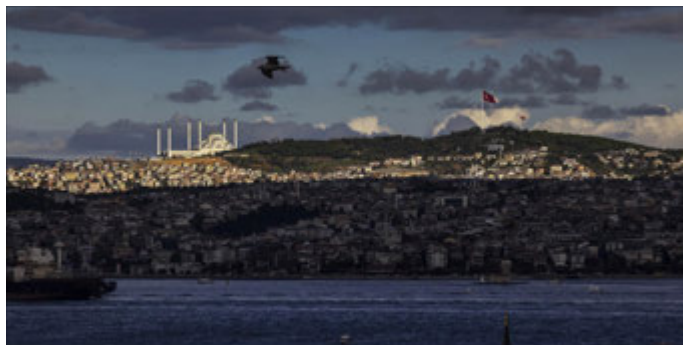
« Les politiques de ce pays n'ont pas compris qu'on avait changé » : en Turquie, une ambiance de fin de règne

Le 15 novembre 1937, Seyid Rıza, un dignitaire alévi et chef du mouvement kurde pendant la rébellion de Dersim, fut pendu par l'État turc à l'âge de 74 ans avec son fils et plusieurs compagnons.

Parlant de la révolte des Kurdes de Dersim et de Seyid Rıza, l'académicien Sedat Ulugana a déclaré que: « les héros n'ont pas de tombes dans les colonies. Ils n'ont pas autorisé qu'ils y ait des tombes pour Cheikh Said, Seyit Reza et Khalid de Gibran. On dit aussi que les corps n'ont jamais été enterrés. Je suis également tombé sur des documents d'archives français selon lesquelles leurs corps avaient été brûlés. »

84 ans après l'exécution de Seyit Rıza et ses compagnons, on ne sait toujours pas où sont leurs corps. Cheikh Said et ses 46 amis, Halit de Gibran, Yusuf Ziya, Sayyid Abdulkadir, Kemal Fevzi et bien d'autres n'ont pas de tombe. Académicien Sedat Ulugana dit : « Il n'y a pas de tombes de héros dans les colonies ». Au 84^e anniversaire de son exécution, le journal *Yeni Yasam* a interviewé le chercheur et historien Sedat Ulugana sur la révolte de Dersim et son chef Seyid Rıza. Qui est Seyit Rıza ?

Nous ne connaissons pas la véritable date de naissance de Seyit Rıza. Puisqu'il a été exécuté en 1938 à l'âge d'environ 70 ans, on peut supposer qu'il est né dans le dernier quart de 1800. Il est né à Dersim. Contrairement à ce que prétendent certains partis, il a reçu une instruction. Bien sûr, l'édu-



cation qu'il a reçue n'était pas une éducation des normes d'aujourd'hui. Au Kurdistan, les Kurdes sunnites et les Kurdes Kizilbash [Un Kizilbaş / Qizilbash est un disciple de l'ordre soufi chiite des Safavides. On appelle aussi Kizilbaş certains Kurdes alévis en Turquie] ont une tradition de madrasa [établissement islamique d'enseignement sunnite].

La tradition de la madrasa est très transitive. Autrement dit, un imam sunnite pouvait recevoir une éducation dans une médersa où se rendait également un pîr [dignitaire religieux] alévi. Par exemple, dans notre région de Kigi, les Kurdes yézidis ont envoyé leurs enfants dans les madrasas. Par exemple, Ahmedi Mizzeyi dit : « Tous nos professeurs étaient des imams. »

Durant cette époque, jusqu'au milieu des années 1800, les codes entre les religions (...) au Kurdistan étaient très flous. Ce n'était pas aussi rigide qu'aujourd'hui. De même, comme nous l'apprennent les mémoires de Nuri Dersimi, Seyid Rıza a été éduqué par le père de Nuri Dersimi, Millabrahim.

Dans son témoignage dans les

archives du tribunal, Seyid Rıza dit « Je sais lire et écrire ». Il peut lire le turc ottoman et apposer sa signature. Il y a deux signatures dans les lettres qu'il a envoyées à Sèvres, l'une est de Seyit Rıza et l'autre d'Alişer [un des dirigeants de la révolte de Dersim]. La signature d'Alişer est plus proche du turc ottoman, mais la signature de Seyit Rıza est entièrement écrite en alphabet latin.

En fait, la jeunesse de Seyit Rıza est passée dans des conflits intertribaux à Dersim. Mais avec la formation du nationalisme kurde après la deuxième monarchie constitutionnelle, [le nationalisme kurde] a reçu plus d'écho chez les Kurdes Kizilbaş par rapport aux Kurdes sunnites.

Pourquoi ?

La contradiction du milieu kurde de Kizilbaş avec l'Empire ottoman était plus profonde. Le cas échéant, les tribus kurdes sunnites pouvaient s'entendre avec les Ottomans sur la base du sunnisme. Mais les tribus kurdes Qizilbash n'avaient pas une telle chance. Nuri Dersimi est une grande chance pour Dersim. Nous savons qu'il est

allé à Istanbul et y est resté un certain temps. Nous savons qu'il était en contact avec la société kurde *Teavün ve Terakki* à cette époque.

Dersimi et quelques autres sont influencés par le nationalisme kurde à Istanbul. C'est aussi un point très intéressant. Le nationalisme kurde ne se forme pas au Kurdistan, il se forme à Istanbul. Le nationalisme kurde qui a émergé à Istanbul est transféré dans la région du Dersim par la main de ces cadres – étudiants.

Au bout d'un moment, Seyit Rıza se rend compte que les conflits entre les tribus ne leur apporteront rien. Avec la proclamation de la monarchie constitutionnelle, Seyit Rıza commence à montrer une attitude différente. Il dit que les problèmes peuvent être résolus par des compromis, pas par la vendetta ou le pillage. C'est Nuri Dersimi qui le dit. Après cela, nous rencontrons une autre visage de Seyit Rıza. La conscience kurde est très forte à Seyit Rıza. Seyit Rıza qualifie l'État turc de « Rom » [nom donné aux Ottomans et Turcs par les Kurdes]. « Nous sommes des Kurdes, ils sont des Roms », dit-il. Il est l'un des premiers chefs tribaux qui ont adopté le nationalisme kurde (...). Plus tard, ses relations avec Alişer le font devenir complètement politisé. (...) Peut-on dire que les premières rébellions kurdes de la période républicaine sont venues des Kurdes alévis ?

Absolument. La série de révoltes ne commence pas avec le *Koçgiri* de 1921, mais avec la révolte de Bitlis en 1914. En

1914, personne en dehors du centre-ville de Bitlis ne soutint cette révolte. Peut-être que quelques cadres ont agi consciemment, ce sont Hamzayı Müksey et Halil Hayali. Tous les autres participants s'étaient inscrits au club pour protéger leurs propres intérêts. Les Russes en parlent aussi. Certains de nos chercheurs kurdes, sans aller trop loin, affirment que « Bitlis est un centre culturel ». En un sens, c'est un centre culturel, mais pas le centre du nationalisme kurde. Après la Première Guerre mondiale, en 1921, une rébellion basée sur le nationalisme kurde a eu lieu à Koçgiri. Il existe des noyaux de féodalité dans de nombreuses régions du Kurdistan, mais pas à Koçgiri. C'est une résistance organisée avec une méthode nationaliste kurde. La lettre que Seyit Rıza et Alişer ont envoyée à Sèvres est, en un sens, le manifeste du nationalisme kurde dans les années 1920.

Pouvez-vous le développer un peu ?

[Le manifeste d'Aliser et Seyid Rıza] dit que les kémalistes sont des touranistes [des nationalistes turcs, panturquistes]. Il dit qu'ils combattent les Ottomans depuis des centaines d'années, qu'ils ne les ont pas laissés entrer dans Dersim, et il dit : « Nous parlons au nom de 8 millions de Kurdes », en considérant les Kurdes en tant qu'un peuple dans son ensemble, pas selon leurs religions. Elle rappelle aussi aux Français quelque chose d'historique : « Il y avait un Saladin alors, maintenant il y a des milliers de Saladin. » A travers le kurdisme, le Kızılbaş Alişer reconnaît comme étant un des siens Selahattin Eyyubi, qui est considéré comme le fondateur du sunnisme. Il révèle un nationalisme kurde holistique. Avec la fondation de la République, on peut dire que le nationalisme kurde et le patriotisme kurde étaient représentés par les tribus kurdes Kızılbaş.

Revenons à Seyit Rıza. Quel

est exactement son rôle dans la résistance de Dersim ?

Après que Seyit Rıza ait envoyé cette lettre au Conseil des traités de Sèvres en 1920, il a abandonné son identité tribale. Seyit Rıza est désormais un leader du peuple kurde. Alişer a définitivement une influence sur lui. Car Alişer est le chef de branche de tout le club kurde de la région de Koçgiri. C'est ainsi qu'il appose sa signature. C'est aussi un très bon intellectuel. Dans une lettre qu'il a envoyée à la société kurde Teali d'Istanbul, il a écrit que les livres et les journaux que la société leur avait envoyés d'Istanbul ne leur étaient pas parvenus. En d'autres termes, ils pourraient suivre la situation conjoncturelle à la fois concernant la question kurde et le processus de Sèvres en développement.

En conséquence, après 1920, Seyit Rıza n'est plus un chef de tribu, mais un chef qui parle au nom de tous les Kurdes. 8 millions de Kurdes ne sont pas seulement des Kurdes Qizilbash, il y a des sunnites, des yézidis et même des chrétiens, qu'il appelle les tribus du Kurdistan. Il dit « le peuple kurde et les tribus du Kurdistan ». Ce qu'il appelle « les tribus du Kurdistan » sont les chrétiens, les Assyriens, les Chaldéens et même les Jitans. C'est une approche très holistique. En fait, ce testament présenté en 1919 est similaire au testament présenté par Öcalan. C'est cet aspect qui m'a beaucoup surpris. La volonté de Seyit Rıza dans cette lettre est la suivante : Nous respectons les droits de tous les peuples vivant au Kurdistan, nous n'avons pas de but impérial, nous n'avons pas de but moniste. Qu'eux aussi nous respectent.

Pouvez-vous nous parler un peu de ces lettres ?

Les lettres étaient écrites en turc ottoman, une langue très simple était utilisée, les demandes étaient très simples, mais il y a aussi des phrases montrant qu'elles ont été écrites par quelqu'un qui avait

une connaissance de la langue diplomatique. Au début de la lettre, elles déclarent que Şerif Pacha est leur représentant. Il y a un portrait de Seyit Rıza qui connaît l'essence de la question kurde. Il y a un Seyit Rıza qui déclare que le Kurdistan ne compromettra pas sa liberté, et ils soulignent que, s'il le faut, ils défendront ces droits contre les Français. Dans un sens, ils montrent le bâton sous le manteau. Dans ces lettres, outre Seyit Rıza et Alişer, il y a les noms de 11 chefs tribaux de Dersim. Il y a même les noms de quelques marchands et chefs de tribus d'Erzincan.

Quelles demandes sont formulées ?

À partir de 1919, la société kurde Teali a été divisée en deux à Istanbul. Le groupe dirigé par Seyit Abdulkadir disait : « Ne poussons pas trop les Ottomans, demandons l'autonomie, même la couleur de leur autonomie devrait être culturelle, pas politique. » D'un autre côté, le groupe dirigé par Memduh Selim et l'émir Ali Bedirhan disait : « Non, nous ne voulons en aucun cas vivre avec les Ottomans. Nous voulons établir un Kurdistan indépendant. » Seyit Rıza et Alişer ont des relations solides avec le deuxième groupe. Seyit Abdulkadir se comporte plutôt comme un bureaucrate ottoman. Seyit Rıza et Alişer savent que l'Empire ottoman va s'effondrer. Ils ont deux problèmes. Premièrement, ils veulent que la frontière nord du Kurdistan passe par les montagnes du nord d'Erzincan et inclue Darende jusqu'à Koçgiri. Deuxièmement, ils ne veulent pas laisser Van aux Arméniens.

Les colonies n'ont pas de tombes de héros

On ne sait pas où se trouvent les tombes non seulement de Seyit Rıza mais aussi de Cheikh Said et Halil de Gibran. Ulugana raconte :

« Dès 1920, les kémalistes ont connaissance des lettres envoyées par Seyit Rıza. Ils

avaient déjà mis Seyit Rıza sur la liste. Ils connaissent aussi la fameuse lettre que Seyit Rıza a envoyée en 1937. Elle est envoyée au ministère français des Affaires étrangères, et une copie est envoyée aux Britanniques.

Nous avons récemment partagé un document montrant que, dans le récépissé de renseignement, il y a un cachet et la mention « Lettre venant de Dersim », que cette lettre a été remise directement au consulat à Istanbul. Elle n'a pas été envoyée par les Bedirkhan d'Alep, comme certains le prétendent, mais traduite en français. À partir de 1930, il existe une connexion entre le mouvement Hoybun et Seyit Rıza. Seyit Rıza savait très bien ce qu'il faisait. Certaines personnes aiment dire « c'est un péché » [l'exécution de Seyid Rıza], mais ce n'est pas le cas. C'est l'une des raisons pour lesquelles il est gravé dans la mémoire du peuple. Le second est son attitude inflexible devant le tribunal. C'est leur marche intrépide vers la potence. L'État ne veut pas que cette mémoire reste, qu'elle devienne permanente. Les héros n'ont pas de tombes dans les colonies. Aujourd'hui aussi, le premier endroit qu'ils attaquent sont les cimetières. Ils n'ont pas autorisé qu'il y ait les tombes de Cheikh Said, Seyit Reza et Khalid de Gibran. On dit aussi que les corps n'ont jamais été enterrés. Je suis également tombé sur des documents d'archives françaises selon lesquelles les corps de rebelles kurdes ont été incinérés. »

La lettre de Seyit Rıza, écrite en Dersim le 30 juillet 1937 et enregistrée par les autorités françaises le 2 octobre 1937, a été découverte par le chercheur Sedat Ulugana. « Je parle pour l'ensemble du Kurdistan », déclare Seyit Rıza dans sa lettre.

Sedat Ulugana: « Seyid Riza était un leader kurde indomptable »

Le 15 novembre 1937, Seyid Riza, un dignitaire alévi et chef du mouvement kurde pendant la rébellion de Dersim, fut pendu par l'État turc à l'âge de 74 ans avec son fils et plusieurs compagnons.

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Les lettres étaient écrites en turc ottoman, une langue très simple était utilisée, les demandes étaient très simples, mais il y a aussi des phrases montrant qu'elles ont été écrites par quelqu'un qui avait une connaissance de la langue diplomatique. Au début de la lettre, elles déclarent que Şerif Pacha est leur représentant. Il y a un portrait de Seyit Rıza qui connaît l'essence de la question kurde. Il y a un Seyit Rıza qui déclare que le Kurdistan ne compromettra pas sa liberté, et ils soulignent que, s'il le faut, ils défendront ces droits contre les Français. Dans un sens, ils montrent le bâton sous le manteau. Dans ces lettres, outre Seyit Rıza et Alişer, il y a les noms de 11 chefs tribaux de Dersim. Il y a même les noms de quelques marchands et chefs de tribus d'Erzincan.

Quelles demandes sont formulées ?

À partir de 1919, la société kurde Teali a été divisée en deux à Istanbul. Le groupe dirigé par Seyit Abdulkadir disait : « Ne poussons pas trop les Ottomans, demandons l'autonomie, même la couleur de leur autonomie devrait être culturelle, pas politique. » D'un autre côté, le groupe dirigé par Memduh Selim et l'émir Ali Bedirhan disait : « Non, nous ne voulons en aucun cas vivre avec les Ottomans. Nous voulons établir un Kurdistan indépendant. » Seyit Rıza et Alişer ont des relations solides avec le deuxième groupe. Seyit Abdulkadir se comporte plutôt comme un bureaucrate ottoman. Seyit Rıza et Alişer savent que l'Empire ottoman va s'effondrer. Ils ont deux problèmes. Premièrement, ils veulent que la frontière nord du Kurdistan passe par les montagnes du nord d'Erzincan et inclue Darende jusqu'à Koçgiri. Deuxièmement, ils ne veulent pas laisser Van aux Arméniens.

Les colonies n'ont pas de tombes de héros

On ne sait pas où se trouvent les tombes non seulement de

Seyit Rıza mais aussi de Cheikh Said et Halit de Gibran. Ulugana raconte :

« Dès 1920, les kémalistes ont connaissance des lettres envoyées par Seyit Rıza. Ils avaient déjà mis Seyit Rıza sur la liste. Ils connaissent aussi la fameuse lettre que Seyit Rıza a envoyée en 1937. Elle est envoyée au ministère français des Affaires étrangères, et une copie est envoyée aux Britanniques.

Nous avons récemment partagé un document montrant que, dans le récépissé de renseignement, il y a un cachet et la mention « Lettre venant de Dersim », que cette lettre a été remise directement au consulat à Istanbul. Elle n'a pas été envoyée par les Bedirhan d'Alep, comme certains le prétendent, mais traduite en français. À partir de 1930, il existe une connexion entre le mouvement Hoybun et Seyit Rıza. Seyit Rıza savait très bien ce qu'il faisait. Certaines personnes aiment dire « c'est un péché » [l'exécution de Seyid Rıza], mais ce n'est pas le cas. C'est l'une des raisons pour lesquelles il est gravé dans la mémoire du peuple. Le second est son attitude inflexible devant le tribunal. C'est leur marche intrépide vers la potence. L'État ne veut pas que cette mémoire reste, qu'elle devienne permanente. Les héros n'ont pas de tombes dans les colonies. Aujourd'hui aussi, le premier endroit qu'ils attaquent sont les cimetières. Ils n'ont pas autorisé qu'il y ait les tombes de Cheikh Said, Seyit Reza et Khalid de Gibran. On dit aussi que les corps n'ont jamais été enterrés. Je suis également tombé sur des documents d'archives françaises selon lesquelles les corps de rebelles kurdes ont été incinérés. »

La lettre de Seyit Rıza, écrite en Dersim le 30 juillet 1937 et enregistrée par les autorités françaises le 2 octobre 1937, a été découverte par le chercheur Sedat Ulugana. « Je parle pour l'ensemble du Kurdistan », déclare Seyit Rıza dans sa lettre.

Face à l'usure du pouvoir, le coup d'éclat permanent de Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Le président islamo-conservateur, jadis tout-puissant, voit son autorité minée par la crise économique, la résurgence de l'opposition et la maladie. Mais celui qui a juré d'imprimer sa marque reste maître dans l'art de prendre ses adversaires à contre-pied.

TURQUIE En foulant le hall d'entrée du tout nouvel opéra d'Istanbul, ce 29 octobre 2021, le président Erdogan ne pouvait rêver meilleure séance photo pour faire oublier ses déboires des semaines passées, sur fond de récession économique et de fiasco diplomatique évité de justesse. L'édifice ultramoderne, inauguré le jour de l'anniversaire de la République turque, occupe une place très particulière dans le cœur du « néo-sultan » : érigé sur les ruines de l'ancien centre culturel Atatürk, qui fut aux premières loges des manifestations de Gezi de 2013, il fait face à l'énorme mosquée, ouverte il y a six mois, de l'autre côté de la place Taksim. Quelle meilleure façon pour l'ex-maire islamo-conservateur d'Istanbul d'imprimer sa marque sur une ville et un pays qu'il façonne à son image depuis vingt ans ?

Le sourire de façade ne suffit pourtant pas à masquer la fatigue, évidente, qui se dessine sous ses yeux. Ses interlocuteurs le disent affaibli, souvent absent, et même sujet à des pertes de mémoire. Parfois, c'est tout son corps qui vacille, comme sur cette vidéo, partagée sur les réseaux sociaux, où le reis de 67 ans, dont on dit qu'il lutte depuis longtemps contre un cancer de la prostate, marche avec la fébrilité d'un pantin désarticulé. L'annu-



Recep Tayyip Erdogan à la fin du G20 à Rome, le 31 octobre. Le reis ne suivrait qu'une seule ligne: surpasser l'héritage laissé par Atatürk, père fondateur de la République, et se maintenir au pouvoir. ANTONIO MASIELLO/Getty Images via AFP

lation récente « pour questions sécuritaires » de son déplacement à la COP26 - fort probablement liée au fait qu'il avait déjà obtenu au G20 le tête-à-tête tant espéré avec Joe Biden pour évoquer l'achat de F-16 - a également fait couler beaucoup d'encre sur son état de santé, même si son conseiller, Ibrahim Kalin, s'est empressé de désamorcer la rumeur en publiant sur Twitter un miniclip où l'on voit les deux hommes enchaîner les passes de basket-ball.

Malade ou pas, le moral n'est plus de mise. La croissance turque, autrefois florissante, qui fit depuis 2002 la popularité de son Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP), est derrière lui. La devise locale a perdu la moitié de sa valeur depuis 2018. L'inflation frôle les 20 %. Le chômage officiel tourne autour des 15 %. Fini, le temps où les investisseurs

étrangers se pressaient aux portes d'une Turquie qui, fière de sa doctrine « zéro problème avec les voisins », tendait les bras vers l'Europe en prônant transparence, lutte contre la corruption, modernisation des infrastructures et réformes structurelles. Aujourd'hui, elle est ce pays qui se retrouve dans le collimateur du Gafi : l'organisme international vient de la placer sous surveillance pour ses manquements dans la lutte contre le blanchiment d'argent.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan a beau affirmer contrôler la situation, en démultipliant des initiatives jugées catastrophiques par les économistes - récent renvoi des directeurs adjoints de la Banque centrale, refus d'augmenter les taux d'intérêt - et en imputant la crise économique aux « forces obscures qui veulent affaiblir le pays », les Turcs ne sont plus dupes. À moins

de deux ans des prochaines élections, les sondages créditent l'AKP d'environ 30 % des intentions de vote, loin du dernier scrutin présidentiel de 2018, remporté au premier tour avec près de 53 % des suffrages exprimés. L'alliance désespérée qu'il a scellée avec les ultranationalistes du MHP trouve aussi ses limites. Selon une nouvelle enquête de l'Institut Metropoll, « 61 % des sondés supportant l'AKP et 81 % des sondés pro-MHP ont reconnu que l'économie est actuellement mal gérée en Turquie ».

Petites phrases assassines

De quoi expliquer son récent coup d'éclat autour de la menace d'expulsion des dix ambassadeurs occidentaux ? Selon le kémaliste Kemal Kılıçdaroglu, chef de file du principal parti d'opposition (CHP), le récent appel à les déclarer «

persona non grata » pour avoir demandé la libération du médecin turc Osman Kavala, emprisonné depuis quatre ans sans aucune base juridique, est une expression de désespoir visant « à créer des causes artificielles à la ruine de l'économie » et à « masquer son bilan désastreux ». Il va sans dire qu'elle traduit, aussi, une impulsivité coutumière, « que les médicaments ne font sans doute qu'accentuer », souffle un observateur préférant taire son nom. On sait Erdogan adepte des provocations et des petites phrases assassines : traitant en 2017 Angela Merkel de « nazie » après l'annulation de meetings de deux de ses ministres en Allemagne, interrogeant en 2020 la « santé mentale » d'Emmanuel Macron et appelant au boycott des produits français en réaction au projet de loi sur le « séparatisme islamiste ». À plusieurs reprises, déjà, son pays - membre incontournable de l'Otan- a frôlé la crise internationale, notamment lors de l'envoi de navires dans les eaux grecques et chypriotes au risque de se mettre à dos ses partenaires traditionnels, l'Europe et les États-Unis.

Mais bien souvent, comme avec cette nouvelle affaire des ambassades, il lui arrive de rétropédaler, en prenant la mesure des conséquences externes de ses actes. Et parce qu'il estime, aussi, que les effets escomptés ont été obtenus dans son propre pays. « Erdogan est un adepte du double langage : il est capable de revenir sur ses décisions fracassantes quand il réalise qu'elles pourraient nuire à ses relations internationales, tout en cultivant auprès de sa base l'image d'une puissance qui tient tête à l'Occident et qui n'a de leçons à recevoir de personne », analyse le politologue

turc İlhan Uzgel. Image savamment exploitée dans son tout nouveau livre, *Un monde plus juste est possible* : le reis y revient notamment sur son appel à réformer le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, selon sa petite formule d'usage : « Le monde est plus grand que cinq. »

Imprévisible aux yeux du monde extérieur, le président turc ne suivrait, en fait, qu'une seule ligne parfaitement tracée : celle qui consiste à surpasser l'héritage laissé par Atatürk, père fondateur de la République - dont les 100 ans coïncideront avec le scrutin de 2023 - et à se maintenir au pouvoir. « Faute de stratégie, Erdogan s'est imposé comme un expert en tactiques lui permettant de l'aider à rester à son poste. Aujourd'hui, une seule question lui importe : sa survie politique », poursuit İlhan Uzgel. Et d'ajouter : « Il est capable de se contredire, de changer de position à l'égard de Washington ou de Moscou, de vouloir entrer dans l'Europe tout en s'en écartant, de se montrer un jour islamiste, un jour nationaliste, un jour eurasianiste pourvu que cela serve ses intérêts. » Longtemps étiqueté conservateur, Recep Tayyip Erdogan a ainsi progressivement cédé aux sirènes du nationalisme à connotation autoritaire, tout en continuant à donner des gages aux populations pieuses en reconvertissant l'ex-basilique Sainte-Sophie en mosquée, ou encore en retirant soudainement la Turquie de la Convention d'Istanbul, destinée à lutter contre les violences faites aux femmes.

Ces prises de position ne peuvent être comprises sans s'arrêter sur deux événements majeurs : les manifestations de Gezi de 2013, premier grand soulèvement populaire contre Erdogan, alors premier minis-

tre ; et le putsch raté de juillet 2016, imputé à son ex-allié, le prédicateur Fethullah Gülen. « Depuis, il s'est mis en tête de purger le pays de toutes les voies dissidentes, tout en s'engageant dans un aventurisme militaire au niveau régional, Syrie, Libye, Haut-Karabakh, qui symbolise aussi une centralisation et une personnalisation de plus en plus marquée du pouvoir », estime sous couvert de l'anonymat un professeur de sociologie, victime du grand nettoyage post-coup d'État.

Magouilles et corruption

Avec l'instauration du système présidentiel, obtenu par référendum en 2017, Erdogan a pris la fâcheuse habitude de dégainer sans consulter ses principaux ministres, parmi lesquels celui des Affaires étrangères, tout en militarisant sa politique étrangère. « Le président turc est l'ultime décideur. Tout passe par un cercle très fermé au sein du Palais », analyse İlhan Uzgel, en comparant le sérail à une « boîte noire ». C'est une évidence : le putsch avorté de 2016 l'a conforté dans l'idée de ne s'entourer que d'un noyau très restreint d'hommes de confiance. À commencer par les membres de sa propre famille. Tel son gendre, Berat Albayrak, passé brièvement à la tête du ministère des Finances et aujourd'hui aux commandes d'un dossier qui lui est particulièrement cher : la production et la vente de drones, devenus la vitrine géostratégique du nouveau hard power turc et des ambitions de puissance du pays. Ou encore son fils, Bilal, aujourd'hui à la tête de la Fondation pour la jeunesse turque.

La presse indépendante, ou du moins ce qu'il en reste, veille néanmoins au grain. Exemple, cette série d'articles accusant

le fiston Erdogan de placer des membres de confréries religieuses, avec lesquelles il entretient des liens étroits, à des postes privilégiés au sein de l'appareil d'État. Depuis que l'AKP a perdu plusieurs grandes villes aux élections municipales de 2019, l'opposition se ragaillardit, encouragée par la victoire de deux maires kémalistes à la tête d'Ankara et Istanbul. Documents à l'appui, Mansur Yavaş et Ekrem İmamoğlu dénoncent les magouilles et la corruption qui entachent l'entourage du président. Deux anciens cofondateurs de l'AKP, l'ex-premier ministre Ahmet Davutoğlu et l'ex-ministre de l'économie, Ali Babacan, donnent également de la voix contre Erdogan. À l'unisson, ils n'ont cessé de dénoncer « le régime d'un seul homme », qu'ils estiment fatal pour le pays.

Si elles parviennent à former un bloc uni, en ralliant à leur cause d'autres petits partis et en mettant de côté leurs divergences et leurs ego, ces différentes figures de l'opposition pourraient pour la première fois présenter une menace sérieuse contre lui. Fragilisé, le numéro un de Turquie n'est pourtant pas homme à se laisser abattre. Par le passé, cet as de la tactique a prouvé qu'il était capable de convoquer des élections anticipées ou de faire réviser les lois, pourvu qu'elles l'aident à assurer sa longévité. Et l'approche du scrutin prévu en 2023 ne fera qu'augmenter la probabilité de nouvelles « surprises ». « Beaucoup d'observateurs considèrent que le président turc pourrait encourir de nombreux problèmes judiciaires s'il venait à être battu. C'est pourquoi tous les coups seront permis dans les mois à venir », prédit Didier Billion, spécialiste de la Turquie et directeur adjoint de l'Iris.

Attack on Kurdish musician Ahmet Kaya's grave in Paris

The grave of Ahmet Kaya, who died in exile in France's capital city of Paris 21 years ago tomorrow (November 16), has been attacked. The grave of the late musician is located in Paris' Père Lachaise Cemetery.

The perpetrator or perpetrators have been unknown. However, the ones who visited the grave posted a video and said that the attack was recent.

About Ahmet Kaya

Ahmet Kaya was a Kurdish folk singer born in Malatya on October 28, 1957.

On February 11, 1999, during the televised annual music awards ceremony at which he was to be named Musician of the Year, Kaya said that he wanted to produce music in his mother language Kurdish. He also announced that he had recorded a song in Kurdish (Karan, released on the Hoşçakalın Gözüm album in 2001) and intended to produce a video to accompany it.

Following this announcement, he faced massive opposition, even an attack with forks, from some other artists and celebrities in the event.

First, pop singer Serdar Ortaç

started singing a song with modified lyrics to boost nationalist feelings, then, people in the ceremony started singing 10th Year March. Later, Kaya was attacked by celebrities.

His wife Gülten Kaya describes the attack as "All of a sudden, all of those chic women and men turned into monsters, grabbing forks and knives and throwing them at us, insulting, booing. Imagine the atmosphere changing in just five minutes, almost a Kafkaesque transformation."

The incident led to a prosecution case which made him leave Turkey. In March 2000,

he was sentenced in absentia to three years and nine months in prison on charge of "spreading separatist propaganda."

He died from a heart attack in Paris on November 16, 2000 at the age of 43, and is buried in Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

In late 2013, when President Abdullah Gül was the President, Kaya posthumously won the Presidential Grand Award in Music "for his ability to bring people from different backgrounds together through his music, his unique style and his discourse." (RT/SD)



Washington Kurdish Institute
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By David L. Phillips

Europe's Newest Migrant Crisis

Some 8,000 migrants are huddled on the border of Belarus and Poland. Many are Iraqi Kurds who seek economic opportunity and human rights in the European Union (EU). Instead of mitigating the population flow, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko has weaponized migrants in retaliation for EU sanctions imposed on Belarus. The EU is ill-equipped to provide for the mass of humanity pressed against razor wire on the border between Belarus and Europe.

Poland is the epicenter of crisis. It has deployed 15,000 soldiers on its border to prevent refugees from entering the country. A growing number of refugees have perished from exposure, lack of medical care and short supplies of food and water.

A similar crisis unfolded in 2015 when more than a million refugees took flight from Turkey in the hope of crossing the Aegean, entering Greece, and making their way to Germany and Northern European countries where they hoped to find jobs and services. Many along the Balkan humanitarian corridor were fleeing violent conflict in Syria and Afghanistan.

Today, the Government of Iraq (GoI) is taking steps to address the migration crisis at its source. In August 2021, the GoI suspended flights between Baghdad and Minsk. It also suspended Belarussian visa processing and launched a public education campaign about the risks of irregular migration. Despite the GoI's effort to deter the exodus of Iraqis, desperate asylum

seekers found alternate routes through Beirut or Istanbul. The crisis is ongoing.

Why are migrants desperately fleeing Iraqi Kurdistan?

Cursory analysis suggests they are economic refugees. As such, they ineligible for protection under international humanitarian law.

Employees of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have not received salaries for months. Those who have been paid receive only a fraction of what's due. The KRG's economic woes are compounded by corruption, nepotism and the dispute with Baghdad over sharing oil revenues. As unemployment skyrockets, the GoI has downsized its social safety net, curtailing education and

health care services and eliminating subsidies for commodities, such as bread and fuel. Electricity and water are increasingly in short supply.

Despite economic difficulties, Kurds are not economic refugees. They are primarily fleeing Iraq's dysfunctional government. Iraq's administrative and security problems are compounded by Iran's influence. Iranian-backed militias target Iraqi Kurds, many of whom are secular and pro-Western.

An independence referendum for Kurdistan Region of Iraq was held on September 25, 2017. The vote for independence was overwhelming with 92.73 percent in favor. Instead of respecting their right to self-determination, the Trump ad-

ministration ignored the democratic aspirations of Iraqi Kurds.

The Biden administration is no better. It remains wedded to the fiction of “one Iraq”, turning a blind eye to ethnic tensions between Arabs and Kurds and sectarian tensions between Shiites and Sunnis, including Iraqi Kurds.

Today’s migrant crisis on the border of Belarus and Europe is unfolding. It could get much worse, as many more migrants make their way to Minsk in the hope of entering Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. The Göl is arranging a

flights for migrants who choose to return, but very few are choosing voluntary repatriation.

Migrants must not be left out in the cold. Addressing human suffering must be the international community’s priority.

The UN needs access to these migrants so they can be interviewed, and their asylum claims processed. FRONTEX, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, needs to take a leading role, alongside the International Organization of Migration (IOM). Together these agencies have the mandate and capacity to promote a

humane and orderly migration.

The migration crisis on the border between Belarus and Poland is a manifestation of the broader problem, Iraq’s general dysfunction.

The US and other western countries are stakeholders in Iraq’s success. They should act to counter Iran’s activities, which undermine Iraq’s sovereignty in pursuit of national interests and regional hegemony. Upholding the interests of Iraqi Kurds will serve as a counterweight to Iran’s malign influence.

The problem is rooted in Iraq.

So is the solution. Iraqi Kurds must feel they have a future as citizens of a united, federal and democratic Iraq. No one should blame Iraqi Kurdistan for pursuing independence if Iraq fails.

Mr. Phillips is Director of the Program on Human Rights and Peacebuilding at Columbia University. He is an Overseer of the International Rescue Committee and a board member of the Washington Kurdish Institute.

The Washington Post

November 15, 2021

Kurds, others converge in French camp, seeking to reach UK

PARIS — At least 1,500 migrants are living in tents on a muddy lot in northern France as growing numbers of people fleeing Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries seek to traverse the English Channel and reach the U.K., according to aid workers.

In Grande-Synthe, a town east of the port city of Calais, the migrants - including some families with young children - have converged on the site of a former industrial complex. Local authorities have warned of dire sanitary conditions and overcrowding in the area, risks associated with the fast approaching winter and deepening tensions between migrants and traffickers that often turn violent.

France’s interior minister and Britain’s home secretary were scheduled to speak Monday about the situation.

With its ports and tunnel to cross the English Channel, northern France has always

been a magnet for people seeking to cross to Britain, fueled by traffickers’ promises of a better life there. The crossings are a source of friction between the U.K. and France, with British officials saying France should do more to stop boats leaving. France, meanwhile, says Britain should do more to help French authorities manage the migrants and stop traffickers.

The families and young men, meanwhile, keep coming. Those clustered in Grande Synthe are primarily Iraqi Kurds propelled via trafficking networks, according to Yann Manzi, founder of aid group Utopia 56. Most are trying to cross in small inflatable boats, because police have made it harder to sneak onto trucks and ferries.

They are “packed in” at the camp in Grande Synthe, and “more and more desperate” as the weather worsens, making boat crossings riskier, he said.

More than 23,000 people have reached the U.K. in small boats across the English Channel this year, including 1,185 on Thursday, a record for a single day. In addition, thousands more were rescued at sea by French maritime authorities.

“We have a problem which is that they are coming from France and in the end, if the French authorities will not or cannot control those departures it is very difficult for us to turn them back at sea,” Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Friday.

France’s Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin rebuffed Johnson’s criticism on Monday, telling BFM-TV that “we don’t need lectures from our British friends who are our allies, but I would like to remind them that we are neither their collaborators nor their auxiliaries.”

Local authorities in northern France have been warning for months that migrants keep coming to Calais and to the fo-

rest in Grande-Synthe, east of Dunkirk.

Many of the migrants in the port area want to cross the channel to seek refugee status, look for economic opportunity or because of family and community ties. French authorities say another big draw is lax British rules toward migrants without residency papers.

“It’s the state’s responsibility,” said the mayor of the town of Grande-Synthe, Martial Beyaert, of the dire conditions in which the migrants have lived for weeks. He told BFM-TV that he repeatedly ask the government to help and set up reception clusters along the coast and cap the number of inhabitants in each shelter at 100 or 150.

“With that and with the help of humanitarian associations, we could somewhat improve conditions,” Beyaert said.

Attack on Syrian prison holding Iraqi Islamic State captives raises concerns

Local forces backed by coalition air support reportedly prevented an attack on a prison housing thousands of Islamic State operatives in northeastern Syria under Kurdish-led administration.

Reports of a planned Nov. 8 attack on a detention facility hosting thousands of alleged Islamic State operatives from Iraq and other countries in northeastern Syria earlier this month have heightened concerns about risks to regional stability and gains against the international terrorist group.

The Sinaa prison, which was apparently the intended target, holds several thousand IS operatives and is known to only occasionally be subjected to sweep-up operations by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The SDF has repeatedly lamented a lack of funding and personnel to do more than simply allow the prisoners to effectively run their own affairs within the prison. The attack is thought to have been planned to liberate prisoners held.

The next day, the international coalition (CJTFOIR) tweeted about "joint success" in an operation with the SDF in the Deir ez-Zor region, but did not go into specifics.

On Nov. 13, three Iraqi nationals including one woman were reportedly shot and killed in al-Hol camp in Hasakah province in northeastern Syria. The camp is run by the Kurdish-led administration and currently houses over 50,000 people, roughly half of whom are Iraqis. Of the 78 people known to have been killed in the camp this year, 58 were Iraqis and at least 10 were headed.

The Sinaa prison is located in the Ghweiran neighborhood in the western part of the city of Hasakah. The Hasakah region is located north of the Deir ez-Zor region. Hasakah is inhabited by both Kurds and Arabs, while Deir ez-Zor is almost entirely Arab.

The regional capital of Deir ez-Zor is west of the Euphrates River and is under Syrian government control. The Hasakah region as well as the eastern part of Deir ez-Zor are under SDF control.

A source from eastern Syria told Al-Monitor Nov. 13 that the Sinaa prison continues to host many high-value Iraqi IS leaders, including several who had had direct contact with former IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who reportedly blew himself up in October 2019 after being cornered in a raid by US forces in Syria's northwest.

The source claimed many of these Iraqi IS fighters and commanders had been involved in al-Qaeda in Iraq before that, and thus have extensive networks and over a decade of experience to draw on and to influence other detainees with.

He also claimed that some Russian nationals who had been in SDF-run detention facilities in northeastern Syria for allegedly being IS fighters had recently been moved to Damascus "to ensure that they do not escape," presumably after negotiations with the Syrian government.

The source spoke on condition of anonymity, but had met with Al-Monitor in previous years and the information provided had later proven accurate.

The Bas News website, which focuses on Kurdish areas, reported Nov. 9 that the international coalition had transferred 15 IS leaders to a base it has a presence on in Shaddadi, in Hasakah province but south of the city, and that "the transfer process comes as a prelude to transferring the insurgents to Iraq."

The media outlet cited unnamed sources as saying, "The CIA interrogated the detained IS leaders inside Sinaa prison in Hasakah before they were transferred to Shaddadi base."

It is unclear whether this alleged transfer and interrogation occurred before or after the operation.

Security issues are rampant at SDF detention facilities in northeastern Syria and the Sinaa prison has reportedly experienced multiple, serious cases of rioting in recent years. In early 2020, detainees reportedly "smashed all the CCTV cameras and the internal doors."

As of the end of last year, the SDF reportedly was holding at least 10,000 IS prisoners in approximately 14 detention centers. Most of the prisoners were captured in early 2019 when the last territory held by the international terrorist group was taken in an offensive by

the SDF and the international coalition.

Over a thousand of the IS detainees are Iraqi nationals, though some 100 were reportedly handed over to the Iraqi government earlier this year.

Many of these Iraqi IS affiliates had been pushed across the border into eastern Syria by Iraq's western Anbar offensive in 2017. Iraq declared that IS had been defeated in its territory in December 2017 after the last IS-held city in the country, Rawa, was retaken in November of that year.

The Washington-based Defense One website reported in February that the United Kingdom planned to provide funding to "double in size the current facility at Hasakah, a series of three converted school buildings that holds roughly 5,000 prisoners ... which is overcrowded and effectively run by inmates internally."

The publication quoted Lt. Gen. Paul Calvert, commander of the US-led coalition to defeat IS, as stressing, in relation to the massive prison in Hasakah, "If you have a breakout up there, that's instant combat power that immediately goes back into [IS]."

The SDF has long warned that it cannot handle the current number of IS fighters in its facilities without additional support.

Several countries continue to come in for criticism over delaying or refusing to take back their own citizens currently detained in northeastern Syria for alleged or clear IS affiliation. Iraqis and Syrians account for the largest number of detainees by far, however.

Some accuse the SDF of using these detainees to try to extract concessions and increase financial and other support from countries including the United States.

The SDF has also long been accused of arbitrary detention of local Arabs and of corruption within both its prisons and camp facilities: allegedly releasing IS affiliates who can pay large sums but refusing to release Arabs arrested for unclear reasons — and with no apparent IS affiliation — unless bribes are paid. The Kurdish-led administration has long denied these accusations.

In early 2017, Al-Monitor met

with Iraqi nationals previously in al-Hol camp who had been brought back to camps for internally displaced persons in Iraq's Salahuddin province. They claimed that al-Hol camp officials had taken their Iraqi government-issued IDs and other documents and refused to give them back unless large bribes were paid.

A UN official had at that time confirmed that confiscating refugees' IDs was "indeed the stan-

dard practice of the Kurdish camp management, despite UNHCR's advocacy."

The porous border between Iraq and Syria and the thousands of IS operatives detained in eastern Syria with links to Iraq means that any prison break in eastern Syria would almost immediately have serious repercussions on its eastern neighbor as well.



November 16, 2021

Flagship Workshop for Persons with Disabilities Makes History in Iraq, MENA Region

Flagship Workshop for Persons with Disabilities Makes History in Iraq, MENA Region

Erbil — Iraq has one of the largest populations of persons with disabilities in the world. Persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in Iraq are increasingly being asked to advocate for their rights to their government and humanitarian and development agencies. Yet, there has been limited opportunities for persons with disabilities from various governorates in Iraq to develop a strong and comprehensive understanding of their rights.

In partnership with the International Disability Alliance (IDA), the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organizations (IADO), and the Arab Organization of Persons with Disabilities, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized the Bridge CRP-SDGs* Module 1 training in Erbil from 9-16 November — the first Iraq-specific training of its kind, and the first national Bridge workshop in

the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA).

Bridge CRPD-SDGs* is a three-module, intensive capacity building initiative. It supports persons with disabilities to comprehensively advocate for the realization of all human rights for all persons with disabilities.

"After waiting for years to find donors to support the implementation of Bridge in Iraq, finally our dream came true! 108 candidates with different types of disabilities applied from across Iraq," said Mwafaq Al-Khafaji, Head of IADO. "Bridge is a great opportunity to improve advocacy skills of persons with disabilities in Iraq."

23 participants with diverse disabilities and experiences were selected, representing 12 Governorates across Iraq. Global Bridge Quality Criteria were followed to ensure that representatives of underrepresented groups, including people with intellectual disabilities, Deaf people, people with psychosocial disabilities, autism

people, women with disabilities, youth with disabilities, older people, Yazidis with disabilities and internally displaced people with disabilities were included in the training.

Accessible and inclusive facilitation included sign language interpreters; illustrators drawing concepts for participants with specific visual learning styles; personal assistants; translators; and accessible training materials. Arabic speaking trainers with disabilities from the MENA Region (including Iraq) facilitated the module.

"This training is very useful and relevant; I'm benefiting a lot," said Yadgar Kareem, a Bridge participant and Head of Kurdistan Union for the Blind and People with Low Vision, during the first week of the session. "Such trainings [help empower] members of Organisations of persons with disabilities members to defend their rights."

Globally, IOM is committed to reducing and addressing barriers facing people with disabili-

ties. In December 2019, the IOM Iraq Disability Inclusion Strategy 2019–2021 was launched to help the government develop programmes that support the needs of migrants with disabilities. In 2021 IOM has been mapping and collaborating with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities; working towards making IOM community centres accessible; and developing guidance for staff to implement disability inclusive programming.

"It is significant to see the Bridge training hosted for the first time in Iraq, developed and led by persons with disabilities," said IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Giorgi Gigauri. "They are best placed to speak about their barriers, and their perspectives must be considered first when developing inclusive programming. We thank our partners for their hard work organizing this workshop, and we thank the Government Australia for the ongoing support of IOM's disability inclusion efforts."

Kurdistan's Weekly Brief Nov 16, 2021

Iran

On Thursday, November 10th, the Iranian regime's security forces—mainly its intelligence agency (Ettela'at) and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)—launched a massive raid-and-arrest campaign in the Kurdish cities of Sanandaj, Baneh, Marivan, and Saqqez. As a result, an estimated 32 Kurdish civilians and activists have been arrested. Human rights groups have reported planes and large-scale military forces used during Iran's raiding of the Kurdish mountainous areas. Additionally, the Ettela'at arrested a 70-year old former political prisoner, Omar Sharifi. Human rights groups and the Cooperation Center for Iranian Kurdistan's Political Parties (CCIKP) denounced Tehran's crackdown on the Kurds. The CCIKP appealed to the international community to take a "stance" on the ongoing crisis in Iranian Kurdistan.

In London, several international human rights groups took part in a four-day hearing testimony of witnesses whose family members were killed by the Iranian regime during the anti-government protests in the Fall of 2019. The hearing is part of the International People's Tribunal on Iran's Atrocities and holds the proper authorities accountable for crimes committed against protesters in Iran. A Kurdish witness to the events, Aram Mardokhi, said that Iranian snipers shot civilians during the protests. The snipers in question were led by the Head of Security, Sarang Jawamer-margi. Additionally, an Iranian news website said that it has audio evidence of the Deputy Chairman of the Judicial Com-

mittee, Hassan Norouzi, admitting to killing protesters. In the 2019 Fall protests, 1,500 civilians were killed, but Tehran continues to deny such casualties.

Iranian teachers across the country, including in the Kurdish region, held protests on Thursday demanding both unpaid salaries and an increase of wages, as the Iranian cost of living has dramatically increased in recent years. The Kurdish opposition parties supported the protests and called for more reforms in education, including teaching in languages other than Farsi.

Iranian border guards wounded a Kurdish borderporter (Kolbar) named Karim Khandedar near the northern border of Sardasht last Monday. At the same time, a landmine injured an 18-year old Kolbar named Arvin Showkati, near western Baneh on Sunday.

Iraq

Following the failed assassination attempt of Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhimi by Iranian-backed militias, the Iranian Commander of al Quds forces in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Esmael Qaani visited Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region. According to several media reports, Qaani held meetings with top Iraqi officials in addition to military commanders. In Kurdistan, Qaani allegedly told the Kurdish officials "not to get involved in internal Shia disputes." Qaani replaced Qassim Solemani, who was killed by a US strike in December of 2019.

Thousands of Kurdish refugees remain trapped on the

Belarus-Poland borders for the second week. At least two people died from hunger and cold, including a 14-year old who died in the freezing temperatures. Both Belarusian and Polish authorities have deployed thousands of troops alongside their borders as the Kurdish refugees became a pressure card by the Belarusian regime and the European Union (EU).

Osman Ocalan, the younger brother of the imprisoned Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan, passed away on Monday due to COVID. Osman Ocalan defected from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 2004 and settled in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Ocalan remained banned from returning to Turkey.

Syria

The commander of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Mazloum Abdi, told al-Monitor that President Biden spoke with Turkish President Erdogan about how the U.S. will not accept a new attack from Turkey in the Rojava region. However, in a statement, the SDF said that Turkey and its radical proxies continue targeting Tal Tamer, Ain Essa, and Tal Abyad towns with heavy weapons. The SDF said the "daily attacks" add to the mounting food security dilemmas facing the people of the region. Turkish proxies also reportedly bombarded Zarkan (Abu Rasen). Separately, a U.S. delegation, led by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, visited the region and met with Abdi and Ilham Ahmed, the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC) leader. Last week, the SDF arrested

four Da'esh terrorists in joint operations with the US-led coalition, including Jadeed Eke-dat of the Deir Ez Zor province. The SDF announced the sears of Da'esh weapons and ammo as well.

Turkey

In the most recent oppression against the Kurds, a Diyarbakir (Amed) High Criminal Court sentenced Basak Demirtas, the wife of the jailed Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtas, to thirty months in prison for "falsified" medical records. However, Demirtas's lawyers denied such charges and explained that a physician's typo was used in the political case.

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) submitted its preliminary defense in the government's closure case it is facing. The Turkish Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation is set to respond within a month, and the HDP will be granted one month to file its primary defense. Meanwhile, lawyers and some of the Kurdish politicians boycotted the sixth hearing session of what is known as "Kobani Trials" against 106 HDP politicians and jailed lawmakers. The court judge ordered a criminal complaint against the lawyers. Constant jailing of those using the word "Kurdistan" led to a Kurdish lawmaker of Van province, Murat Sarisaç, formally filing questions to Turkey's Vice President, Fuat Oktay. "Is it illegal to refer to a cultural and historical geography where Kurds have lived for millennia as 'Kurdistan'? If so, what is the rationale for this prohibition?" asked Sarisaç alongside three other questions.

Pour les Kurdes d'Irak, l'Europe est « un paradis où les gens réalisent leurs rêves »

Mera Jasm Bakr est chercheur associé au bureau Syrie-Irak de la Fondation Konrad Adenauer. Il travaille sur les racines de l'émigration kurde, ce qu'il l'a amené à parcourir les zones rurales du Kurdistan d'Irak, à la rencontre de jeunes dont l'unique rêve est de rejoindre le Vieux Continent.

La Croix : Pourquoi les Kurdes rêvent-ils à ce point de gagner l'Europe?

Mera Jasm Bakr : Les candidats à l'exil viennent surtout de zones rurales, comme Said Sadiq, Darbandikhan et Ranya. Mais pour comprendre les racines du phénomène, il faut remonter à la chute du régime baasiste en 2003 quand toute l'infrastructure de districts ruraux a été détruite. Après la formation du nouveau gouvernement irakien, des milliards de dollars ont été distribués aux deux partis au pouvoir, le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) et l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK).

Mais au lieu d'utiliser cet argent pour réhabiliter ces zones et rebâtir l'infrastructure économique, ils ont massivement investi dans le secteur sécuritaire et dans l'administration. Au Kurdistan, il y a 1,2 million de fonctionnaires sur 6 millions d'habitants ! Mais avec la crise de 2014, la guerre avec l'État islamique et la chute des prix du pétrole, Bagdad a arrêté d'envoyer cet argent au pouvoir kurde, si bien que les fonctionnaires n'ont pu être payés et que la situation économique s'est très vite dégradée.

Depuis, les jeunes Kurdes, même diplômés, savent qu'ils n'ont aucune chance de trouver du travail. Il y a un énorme désenchantement. Même quand je leur demande le rapport à leur patrie, ils me rient au nez. « Une patrie, c'est un endroit où on se sent à l'aise, en sécurité et où on peut vivre dans la dignité ! », m'a ré-



pondu l'un d'eux.

C'est pareil pour les familles qui n'ont pas pu se bâtir un avenir, mais veulent en offrir un à leurs enfants. Le père d'un jeune homme mort il y a quelques jours vers la frontière polonaise m'a dit aujourd'hui lors de ses obsèques : « Je ne pouvais pas aider mon enfant. »

Assiste-t-on aussi à un phénomène d'entraînement ?

M. J. K. : La diaspora kurde est très importante en Europe. Au Kurdistan, il est impossible de rencontrer quelqu'un qui n'ait pas un frère, un cousin, un ami qui ait émigré. Alors ils échangent sur les opportunités de travail, le système de santé, la vie. Et il y a une énorme pression de groupe. L'Europe est pour eux « un paradis où les gens vont et réalisent leurs rêves ».

Ont-ils conscience qu'ils sont instrumentalisés politiquement ?

M. J. K. : Ils ont une compréhension élémentaire de ce qui se joue avec Minsk, mais voient tout de même cette crise comme une opportunité. Ils n'ont plus besoin de prendre de bateau pour traverser l'Europe, il suffit d'un billet d'avion et de passer la frontière. La Biélorussie est une porte de sortie vers l'Europe.

Quel procédé utilisent-ils pour quitter le Kurdistan ?

M. J. K. : C'est tellement facile. Il n'y a pas besoin de disposer d'un savoir particulier. Il suffit d'aller dans une agence de voyages, de demander un « package » pour la Biélorussie et de se mettre d'accord sur un prix. Ces packages comprennent

le visa, le vol et l'hôtel à Minsk. Depuis la crise avec Minsk, ces agences font preuve d'un peu plus de discrétion, et le processus s'est un peu compliqué. Mais il y a beaucoup de façons d'y arriver. Les gens prennent désormais un visa biélorusse et un visa pour Dubaï puis réservent un vol pour Dubaï où ils s'envolent pour Minsk.

Les gouvernements irakien et kurde ont-ils les moyens de réguler ce phénomène ?

M. J. K. : Le gouvernement n'a pris aucune mesure quand il était encore temps de le faire. L'annonce par exemple de la fermeture des consulats biélorusses est intervenue une fois que les visas avaient déjà été émis ! Il aurait suffi de dire qu'avec un visa biélorusse plus personne ne pourrait plus quitter l'Irak.

Des liens universitaires entre la France et le Kurdistan

La réputation des combattants kurdes n'est plus à faire. En revanche, on connaît moins les universités du Rojava. A Paris, un « centre de solidarité et de coopération avec les universités du Nord et de l'Est de la Syrie » vient de naître...

En pleine guerre, les habitantes et habitants du nord et de l'est de la Syrie ont créé plusieurs institutions universitaires, telles que l'Université d'Afrin (ville actuellement occupée par la Turquie), l'Université du Rojava, l'Université de Kobani et, plus récemment, l'Université d'Al-Sharq à Raqqa.

Fidèle à un principe d'égalité, ce centre créé à Paris est co-présidé par Hawjin Baghali et Engin Sustam. Ce dernier explique au Peuple breton qu'« avec ce centre, nous espérons développer une meilleure coordination universitaire entre les universitaires du monde entier et les universités du Rojava et de la région nord et est de la Syrie ». Le but ? « Créer un réseau transfrontalier et transnational pour une pédagogie alternative au sein des réseaux universitaires face à l'ancien système d'enseignement ordinaire en Syrie. Il s'agit de remplacer la pédagogie coloniale et autoritaire du régime gouvernée par le Parti Baas avec une éducation démocratique, autonome, décoloniale, et libertaire », détaille le nouveau co-président.

Dans un communiqué, huit objectifs précis sont exposés :



– Présenter et faire connaître les universités aux personnes physiques et morales, aux intellectuel·les, ainsi qu'aux institutions académiques et universitaires internationales.

– Recruter des enseignants-es et/ou des chercheur-es pour les laboratoires des universités.

– Favoriser le développement de programmes de collaboration et de projets de recherche avec des établissements d'enseignement supérieur internationaux.

– Faciliter et organiser les programmes d'échange des étudiant-es, notamment grâce à des programmes d'échanges universitaires entre établissements d'enseignement supérieur.

– Organiser des débats, panels, discussions, séminaires, expositions et conférences.

– Aider les universités dans leur mission de développement des médias numériques.

– Contribuer aux projets de tra-

duction et aux missions d'interprétation des universités.

– Fournir des ressources éducatives et infrastructurelles aux universités (telles que des livres académiques, des abonnements à des plateformes académiques, des ordinateurs portables et d'autres matériels pédagogiques et de recherche).

Un site web a été créé pour ce centre : www.cscunes.com

Kurdish singer says concert cancelled by municipality for including Kurdish songs

Kurdish singer Mem Ararat said in a statement on Twitter that a concert of his which was scheduled to take place on December 4 at Ankara's Neşet Ertaş Culture Center was cancelled by the authorities because it included Kurdish songs.

Ararat said the Keçiören Municipality called the organizer and told them they had cancelled the concert as they were not aware it would include Kurdish songs when the contract was signed and that they could not allow that.

According to Ararat, the cancellation amounted to a hate crime. "Although most of the tickets were sold, my concert was abruptly cancelled," he said. "This will not stop us from



singing our songs in all [Kurdish] dialects!"

Speaking to the Duvar news website, Buket Taker from the municipality said they had cancelled the concert because the organizers had put a different name, Mehmet Esen, on the contract.

"We cancelled the concert be-

cause of false information," she added. "They told us the room would be rented for a play by Mehmet Esen and said the play would be like a musical."

Taker said the cancellation had nothing to do with the language of the songs. When Taker was reminded that Mehmet Esen was Ararat's name on his official identification document,

she said they still required his "stage name."

Taker said the municipality would be filing a complaint against Ararat for providing false information on the contract, although Mehmet Esen is his official name.

The use of Kurdish has been [heavily restricted](#) in recent years.

Prohibitions [against](#) the use of Kurdish in Turkey go back many years. Kurdish language, clothing, folklore and names had been banned since 1937. The words "Kurds," "Kurdistan" and "Kurdish" were among those officially prohibited. After a military coup in 1980, speaking Kurdish was officially forbidden even in private life.

Deux autres civils enlevés à Afrin

Les forces turques et les groupes de mercenaires sous contrôle turc continuent de cibler les civils dans les régions occupées du nord de la Syrie, notamment à Afrin.

Ebdo Murad Reşo, 38 ans, du village d'Omo dans le district de Mabata à Afrin, a été enlevé par les factions de djihadistes soutenues par la Turquie à un poste de contrôle près d'Afrin, ont rapporté des sources locales. Selon les informations, l'homme se rendait à Azaz.

C'est la deuxième fois qu'il est enlevé par les forces d'occupation.

D'autre part, un enfant de 14 ans du nom de Hisên Şaban aurait été enlevé par les occupants dans le village de Badina, à Rajo, un autre district d'Afrin.

L'État turc a installé des groupes de mercenaires djihadistes et établi un régime de terreur dans la région d'Afrin qu'il occupe depuis mars 2018. Les enlèvements avec de-

mandes de rançon, les pillages et les déplacements sont devenus le quotidien de la population. Rien qu'au cours des deux derniers mois, plus de 300 enlèvements ont été enregistrés à Afrin. 25 des victimes étaient des femmes. Au cours de cette même période, 6 exécutions de civils ont été recensées.

Pour la période comprise entre le 29 juillet et le 23 août, l'Organisation des droits humains d'Afrin a relevé 101 enlève-

ments. 17 des personnes enlevées étaient des femmes et trois des mineurs. Souvent, les personnes enlevées sont emmenées dans des cellules de torture gérées par des mercenaires ou les services de renseignement turcs (MIT). La plupart sont libérées après paiement de rançons. Dans plusieurs cas, les personnes kidnappées ont été [tuées sous la torture](#). Ce climat de terreur qui s'inscrit dans la politique turque de [nettoyage ethnique](#) vise à chasser la population kurde de la région.

Raid policier à Sirnak : 27 personnes arrêtées

Des commandos de la police turque ont pris d'assaut, tôt ce matin, plusieurs lieux d'habitation dans la province kurde de Sirnak.

D'après les informations parvenues de source locale,

27 personnes ont été placées en garde à vue, tandis que six autres sont recherchées.

27 personnes ont été arrêtées mercredi matin dans des raids simultanés menés par les forces spéciales de la police turque à Cizir et Silopi, dans la province de Sirnak, au nord du Kurdistan. Six autres personnes seraient actuellement recherchées dans le cadre de cette opération. De nombreuses maisons ont été prises d'assaut par les commandos. Lors d'une des perquisitions, deux mineurs auraient été maltraités par les policiers.

Pour l'heure, les autorités n'ont pas communiqué le motif des



arrestations. Les personnes gardées à vue se voient refuser une assistance juridique,

ce qui est une pratique courante dans les procédures politiques en Turquie.

Les milieux politiques et syndicaux kurdes sont fréquemment visés par des vagues d'arrestations. La semaine dernière, 19 dirigeants locaux du Parti démocratique des Peuples (HDP) et militants syndicaux ont été arrêtés au cours d'une opération menée dans plusieurs provinces, principalement dans la métropole kurde de Diyarbakir. 14 d'entre eux ont été placés en détention lundi dernier.

Crise migratoire à la frontière entre Pologne et Biélorussie : « Nous sommes devenus des pions »

Chair à canon du régime Loukachenko, des milliers d'exilés, souvent des Kurdes irakiens leurrés par des réseaux mafieux, sont poussés vers la frontière polonaise, après avoir subi un calvaire d'humiliations et de mauvais traitements.

Leurs corps épuisés, affaiblis, travaillés par le froid, la fatigue et l'angoisse se sont transformés à leur insu en armes, dans une guerre qui n'est pas la leur. Mercredi 17 novembre au matin, ils étaient encore quelques milliers d'exilés échoués aux portes de l'Union européenne, après avoir été poussés la veille par les forces

biélorusses à enfoncer la frontière polonaise. Kurdes irakiens en très grande majorité, fuyant un avenir bouché dans leur pays d'origine, ils ont été attirés dans ce piège infernal à la suite de l'orchestration, par Minsk, d'afflux migratoires vers l'Europe en provenance du Moyen-Orient, via la Pologne et la Lituanie.

Pour le régime biélorusse, ces hommes, ces femmes et ces enfants constituent de la chair à canon destinée à déferler sur ses adversaires occidentaux, en représailles aux sanctions imposées après la répression violente du soulèvement populaire de 2020 contre la réélection du président Alexandre Loukachenko. Le Monde a pu

joindre certains d'entre eux quelques heures après la confrontation organisée par les militaires biélorusses entre ces migrants et les forces polonaises qui gardent leur frontière comme une citadelle assiégée.

« Nous avons été rassemblés comme du bétail par les Biélo-

russes », raconte au téléphone Nishan, 26 ans, la voix griffée par une toux constante et mauvaise (Nous ne publions pas le nom de familles pour préserver la sécurité des migrants). En Biélorussie depuis début novembre, il est arrivé dans le pays avec un groupe de douze personnes, dont des enfants, en provenance du Kurdistan irakien. « *Au début du mois, nous étions éparpillés dans la forêt en petits groupes, on était seuls et on ne savait pas où aller. Puis les policiers ou les militaires biélorusses sont venus pour nous regrouper* », explique le jeune homme. D'après lui, les hommes de Minsk ont accompagné d'humiliations violentes ce travail de rabattage. « *J'ai reçu un coup de poing dans la poitrine parce que je refusais de répondre à leurs ordres, raconte-t-il. Nous avons demandé à un groupe de militaires de nous donner de l'eau. Ils ont sorti leur sexe et nous ont dit qu'on pouvait boire leur urine.* »

Le piège

Au fil des jours, un mouvement s'est dessiné, orchestré par les Biélorusses, vers les environs de Grodno, en face du poste frontalier polonais de Kuznica. « *Dans la nuit du 15 novembre, nous avons commencé à voir des groupes de plus en plus nombreux partir vers une destination inconnue*, raconte Musa, un migrant kurde irakien de 29 ans. *Petit à petit, on a compris que les Biélorusses nous poussaient dans une direction précise.* » Quelques heures plus tard, le 16 novembre, Musa et ses compagnons se trouvent dans ce qu'il décrit comme la « *zone tampon* » entre la Pologne et la Biélorussie, près du poste-frontière.

De nombreuses images diffusées sur les réseaux sociaux ont montré cet espace délimité d'un côté par les barbelés, les militaires et les forces anti-émeutes polonaises, et de l'autre, par les hommes de



Dans un camp de la région de Grodno, en Biélorussie, près de la frontière polonaise, le 14 novembre 2021. OKSANA MANCHUK / AFP

Minsk. « *Les heures passaient, on avait froid, on était affamés*, raconte le jeune Kurde. *On pensait que les Polonais allaient peut-être ouvrir, mais rien n'arrivait. On était énervés, on réclamait des vivres aux Polonais. On n'en pouvait plus. Les Biélorusses nous ont transformés en rats affamés prêts à tout pour sortir de leur piège.* »

Aucun retour en arrière ne paraissait dès lors plus possible pour les 2 000 à 3 000 personnes poussées vers les lignes polonaises. « *La stratégie des Biélorusses consiste à profiter du fait que nous sommes à bout pour nous faire faire ce qu'ils veulent. Par exemple, ils nous disent que si on veut retourner à l'arrière pour se réapprovisionner, on doit aller attaquer la frontière* », raconte Nishan. Mais le rôle des hommes en armes du régime de Loukachenko ne s'arrête pas là.

Menaces physiques

« *Trois jours durant, les Biélorusses ont fait passer des pinces, des outils pour franchir les barbelés polonais. Ils nous ont forcés à nous en servir* », raconte Nishan. Musa ac-

quiesce : « *Comme la majorité d'entre nous refusaient d'attaquer les Polonais, des Biélorusses venaient par deux ou trois, formaient des petits groupes d'une vingtaine de personnes pour les forcer à s'attaquer aux barbelés. Ceux qui ne s'exécutaient pas étaient menacés physiquement.* » En face, les Polonais crient à l'invasion et ordonnent la riposte à coups de grenades de gaz lacrymogène et de canons à eau, alimentant les boues du no man's land.

Deux Etats, deux armées, une même violence dont les victimes importées vers ce champ de bataille étranger ont été leurrées par l'espoir d'une vie meilleure, auprès de proches déjà installés en Allemagne ou en Suède. Les exilés sont conscients du jeu politique dont ils sont l'instrument. « *Je comprends qu'il y a une grande hostilité entre ces deux pays et qu'ils nous utilisent pour se combattre. Nous sommes devenus les pions d'un jeu d'échecs entre ces deux pays qui nous bougent comme ils veulent. L'un nous pousse, l'autre nous rejette* », résume Musa.

A la fin de la journée de mardi,

les forces polonaises n'ont pas bougé d'un pouce, offrant à la propagande de Loukachenko des images cruelles de refoulements inhumains par un pays européen. Reste alors, pour les exilés, la fatigue et la confusion qui s'écrasent sur eux dans le soir qui tombe. Ils ont faim. Leurs récits évoquent des distributions insuffisantes, par la Croix-Rouge biélorusse, de denrées immangeables. Ils survivent avec un peu de lait, un peu de pain, des restes de dattes et de fruits secs rapportés de Minsk au fond des sacs. « *L'angoisse est telle que même si nous sommes affamés, nous ne pouvons rien avaler* », raconte Nishan. Tebin, Kurde d'Irak, 39 ans, ancien fonctionnaire du ministère de l'agriculture, raconte qu'il faut parfois s'agenouiller dans la boue face aux Biélorusses pour avoir quelque chose à manger : « *Il faut vraiment être à bout pour faire ça.* »

« On n'ose plus regarder nos propres corps »

Ils sont épuisés, se forçant à rester éveillés, la nuit, pour ne pas mourir de froid dans des abris de fortune en branches, sous les tentes ou sous le ciel nocturne. Ils sont sales. Vivant,

depuis des semaines pour certains d'entre eux, dans des conditions d'hygiène déplorables, ils racontent leur honte. « Si vous étiez là, vous pourriez nous voir, mais vous ne pourriez pas nous regarder. Nous puons. Nos mains sont couvertes de gerçures, nos pieds saignent. On n'ose même plus se regarder les uns les autres. On n'ose plus regarder nos propres corps », raconte Tebin.

Ils sont malades, blessés. « Autour de nous, il y a certaines personnes qui, à cause du froid, perdent la peau de leurs extrémités qui sont à vif, et qui ont les mains et les bras couverts d'entailles à cause des barbelés », raconte Musa. Comme il a fait quelques études médicales, beaucoup veulent voir en lui un médecin, un docteur. On l'appelle pour soigner les malades transis de froid, secoués par la toux. « Je ne peux rien faire pour eux », regrette-t-il. Certains Kurdes irakiens ont tenté d'emmener les malades les plus graves vers les lignes polonaises, enveloppés dans des couvertures, sur des civières improvisées. « Ils ne les ont même pas regardés », raconte Tebin. Et puis il y a les enfants. Musa raconte que la veille, un bébé de 8 mois, gardé près du feu par sa mère pour le tenir au chaud, a failli mourir étouffé : « On manque de bois sec, alors on brûle n'importe quoi et ça produit des fumées toxiques. »

Que va-t-il advenir d'eux désormais ? « Tout change tout le temps, on ne sait même pas ce qui va se passer dans les heures, dans les minutes qui viennent », raconte, mardi soir, Tebin. Pour les naufragés de la



Un migrant à proximité du poste frontière de Bruzgi-Kuznica dans la région de Grodno, en Biélorussie, près de la frontière polonaise, le 16 novembre 2021. LEONID SCHEGLOV / BELTA VIA REUTERS

frontière, l'avenir est un écran opaque parcouru de rumeurs. Depuis les petites heures de la nuit, un bruit inquiétant a commencé à courir parmi les exilés. On les emmènerait vers la frontière de la Lituanie, à une cinquantaine de kilomètres, réitérer une opération similaire à celle de la veille. Mercredi à l'aube, après avoir passé la nuit dans le froid, Nishan raconte avoir été agrégé, avec ses compagnons, à un groupe d'une centaine de personnes emmenées en bus sous la supervision des militaires biélorusses vers un hôtel de la localité de Parecca, à moins de 7 kilomètres de la frontière lituanienne.

La hantise d'un retour au pays

A d'autres, on a proposé un abri, au nombre de lits très limité, quelques centaines, dans

un centre logistique transformé en dortoir, dont les images circulent sur les téléphones portables. Malgré le froid, beaucoup rechignent à s'y rendre. Pour Bahaddin, « les gens ont peur que ce soit une étape vers un rapatriement en Irak, et la majorité des gens n'en veulent pas ». La perspective d'un retour au pays natal est une véritable hantise pour beaucoup. Certains partagent l'idée que cette masse d'exilés est la meilleure manifestation du dégoût d'une large partie de la population pour un régime corrompu. Dans la nuit de mercredi à jeudi, les forces de sécurité polonaises ont arrêté une centaine de migrants alors qu'ils tentaient de franchir la frontière.

Sozyar, 27 ans et mère d'un enfant de 4 mois, qu'on entend pleurer sans cesse, en bruit de fond derrière ses paroles pani-

quées, dénonce le système qui les a tous menés dans cet enfer. « Tout ce que je veux dire, c'est qu'il ne faut pas faire confiance aux passeurs qui nous ont fait croire, au Kurdistan, que tout serait facile. Ils nous ont menti, ils nous ont vendus ! » Dans les récits des exilés kurdes se détachent des traits communs : des pages Facebook en kurde liées à des agences de voyages et à des contrebandiers, incitant à acheter des « packages » pour l'Europe via Minsk ; et de grosses sommes empruntées par les candidats à l'exil – à l'ombre de réseaux mafieux kurdes qui se sont chargés de les acheminer vers le régime de Loukachenko.

Dimanche, deux cadavres de migrants morts à la frontière biélorusse ont été rapatriés pour être enterrés au Kurdistan.

The New York Times

David E. Sanger, Steven Erlanger, Farnaz Fasihi, Lara Jakes, 21/11/2021

As Hopes for Nuclear Deal Fade, Iran Rebuilds and Risks Grow

With Iran's new administration preparing for its first international nuclear negotiations, there are signs that there will be no going back to the 2015 agreement.

WASHINGTON — Over the past 20 months, Israeli intelligence operatives have [assassinated Iran's chief nuclear scientist](#) and triggered major explosions at four Iranian nuclear and missile facilities, hoping to cripple the centrifuges that produce nuclear fuel and delay the day when Tehran's new government might be able to build a bomb.

But American intelligence officials and international inspectors say the Iranians have quickly gotten the facilities back online — often installing newer machines that can enrich uranium at a far more rapid pace. When a plant that made key centrifuge parts suffered what looked like a crippling explosion in late spring — destroying much of the parts inventory and the cameras and sensors installed by international inspectors — production resumed by late summer.

One senior American official wryly called it Tehran's Build Back Better plan.

That punch and counterpunch are only part of the escalation in recent months between Iran and the West, a confrontation that is about to come to a head, once again, in Vienna. For the first time since [President Ebrahim Raisi took office](#) this summer, Iranian negotiators plan to meet with their European, Chinese and Russian counterparts at the end of the month to discuss the

future of the 2015 nuclear agreement that sharply limited Iran's activities.

American officials have warned their Israeli counterparts that the repeated attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities may be tactically satisfying, but they are ultimately counterproductive, according to several officials familiar with the behind-the-scenes discussions. Israeli officials have said they have no intention of letting up, waving away warnings that they may only be encouraging a sped-up rebuilding of the program — one of many areas in which the United States and Israel disagree on the benefits of using diplomacy rather than force.

At the Vienna meeting, American officials will be in the city but not inside the room — because Iran will not meet with them after President Donald J. Trump pulled out of the accord more than three years ago, leaving the deal in tatters. While five months ago those officials seemed optimistic that the 2015 deal was about to be restored, with the text largely agreed upon, they return to Vienna far more pessimistic than when they last left it, in mid-June. Today that text looks dead, and President Biden's vision of re-entering the agreement in his first year, then building something “longer and stronger,” appears all but gone.

It is a sign of the changed



Ali Bagheri Kani, Iran's newly appointed chief nuclear negotiator, calls the upcoming talks “negotiations to remove unlawful and inhuman sanctions.” Credit...Tolga Akmen/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

mood that Ali Bagheri Kani, Iran's newly appointed chief nuclear negotiator, does not refer to the upcoming talks as nuclear negotiations at all. Mr. Bagheri Kani, a deputy foreign minister, said in Paris last week that “we have no such thing as nuclear negotiations.” Instead, he refers to them as “negotiations to remove unlawful and inhuman sanctions.” Iran says it will insist on the lifting of both nuclear and non-nuclear sanctions, and that it needs a guarantee that no future president could unilaterally abandon the agreement, as Mr. Trump did. Biden administration officials say the president would never make such a commitment.

Iran, as always, denies that it has any intention of ever building a nuclear weapon. But the more likely scenario is that it

wants a “threshold capability” — one that would leave it able to produce a weapon in weeks or months, if it felt the need.

Publicly, the United States is hinting that if Iran stonewalls in Vienna, it may have to consider new sanctions.

Robert Malley, the State Department's Iran envoy, said recently that while “it is in Iran's hands to choose” which path to take, the United States and other allies need to be prepared for whichever choice Tehran makes.

He noted that Mr. Biden and Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken “have both said if diplomacy fails, we have other tools — and we will use other tools to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.”

But inside the White House, there has been a scramble in recent days to explore whether some kind of interim deal might be possible to freeze Iran's production of more enriched uranium and its conversion of that fuel to metallic form — a necessary step in fabricating a warhead. In return, the United States might ease a limited number of sanctions. That would not solve the problem. But it might buy time for negotiations, while holding off Israeli threats to bomb Iranian facilities.

Buying time, perhaps lots of it, may prove essential. Many of Mr. Biden's advisers are doubtful that introducing new sanctions on Iran's leadership, its military or its oil trade — atop the 1,500 Mr. Trump imposed — would be any more successful than past efforts to pressure Iran to change course.

And more aggressive steps that were successful years ago may not yield the kind of results they have in mind. Inside the National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command, there is consensus that it is much harder now to pull off the kind of cyberattack that the United States and Israel conducted more than a decade ago, when [a secret operation, code-named "Olympic Games," crippled centrifuges at the Natanz nuclear enrichment site for more than a year.](#)

Current and former American and Israeli officials note that the Iranians have since improved their defenses and built their own cyberforces, which the administration [warned last week were increasingly active inside the United States.](#)

The Iranians have also continued to bar inspectors from key sites, despite a series of agreements with Rafael M. Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' watchdog, to preserve data from the agency's sensors at key locations. The inspectors'



Rafael M. Grossi, the head of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency, arrives in Tehran on Monday to try to revive monitoring and inspections in Iran. Credit... Abedin Taherkenareh / EPA, via Shutterstock

cameras and sensors that were destroyed in the plant explosion in late spring have not been replaced.

"From my perspective, what counts is the inspections that you have in place," Mr. Grossi said in a recent interview in Washington, where he spent a week talking with American officials and warning them that his agency was slowly "going blind" in Iran. He is scheduled to arrive in Tehran on Monday, in a last-ditch effort to revive monitoring and inspections before the agency's board of governors meets this week.

The inspection gap is particularly worrisome because the Iranians are declaring that they have now produced roughly 55 pounds of uranium enriched to 60 percent purity. That purity is below the 90 percent normally used to produce a weapon, but not by much. It is a level "that only countries making bombs have," Mr. Grossi said. "That doesn't mean that Iran is doing that. But it means that it is very high."

And while Iranian officials have given many explanations for why they are taking the step — for example, to fuel naval nuclear reactors, which Iran does not possess — the real reason seems to be to build pressure.

This month, the spokesman for Iran's atomic energy agency, Behrouz Kamalvandi, noted with pride that only countries with nuclear weapons have

shown that they can enrich uranium to this level. (He is wrong: Several non-nuclear states have done so.)

"In this organization now, if we have the will, we can do anything," he said.

Before Mr. Trump decided to scrap the deal, Iran had adhered to the limits of the 2015 agreement — which by most estimates kept it about a year from "breakout," the point where it has enough material for a bomb. While estimates vary, [that buffer is now down to somewhere between three weeks and a few months](#), which would change the geopolitical calculation throughout the Middle East.

When Mr. Biden took office, several of his top aides had high hopes that the original deal — parts of which they had negotiated — could be revived. At that time, the Iranians who had agreed to the accord were still in place: Iran's president, Hassan Rouhani, and his foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, remained in office, even if their power was greatly diminished.

But the administration spent two months determining how to approach a negotiation, and European officials complain that, in retrospect, that lost time proved damaging.

It was only at the end of March that the two sides agreed to return to the table; the Vienna talks began in early April.

By June, an agreement "was largely complete," one senior administration official said. Then it became clear that Iran was stalling until its presidential elections, which brought in Mr. Raisi, a hard-line former head of the judiciary.

Initially, American officials hoped Mr. Raisi would just take the agreement that had been negotiated, make minor alterations and celebrate a lifting of most Western sanctions. Anything that went wrong, they calculated, the new president could blame on the former president and foreign minister.

But that proved a miscalculation. In late September, the country's new foreign minister, Hossain Amirabdollahian, told The New York Times that he had no interest in conducting the kind of detailed negotiation that his predecessor had worked on for years.

The spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry, Saeed Khatibzadeh, said at a recent news conference that Iran had three conditions for Washington to return to the deal: It must admit to wrongdoing in pulling out of the deal, it must lift all sanctions at once, and it must offer a guarantee that no other administration will exit the deal as Trump did.

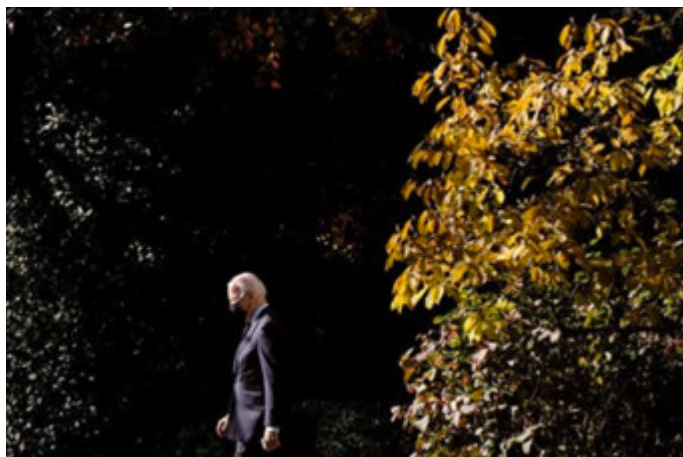
"It is absolutely impossible for Iran to give the level of concession to the U.S. that Rouhani's government gave," said Gheis Ghoreishi, a foreign policy adviser close to Iran's government. "We are not going to give all our cards and then wait around to see if the U.S. or E.U. are going to be committed to the deal or not; this is no way going to happen."

While European officials say they do not want to consider a "Plan B" if a standoff develops, a variety of such plans — ranging from economic isolation to sabotage — have been the regular subject of meetings at the White House, the Pentagon and the State Department. Asked about the Plan B dis-

cussions at a news conference more than two weeks ago, Mr. Biden paused a moment, then said, "I'm not going to comment on Iran now."

But the Israelis are commenting. This month Israel's army chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi, said the Israeli military was "speeding up the operational plans and readiness for dealing with Iran and the nuclear military threat." It was a reference to the fact that the new prime minister, Naftali Bennett, has authorized more funding for planning and practicing attacks. Israeli officials insist they have developed a bunker-busting capability that obviates the need for the kind of help they sought from the Bush administration 13 years ago. Whether that is true or a bluff remains unclear.

At some point, Biden administration officials say they may be forced to declare that Iran's nuclear program is simply too advanced for anyone to safely return to the 2015 agreement.



When President Biden took office, hopes were high inside the White House that the deal Iran had reached with the Obama administration could be restored. Credit... T.J. Kirkpatrick for The New York Times

"This is not a chronological clock; it's a technological clock," Mr. Malley said in a briefing last month. "At some point," he added, the agreement "will have been so eroded because Iran will have made advances that cannot be reversed."

He added: "You can't revive a dead corpse."

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Le Monde

LETTRE D'ISTANBUL

Par Marie Jégo, (Istanbul, correspondante)
23-11-2022

Le désespoir « des gens de l'Est », conté par l'écrivain turc d'origine kurde Kemal Varol

Dans son roman « Ouâf », l'auteur décrit, à travers la narration d'un chien, la « sale guerre » des années 1990 entre l'armée turque et les rebelles armés du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan.

De passage à Istanbul, l'écrivain Kemal Varol est un homme pressé. S'il dit apprécier la ville sur le Bosphore, ses cafés bondés, son agitation, il lui tarde de rentrer à Diyarbakir, la grande ville kurde du sud-est de la Turquie, où il enseigne la littérature et où il a toujours vécu. Son grand-père paternel était un

dengbej, un chanteur épique kurde, son père récitait des poèmes aux accents du *kaval*, la flûte traditionnelle.

C'est dans cette région riche en musicalité et traumatisée par les conflits qu'il puise son inspiration, restituant dans ses livres, de façon sensible et poétique, le désespoir « des

gens de l'Est ». Dans son roman *Ouâf* (Kontr, 2020), l'auteur décrit, à travers la narration d'un chien, la « sale guerre » des années 1990 entre l'armée turque et les rebelles armés du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK).

L'ouvrage expose les enjeux de la question kurde, toujours

aussi problématique en Turquie, où il arrive que des individus soient condamnés à des peines de prison pour avoir chanté en kurde ou pour avoir osé prononcer le mot « Kurdistan ». *Ouâf*, c'est l'histoire de Mikasa, un chien errant, mal-aimé, renié par sa mère, incapable de lever des femelles, raillé par les soldats, qui le

soupçonnent d'être homosexuel, lequel se retrouve enrôlé de force par l'armée, formé au déminage.

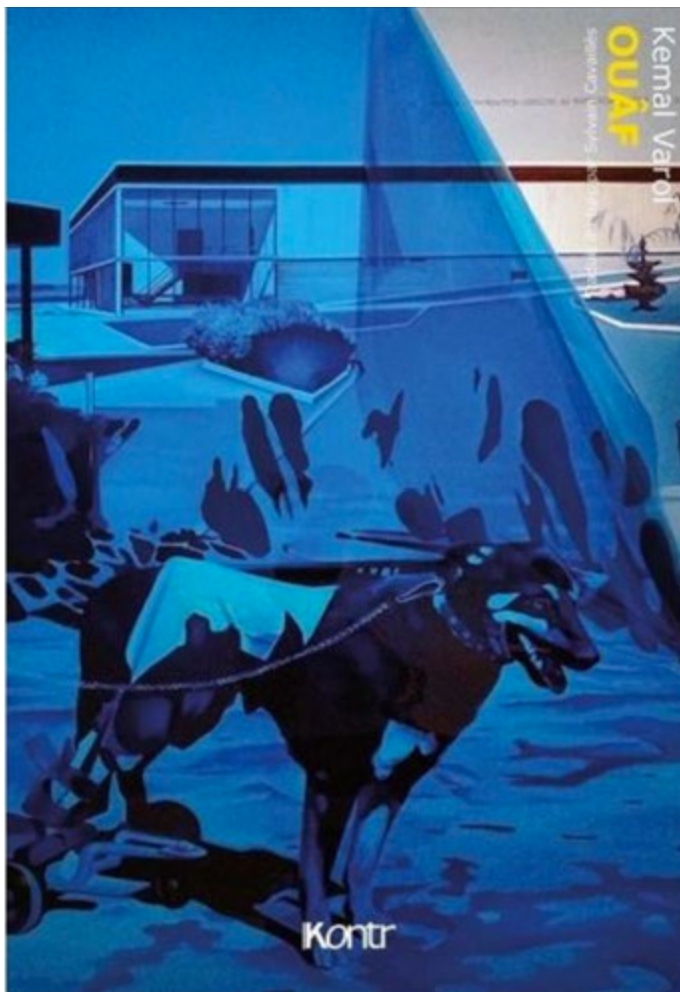
Une tragédie pour le bâtard qui va perdre ses deux pattes arrière dans l'explosion d'une mine qu'il a omis de signaler. En réalité, il l'a fait exprès, pour se venger. Il fallait que le chef de la contre-guérilla, le tortionnaire surnommé Turquoise, qui a éliminé la chienne Melsa, sa fiancée, s'approche de l'engin enfoui et soit tué. Mission accomplie.

« Prendre de la hauteur »

« *J'ai voulu montrer ce que la guerre fait aux hommes et à la nature* », explique Kemal Varol, rencontré dans un salon de thé de la place Taksim, sur la rive européenne d'Istanbul. Pour avoir « *grandi dans cet environnement conflictuel* », il en connaît tous les recoins. La difficulté consistait à trouver le juste milieu. « *Choisir un camp, c'est facile. Essayer de comprendre ce qui se passe est beaucoup plus ardu* », précise-t-il de sa voix grave. Le chien lui a permis « *de prendre de la hauteur* ».

L'idée de la narration canine lui est venue le jour où il a vu des soldats patrouiller avec un chien dans la rue. « *L'expression mélancolique de l'animal m'a marqué. Un peu plus tard, j'ai appris que des chiens démineurs avaient été utilisés dans le conflit.* » Son héros à quatre pattes est terriblement humain. Transi d'amour pour sa belle, amateur de joints et de cinéma, doté d'un certain humour, Mikasa est rebuté par l'ignominie des hommes, pris dans l'engrenage de la guerre. Une guerre qu'il décrit de loin et de façon glaçante.

Dans le cimetière où la meute des canidés trouve refuge pour dormir, « *certaines nuits, des hommes à la moustache cro-*



« Ouâf », de Kemal Varol, Kontr, 240 p., 22 euros. KONTR

chue habillés en civil mais avec des talkies-walkies à la main, venaient avec des pelle-teuses de la mairie, creusaient de grands trous et y faisaient rouler en même temps quelques individus aux chaussures marron ». Enlèvements, tortures, exécutions sommaires étaient alors le lot quotidien dans les provinces du sud-est de la Turquie, marquées par les révoltes et la répression. De sa niche, située sur le territoire de la caserne, Mikasa assiste aux exactions.

« *Jour et nuit, des cris s'élevèrent depuis le sous-sol. Ainsi que des odeurs de brûlé, de sang, d'urine et de merde. Et des supplications, des hurlements, des aveux.* » Au beau milieu de la nuit, des cadavres

de jeunes « *aux corps couverts de plaies* » furent ramenés du sous-sol pour être ensevelis à la sauvette. « *Trois filles, huit garçons. Certains avaient hébergé des combattants, d'autres avaient participé aux manifestations.* »

L'espoir a disparu

Toute ressemblance avec des personnages ou des situations ayant existé est fortuite. Le récit est une fiction. L'action se passe ainsi à Arkanya, une bourgade imaginaire, récurrente dans l'univers romanesque de Varol. La ville est située dans la partie orientale d'un pays tout aussi imaginaire, dont les habitants sont décrits comme « *les gens de l'Est* ». Ce refus de nommer les

lieux et les acteurs donne une portée universelle au récit et par là même protège l'écrivain d'éventuelles poursuites dans un pays où la liberté s'arrête le plus souvent là où commence l'expression.

« *J'ai voulu raconter mon expérience personnelle* », confie Kemal Varol, dans le café bruyant de la place Taksim où la musique diffusée par un haut-parleur rend les conversations tout juste audibles. « *Je me suis toujours senti tiraillé entre deux mondes, avec le sentiment qu'au fond je n'appartiens à aucun des deux* », poursuit-il. Pour les Turcs, il est un écrivain d'origine kurde alors que, pour les Kurdes, il est un auteur turc puisqu'il écrit en turc.

A Diyarbakir, le silence a remplacé le vacarme des pistolets-mitrailleurs et des obus qui s'étaient déchaînés sur le centre-ville à l'hiver 2015-2016, quand de jeunes militants du PKK avaient pris les armes contre les forces de l'ordre, au prix de centaines de morts et de nombreuses destructions. Plus d'un quart du quartier historique de Sur, un labyrinthe de ruelles le long de la muraille de basalte qui enserre la ville, a été réduit en cendres, rasé puis reconstruit sous la forme de villas de style rococo, alignées au cordeau.

Désormais, les habitants de la région n'ont que deux soucis en tête : « *Eviter la prison et gagner de quoi vivre.* » L'espoir a disparu. Il avait surgi quand la question kurde semblait en passe d'être résolue, le gouvernement d'Ankara ayant entamé des pourparlers avec le PKK en 2009. Le 22 mars 2015, le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a mis fin au processus. Que s'est-il passé ? « *Dans ce pays, on est trop émotionnels. Au moindre problème, on en vient aux mains.* »



November 23, 2021
By Felix Hoske and Sergiy Karazy

Unborn child of Kurdish migrant buried in Polish Tatar cemetery

BOHONIKI, Poland, Nov 23 (Reuters) - In a tiny white coffin, the body of an unborn child that died in the womb of its mother as she tried to cross from Belarus into the European Union was buried in a Muslim cemetery in north-east Poland on Tuesday.

In Islam, unborn children are also given funeral rites. Halikari Dhaker's mother miscarried him while she, her husband and their five children crossed the Belarusian-Polish border through dense forests and wetlands.

Hailing from Iraqi Kurdistan, Dhaker's family were among thousands of migrants who travelled to Belarus in the hope of finding a better life in the EU.

The bloc says Minsk has engineered the migrant crisis on its eastern border to hit back against sanctions imposed by Brussels. Belarus has repeatedly denied this.

"The family of the dead child Halikari Dhaker are not here with us ... As far as I know, the wife, the mother, is in a very serious medical state in a hospital," said Aleksander Bazarewicz, Imam of the village of Bohoniki, home to a Tatar Muslim community.

As the first snow of winter lay on fields around the cemetery, the coffin was lowered into the ground by Bazarewicz and a Chechen Muslim man who took part



A member of the Polish Muslim community carries a coffin during a funeral of an unborn child Halikari Dhaker, who died in the womb of his mother during the migrant crisis at the Belarusian-Polish border, at a cemetery in the village of Bohoniki near Sokolka, Poland November 23, 2021. REUTERS / Sergiy Karazy



Journalists film as Imam of the village of Bohoniki Aleksander Bazarewicz and members of the Polish Muslim community attend a funeral of an unborn child Halikari Dhaker, who died in the womb of his mother during the migrant crisis at the Belarusian-Polish border, at a cemetery in the village of Bohoniki near Sokolka, Poland November 23, 2021. REUTERS/Sergiy Karazy

in the funeral.

Humanitarian agencies say up to 13 migrants have died at the border, where many have suffered in a cold, damp forest with little food or water as a frigid winter sets in.

A small ethnic and religious minority in overwhelmingly Catholic modern Poland, the Tatars descend from warriors who were rewarded with land by Polish kings for protecting the country's eastern border centuries ago.

The community has been delivering clothes and food to both migrants and Polish troops on the border.



Khazan Jangiz
23-11-2021

Awards and winners: Duhok International Film Festival wraps up

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region
Sidik and the Panther, by filmmaker Rebar Doski, won the best Kurdish feature film at the 8th Duhok International Film Festival, which wrapped on Monday with an award ceremony.

Sidik and the Panther tells the story of a man who travels through the mountains of the Kurdistan Region in search of a snow leopard, believed to be extinct in the area. He dreamed that if he found one, the area would become a national park and bombs would no longer be dropped on it.



“We are very proud of this festival. This festival has to continue,” Doski said in an [interview](#) with the festival. He added that he hoped more cinemas would open in Duhok. “I hope four, five cinemas are opened and I will be more pleased.”

The [weeklong festival](#) showcased 44 Kurdish and 49 international films in Kurdistan Region’s mountainous Duhok city.

Navid Farzdzadeh won best actor award for the film *Zalava*, a horror drama set in

a remote mountainous Kurdish village called *Zalava* where villagers believe a demon is among them. The film’s director, Arsalan Amiri, also won the best director award.

“I am happy that the Duhok film festival gets better each year and Kurdish cinema is also getting better each year. Kurdish cinema has good movies this year as well,” [Amiri said](#).

Best actress went to Maryam Boubani for her role in

Sisters Apart, a film about a Kurdish soldier going on a mission to find her missing sister in Erbil, among female fighters.

Holy Bread, directed by Rahim Zabihi, about impoverished Kurdish kolbars who transport goods across dangerous border areas and mountains for a living, won the best Kurdish documentary award.

Great Istanbul Depression, directed by Zeynep Dilan Suren, won best international short film. It tells

the tale of two university graduates looking for a job on the edge of the metropolis.

The Other Side of The River by Antonia Kilian won best international documentary film. The movie is about a 19-year-old escaping an arranged marriage. She crosses the Euphrates River and finds her new home with the Kurdish Women’s Protection Units (YPJ) who liberate her hometown Manbij from the Islamic State (ISIS).

Les Kurdes d'Occitanie rendent hommage à Danielle Mitterrand, décédée il y a 10 ans

Danielle Mitterrand est décédée le 22 novembre 2011. Dix ans après, les Kurdes d'Albi n'ont pas oublié celle qui leur a sauvé la vie après les bombardements chimiques de Saddam Hussein sur le Kurdistan irakien, bombardements qui avaient fait 182.000 morts en six mois en 1988.

Zoubeyr Mahy, patron d'une supérette à Albi et aujourd'hui président de l'association franco kurde d'Occitanie, est étonné que la France n'ait pas honoré la mémoire de Danielle Mitterrand plus ça, le 22 novembre. Ce jour-là, au Kurdistan irakien, « les députés kurdes ont respecté une minute de silence et plusieurs gerbes ont été déposées », en souvenir de « la mère des Kurdes », décédée il y a tout juste 10 ans. Alors, en attendant la cérémonie prévue le samedi 27 novembre à Cluny, en Bourgogne, Zoubeyr a tenu à honorer celle qu'il avait accueillie chez lui, au printemps 2001, pour les 10 ans de l'association franco kurde d'Albi.

« La première fois que je l'ai rencontrée, c'était 1989, au camp de Mardin, dont j'étais un des responsables, en Turquie. Nous étions 18.000 à vivre sous des tentes, dans ce camp de 1km2 entouré de barbelés. Nous avons fui les bombardements chimiques de Saddam Hussein qui cherchait à nous exterminer tandis que les Turcs nous laissaient mourir de faim. On perdait 4 à 10 enfants par jour. Mais les Occidentaux ne disaient rien car la Turquie était leur allié et Saddam venait de battre l'Iran. Les Kurdes n'intéressaient personne, sauf Danielle Mitterrand. Danielle Mitterrand qui avait aidé l'Institut kurde de Paris dès sa création en 1983. C'est la seule à être venue à



Kendal Nezan, le président de l'institut kurde de Paris, et Zoubeyr Mahy, le président de l'association franco-kurde d'Albi, entourant Danielle Mitterrand et son assistante, lors du 10e anniversaire de l'association à Albi./ DDM



Danielle Mitterrand avait essayé quelques larmes sur les joues de plus jeunes ce jour-là à Saint-Juéry.



Zoubeyr lors de son discours de bienvenue à Danielle Mitterrand, en mai 2001, salle de l'Albaret, à Saint-Juéry

notre secours. Après sa visite à Mardin et dans deux autres camps, elle a convaincu François d'accueillir

1000 réfugiés kurdes en France. Les 345 premiers sont arrivés en août 1989, puis ça s'est fait par groupes de 50. Nous, en

1991, nous étions les derniers. Cette année-là, elle a aussi joué un rôle dans le choix de la France de défendre la résolution 688 à l'ONU qui a créé une no fly zone pour les avions de Saddam au-dessus du Kurdistan. C'est pour ça qu'elle est considérée comme la mère des Kurdes. Elle nous a sauvés.

Quand elle est venue prendre le petit-déjeuner chez nous à Albi, pour le 10e anniversaire de l'association, c'est exactement ce que j'ai ressenti. Son regard sur moi, c'était le regard d'une mère. Grâce à elle, des milliers de jeunes Kurdes ont pu devenir ingénieurs, médecins, avocats... Tout comme elle a sauvé énormément de monde en Amérique latine en s'intéressant au problème de l'eau. Cette grande dame, quelque part, c'est une héroïne. C'est regrettable qu'un pays ne soit pas plus fier que ça d'avoir une telle personne dans son histoire. Ce n'est pas une question politique de la célébrer. Personne ne se pose de question politique en célébrant le général de Gaulle, qui a sauvé la France. En tout cas, pour les Kurdes, Danielle Mitterrand est rentrée dans l'histoire. Celle des gens de bien qui ont fait beaucoup pour l'humanité. C'est une immense personnalité qui a donné son nom à des avenues, des places, des salles de cinéma et des écoles au Kurdistan. Nous ne l'oublierons jamais. Et la France non plus ne doit pas l'oublier.»

Ce jour-là de mai 2001, Danielle Mitterrand avait simplement conclu avant de prendre le verre de l'amitié avec ses hôtes: « On sauve une vie et on sauve le monde. Je ne prétends pas sauver le monde. Simplement j'ai sauvé quelques vies. »

L'armée turque a perdu de sa superbe

Après vingt ans de gouvernement du Parti de la justice et du développement, l'influence des forces armées qui naguère intervenaient directement dans la gestion de la Turquie a-t-elle disparu ? Le harcèlement de ses cadres anciens et actuels montre que la confiance du gouvernement en l'armée est loin d'être sans limite.

Lorsque le Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP) remporte les élections législatives anticipées en 2002, la venue au pouvoir de cette nouvelle formation qui se dit conservatrice et démocrate apparaît alors comme l'opportunité de sortir ce pays de l'impasse dans laquelle l'a plongé un demi-siècle d'interventions militaires cycliques (1960, 1971, 1980, 1997). Ces dernières ont vu l'armée turque devenir un acteur politique dans un système où, comme le dit Steven A. Cook, elle est au pouvoir, mais ne gouverne pas¹.

Les militaires ont certes été historiquement au cœur de la fondation de l'État-nation turc contemporain, mais leur implication dans le champ politique à partir de 1960, lorsqu'ils sortent pour la première fois de leurs casernes depuis le début de la période républicaine, est de nature différente. Mustafa Kemal était un général qui, devenu chef d'État, se voulait avant tout un président civil réformateur. Pendant la période kémaliste, l'armée remplit une fonction de maintien de l'ordre, mais elle n'est pas une instance qui influence de façon déterminante la conduite des affaires de l'État.

Après la seconde guerre mondiale à laquelle elle n'a pour ainsi dire pas participé, l'armée apparaît même comme une



Ankara, 3 mai 2016. Visite du président Recep Tayyip Erdoğan au commandement des forces spéciales, Yasin Bulbul/Bureau du premier ministre turc/AFP

institution vieillissante et quelque peu « ringarde », dont se moque Adnan Menderes, le premier ministre du Parti démocrate, arrivé au pouvoir en 1950 après une libéralisation du régime kémaliste de parti unique. La carrière militaire était d'ailleurs devenue beaucoup moins attractive à cette époque.

Un double pouvoir

Le coup d'État du 27 mai 1960 permet donc à l'armée de s'installer au cœur de ce nouveau système parlementaire et de lui assigner des règles : il restera pluraliste, mais devra garantir la pérennité de l'État national fondé en 1923 et respecter les prérogatives des élites qui en sont les dépositaires (militaires, juges, hauts fonctionnaires...). Deux pouvoirs cohabitent dès lors dans ce dispositif : un gouvernement civil issu d'élections concurrentielles dans le cadre d'un régime parlementaire, et un pouvoir d'État qui assume un certain nombre de tâches régaliennes (sécurité, défense,

diplomatie), voire hégémoniques (enseignement supérieur), et surveille les institutions civiles.

Car la société turque n'est pas docile et les crises profondes qu'elle traverse amènent l'armée à intervenir à plusieurs reprises, au cours de la deuxième moitié du XX^e siècle. Après une nouvelle intervention diffuse en 1971, les militaires contraignent la démocratie à un long purgatoire en 1980, en apurant le système des partis et en élaborant une Constitution qui conforte ou met en place un certain nombre de garde-fous institutionnels, comme le Conseil de sécurité nationale (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, MGK) ou le Conseil de l'enseignement supérieur (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu, YÖK). Ce texte constitue le stade suprême de l'interventionnisme militaire turc. Il débouche sur un système où l'armée dispose d'une influence tellement sophistiquée que, lorsque les instances civiles franchissent la ligne rouge, elle n'a plus be-

soin de faire sortir ses chars dans la rue, se contentant de postures ou de déclarations rapidement comprises par leurs destinataires imprudents. En 1997, le « coup d'État post-moderne » voit l'institution militaire se défaire du gouvernement dirigé par l'islamiste Necmettin Erbakan, ce qui démontre l'efficacité du système mis en place, mais ne résout pas les problèmes de fond et se solde, cinq ans plus tard, par la victoire sans appel de l'AKP.

De l'entente à l'affrontement

L'heure n'est pourtant pas à la revanche lorsque Recep Tayyip Erdoğan prend les rênes du gouvernement au printemps 2003. Marqué par le souvenir cuisant de son incarcération en 1998 à la suite d'une provocation verbale, le nouveau premier ministre prône le consensus, une posture partagée par le général Hilmi Özkök, alors chef d'état-major. Il faut attendre 2007 pour qu'un conflit ouvert éclate, à l'occasion de l'élection prési-

dentielle. Les efforts mis en œuvre par l'establishment politico-militaire pour empêcher l'élection d'un membre de l'AKP à la présidence de la République échouent, et le gouvernement d'Erdoğan sort renforcé de cette épreuve. Il part dès lors à l'assaut de l'exception militaire turque, en commençant par la dépouiller de ses privilèges judiciaires (droit de juger les civils, exclusivité de la justice sur les militaires).

Pourtant, à cette époque, l'affaiblissement des positions de l'armée dans le système va surtout découler des affaires **Ergenekon et Balyoz**, qui sont la trame d'une série de procès pour complot, instruits par des procureurs spéciaux nommés par le pouvoir, et principalement issus du **mouvement Gülen**. Par vagues successives, des centaines de personnalités laïques et surtout d'officiers supérieurs retraités ou d'active sont arrêtés, jusqu'à l'ancien chef d'état-major (2008-2010) İker Basbuğ, condamné à la prison à perpétuité en 2013. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan a entretemps pris le contrôle effectif du Conseil militaire suprême (Yüksek Askeri Şura, YAŞ), qui pourvoit aux promotions dans l'armée et nomme en particulier les membres de l'état-major.

L'AKP, mouvement contestataire venu de la périphérie, a atteint ainsi le cœur du système, mais peut-il continuer à s'en prendre à l'État et à son armée au moment même où les périls s'accumulent aux frontières du fait de l'approfondissement du conflit syrien ? De surcroît, la lutte intense du parti majoritaire contre le pouvoir d'État a dangereusement valorisé ceux qui l'ont conduite. Véritable « État dans l'État », le mouvement Gülen, après avoir fait taire les militaires, se permet désormais de défier le gouvernement, voire de le menacer directement lors d'une première vague d'arrestations dans des cercles dirigeants en décembre 2013. C'est le début

d'une lutte sans merci entre le parti au pouvoir et ses anciens complices, qui se traduit par une première épuration sévère de la justice et de la police où les gülenistes disposent de relais majeurs. La dénonciation de leurs méfaits aboutit toutefois nécessairement à une libération, puis à une réhabilitation de leurs victimes, à commencer par les militaires frappés par les affaires Ergenekon et Balyoz, désormais présentées comme de pures machinations ourdies par ce qu'on appelle alors « l'État parallèle ».

Le coup d'État manqué du 15 juillet 2016, parti du soulèvement d'unités fortement infiltrées par les gülenistes — notamment dans l'aviation et la gendarmerie — et ralliées par une série d'acteurs aux motivations variées, apparaît comme le dernier acte de la guerre qui oppose l'AKP à ses anciens alliés. Mais, même s'il semble sonner le glas de « l'exception militaire » turque, l'armée étant placée sous les ordres du ministère de la défense, il laisse entière pour le gouvernement la question de la composition, de la fidélité et du positionnement politique de celle-ci.

Un nouveau paradigme politico-militaire

L'ancien paradigme selon lequel l'armée turque était une institution unifiée installée au cœur du système a vécu. Le coup manqué de 2016 a révélé une instance perméable à des influences extérieures et profondément divisée. Il a été suivi de purges et de défections importantes, en particulier des militaires qui siégeaient dans des instances de l'OTAN. Dès lors, le problème pour le gouvernement n'est plus de se garder d'une institution, actrice politique forte et influente, mais de gérer une communauté déstabilisée par de récentes mutations, et donc imprévisible. Dans un tel contexte, la sujétion de l'armée au ministère de la défense apparaît autant comme sa soumission ultime au pouvoir civil que comme la

tentative de sauvegarder l'intégrité de l'institution, en la plaçant sous l'autorité de son ancien chef d'état-major, le général Hulusi Akar, resté loyal pendant le putsch et devenu une personnalité politique en vue du nouveau régime.

Au sein de l'armée qui a survécu au coup cohabitent en effet, pour l'essentiel, les membres de la vieille garde des officiers laïques qui ne se sont pas soulevés, de nouveaux cadres proches de l'AKP, voire de certaines confréries comme les Süleymançı, et surtout un réseau de plus en plus influent d'officiers ultranationalistes qui n'hésitent plus à afficher leur identité musulmane. Cette sensibilité religieuse du nationalisme militaire n'est pas vraiment nouvelle. Elle tourne le dos aux références atlantistes traditionnelles de l'institution datant de la Guerre froide pour leur préférer des valeurs « eurasiatistes » le plus souvent très antioccidentales. Une mutation qui ravit significativement un activiste radical sulfureux comme Dogu Perinçek, qui a toujours été proche de ces thèses.

Ces orientations ne sont bien sûr pas sans lien avec les tendances panturquistes du nationalisme turc du début du XX^e siècle, présentes au sein **mouvement Jeunes-Turcs**, mais dans la période contemporaine, elles font aussi écho aux rapprochements qu'a opérés, ces dernières années, la Turquie avec la Russie².

Cet équilibre précaire cache surtout une course au remodelage de l'armée par ses recrutements présents et futurs. En premier lieu, après l'échec du putsch de 2016, le gouvernement a dissous les lycées spéciaux et académies qui constituaient le creuset du recrutement militaire autonome, leurs cadets étant relocalisés arbitrairement et rapidement dans des universités traditionnelles. La nouvelle université de défense turque, qui les a officiellement remplacés, embauche de façon accélérée

des recrues proches de l'AKP. Il faut dire que l'enrôlement de diplômés issus des lycées religieux *iman hatip* est désormais possible.

En second lieu, le ministre de la défense, qui contrôle l'état-major pour l'essentiel, s'est lancé dans le recrutement accéléré de « sergents spécialisés » (*uzman çavuş*). Ces derniers ne doivent disposer que d'un diplôme secondaire et sont formés en six mois. Ce nouveau recrutement en vogue rejoint aussi le besoin d'une modernisation de l'armée rendant nécessaire sa professionnalisation au détriment de la conscription, jugée, là comme ailleurs, coûteuse et inadaptée. Outre la réduction du service militaire, des réformes récentes permettent aux conscrits d'écourter leur temps sous les drapeaux en payant une soulte.

S'accompagnant d'une redéfinition des missions des forces armées, ces mesures ont contribué à un tassement des effectifs, compensé en partie par le recrutement d'engagés, comme les *uzman çavuş*, dont la mobilisation est également rendue nécessaire par l'augmentation du nombre d'unités déployées sur des théâtres extérieurs. Dès lors, on peut penser que ceux qui contrôleront les professionnels de cette nouvelle armée (dont les effectifs d'ensemble s'élèvent à 355 200 hommes), et notamment ses « sergents spécialisés » prendront un ascendant décisif sur elle.

Une institution de plus en plus segmentée

Le ministre de la défense ne se désintéresse pourtant pas des généraux. Si lui-même est entré en politique, il supporte mal que certains de ses collègues d'active cherchent à en faire autant et risquent de lui faire de l'ombre, en devenant de trop médiatiques chefs de guerre, gagnant parfois les faveurs de la présidence. Le général commandant la 2^e armée lors de l'intervention à Afrin en

2018, (Metin Temel) ou l'amiral qui a fortement inspiré la politique libyenne de la Turquie en 2019, (Cihat Yayıcı) l'ont appris à leurs dépens en bénéficiant de promotions destinées à les marginaliser. Le gouvernement souhaite préserver l'autorité de celui sur qui reposent les compromis établis après le coup d'État de 2016. Et ce, d'autant plus que de nouvelles dissensions sont apparues dans l'armée.

En premier lieu, certains officiers supérieurs s'interrogent sur les interventions extérieures de la Turquie. La situation critique de l'armée turque dans l'enclave d'Idlib au nord de la Syrie a motivé, en septembre 2021, la démission de deux généraux expérimentés qui paraissaient encore loin de la retraite. En deuxième lieu, en dehors même des purges, les reclassements opérés récemment pour des raisons of-

ficiellement techniques — en premier lieu la réduction du nombre des colonels — alimentent un sentiment d'incertitude, voire d'injustice au sein de l'encadrement. En troisième lieu, les cadres militaires supérieurs à la retraite continuent de constituer un groupe de pression qui peut sortir de sa réserve si nécessaire, comme l'a montré, en avril 2021, la lettre signée par 104 ex-amiraux, inquiets du sort de la [Convention de Montreux qui régit les détroits \(Dardanelles et Bosphore\)](#), depuis que le président s'est lancé dans la construction d'un canal qui doit doubler l'un d'entre eux, et qu'il est revenu sur la ratification des traités par de simples décrets.

Enfin, la reprise de la guérilla kurde et la multiplication des projections de l'armée turque à l'extérieur favorisent la diffusion de sentiments chauvins, ethnocoreligieux et pour tout

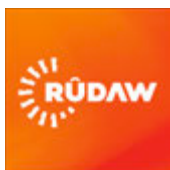
dire ultranationalistes au sein des cadres de l'armée, dont un certain nombre ont retrouvé leurs fonctions après la fin de l'affaire Ergenekon. Ce phénomène conforte parallèlement l'influence acquise, au sein du nouveau régime présidentiel, par le Parti d'action nationaliste (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) de Devlet Bahçeli qui a permis à l'AKP de faire adopter la révision constitutionnelle de 2017, de conserver une majorité au Parlement, et de voir Recep Tayyip Erdoğan réélu dès le premier tour à la présidence de la République en 2018. La convergence des positions du leader d'extrême droite et du chef de l'État, qui appellent désormais à la dissolution du Parti démocratique des peuples (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP), ou qualifient de « terroristes » les étudiants qui dorment dans les parcs à Istanbul depuis la rentrée universitaire 2021 pour

protester contre l'augmentation du prix des loyers, est à cet égard révélatrice. Elle s'explique sans doute par le rôle de faiseur de rois qu'a acquis depuis 2016 la formation de Devlet Bahçeli, mais elle suggère peut-être aussi que cette influence ne s'exerce pas que dans les cercles civils.

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¹*Ruling But Not Governing. The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey*, John Hopkins University Press, 2007.

²Jean Marcou et Mitat Çelikpala, *Regard sur les relations turco-russes. De la rivalité dans un monde bipolaire à la coopération dans un espace eurasiatique ?*, Institut français d'études anatoliennes, Istanbul, 2020.



24-11-2021

31 die in deadliest migrant boat tragedy between France, UK

CALAIS, France - At least 31 migrants died Wednesday crossing from France to England when their boat sank off the port of Calais, French authorities said, the deadliest disaster since the Channel became a major part of the migrant route.

President Emmanuel Macron, saying France would not allow the Channel to become a "cemetery", vowed to find out who was responsible for the tragedy as prosecutors opened a manslaughter probe.

"It is Europe's deepest values - humanism, respect for the dignity of each person - that are in mourning," Macron said.



Migrants are helped ashore from a RNLI (Royal National Lifeboat Institution) lifeboat at a beach in Dungeness, on the south-east coast of England, on November 24, 2021, after being rescued while crossing the English Channel. Photo: Ben Stansall/AFP

The French leader also called for an emergency meeting of

"European ministers faced with the migration challenge", with

his Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin urging a "tough international response".

Darmanin announced that four people suspected of being "directly linked" to the accident have been arrested.

Prime Minister Jean Castex is to convene several of his ministers for a crisis meeting early on Thursday, his office said.

French officials said earlier three helicopters and three boats had searched the area, uncovering corpses and people unconscious in the water, after a fisherman sounded the alarm.

The victims were among around 50 people aboard a vessel that had set out from Dunkirk east of Calais, according to the police.

On the other side of the Channel, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he was “shocked, appalled and deeply saddened by the loss of life at sea”, following a crisis meeting with senior officials.

The disaster, the worst single loss of life since at least 2018 when migrants began using boats en masse to cross the Channel, comes as tensions grow between London and Paris over the record numbers of people crossing.

Britain has urged tougher action from France to stop migrants from making the voyage.

- Winter warning -

Pierre Roques, coordinator of the Auberge des Migrants NGO in Calais, said the Chan-

nel risked becoming as deadly for migrants as the Mediterranean which has seen a much heavier toll over the last years of migrants crossing.

“People are dying in the Channel, which is becoming a cemetery. And as England is right opposite, people will continue to cross.”

According to the French authorities, 31,500 people attempted to leave for Britain since the start of the year and 7,800 people have been rescued at sea, figures which doubled since August.

In Britain, Johnson’s government is coming under intense pressure, including from its own supporters, to reduce the numbers crossing.

Natalie Elphicke, the Conservative MP for the British Channel port of Dover called the sinking “an absolute tragedy” and demonstrated the need to stop the crossings at source.

“As winter is approaching the seas will get rougher, the water colder, the risk of even more lives tragically being lost greater,” she said.

- ‘A business’ -

France’s top maritime official for the northern coast Philippe Dutrieux told AFP in an interview last week that the numbers trying to cross had doubled in the last three months.

He blamed the “cynicism” of the traffickers “who throw migrants into the water as it is a business that makes money”.

“It has been years that we have been warning about the dangers of the situation”, said Charlotte Kwantes, head of Utopia56, an association that works with migrants in Calais.

She put at “more than 300” the number of migrants who have died since 1999 in the area.

“As long as safe passages are not put in place between England and France, or as long as these people cannot be regularised in France... there will be deaths at the border,” she told AFP.

In Britain, the chief executive of the Refugee Council, Enver Solomon, said the deaths were “heartbreaking” and safe routes were needed for those “in desperate need of protection”.

According to British authorities, more than 25,000 people have now arrived illegally so far this year, already triple the figure recorded in 2020.

The issue has added to growing post-Brexit tensions between Britain and France, with a row on fishing rights also still unresolved.

By Bernard Barron with Sylvie Maligorne and Stuart Williams in Paris

Le Monde

Julia Pascual
25/11/2021

La colère des associations après la mort de 27 migrants dans la Manche : « C’étaient des hommes, des femmes, des enfants, des humains »

Décryptages:

La plupart des victimes étaient des Kurdes, originaires d’Irak ou d’Iran. Après ce drame inédit, les autorités ciblent les passeurs et les ONG réclament des voies légales de migration vers le Royaume-Uni.

Le canot pneumatique s’est-il dégonflé ? Son plancher s’est-il écroulé sous le poids des hommes ? Un porte-conteneurs, comme il en transite plein dans ce détroit, l’a-t-il fait chavirer accidentellement ? Dans la matinée de jeudi 25 novembre, on ignorait encore tout ou presque des circonstances du naufrage mercredi

après-midi d’une petite embarcation de migrants qui tentaient de rejoindre les côtes anglaises depuis le littoral français. **Mais c’est un drame sans précédent qui s’est déroulé au large de Calais (Pas-de-Calais). Au moins vingt-sept personnes, dont sept femmes et trois jeunes, sont mortes noyées dans la Manche. Un tel bilan est inédit.**

Le président de la République, Emmanuel Macron, **a déclaré mercredi que « la France ne laissera pas la Manche devenir un cimetière ».** Mais elle l’est, de fait, déjà devenue. A voir les corbillards entrer l’un après l’autre dans la zone

portuaire de Calais – où les secours ont débarqué les corps des nombreuses victimes, c’est cette image qui dominait. « *Combien de morts vous faudra-t-il ?* », interroge une pancarte brandie parmi un groupe de quelques dizaines de personnes, des militants associatifs surtout, venues se réunir devant le port.

Il y a des bougies posées sur les pavés, dans un hommage funèbre. « *Quand on dit que les frontières tuent, c’est vraiment ça* », souligne Alexine Fougner, 27 ans, engagée à Calais auprès d’une association qui aide les personnes migrantes vivant dans les campe-

ments à recharger leurs téléphones. « *C’était des hommes, des femmes, des enfants, des humains. On devrait être 5 000 ce soir et on est 50*, se désole Olivier Maillard, militant calaisien de 49 ans. *L’empathie s’épuise dans ce pays.* »

La mer était calme

D’après les premiers éléments d’information partagés par les autorités et le parquet de Lille – où une enquête a été ouverte –, la majorité des victimes seraient des Kurdes, d’Irak ou d’Iran. Deux hommes rescapés ont par ailleurs été pris en charge à l’hôpital de

Calais, vraisemblablement de nationalité irakienne et somalienne.

Leur embarcation serait partie des environs de Loon-Plage, une commune proche de Dunkerque (Nord). Il est probable que les personnes venaient des campements voisins de Grande-Synthe. Dans l'après-midi, c'est un bateau de pêche qui a signalé des corps en mer, tout près des eaux anglaises, avant qu'un patrouilleur de la marine nationale, une vedette de la gendarmerie maritime et un canot tous temps de la Société nationale de sauvetage en mer (SNSM) de Calais soient dépêchés sur la zone. « Le bateau a été retrouvé dégonflé, il flottait encore un peu », rapporte Bernard Barron, président de la SNSM de Calais. Les naufragés étaient à l'eau.

Mardi, le temps était propice aux traversées. La mer était calme. Pas de vent, pas de brume. « Ça devait arriver, c'était écrit, réagit Alain Ledaguenel, président de la SNSM de Dunkerque, dont les équipages bénévoles ont réalisé plusieurs dizaines de sauvetages cette année, fréquemment appelés en renfort des bateaux de l'Etat. On sait que les moyens des secours en mer sont insuffisants. »

Le phénomène dit des *small boat* est apparu en 2018 mais il a explosé en 2021. Depuis le début de l'année, plus de 25 000 migrants ont ainsi réussi à rejoindre l'Angleterre et près de 8 000 ont été secourus, en détresse, et ramenés sur les côtes françaises. Les canots pneumatiques sur lesquels ils embarquent souvent à plus de 30 « viennent de Chine, sont très fragiles, étroits et longs, avec des moteurs qui ne sont pas suffisamment puissants, explique M. Ledaguenel. A bord, ils n'ont même pas de compas pour se diriger. Ils n'ont aucun feu de navigation, sont indétectables au radar et quand ils sont éloignés des côtes, la portée d'un téléphone n'atteint pas le rivage. Si celui qui est à la barre n'a pas de point de repère, il ne va pas savoir compenser la dérive due au courant de marée et va se trouver déporté et, rapidement, en panne sèche ». « La Manche est une autoroute, ajoute son collègue Bernard Barron. Imaginez qu'un canot surchargé se retrouve dans le sillage d'un pétrolier, sur-



Des bénévoles et des membres d'associations se sont regroupés à l'entrée du quai Paul-Devot, à Calais, dans la nuit du 24 au 25 novembre 2021. AIMÉE THIRION POUR « LE MONDE »

pris par le remous de ses hélices. Ça fait comme un tsunami qui déferle. »

« Hypocrisie immonde »

Mercredi soir, le premier ministre anglais, Boris Johnson, et Emmanuel Macron ont convenu de « l'urgence » d'intensifier la lutte contre les traversées. Le chef de l'Etat a appelé à « accélérer le démantèlement des réseaux criminels », demandant un « renforcement immédiat des moyens de l'agence Frontex » et une « réunion d'urgence des ministres européens concernés par le défi migratoire ». Depuis l'hôpital de Calais où il s'était déplacé en début de soirée, le ministre de l'intérieur, Gérald Darmanin, a, lui aussi, voulu attribuer « la responsabilité de ce drame » aux « passeurs ».

Une rhétorique qui exaspère le milieu associatif. « C'est une hypocrisie immonde de dire qu'on va lutter contre les passeurs. Ce sont eux qui les ont fabriqués, tempête Vincent de Coninck, chargé de mission migrants au Secours catholique de Calais jusqu'en 2018. J'ai connu au début des années 2010 une période où les gens passaient sans argent. C'est la sécurisation à outrance qui a fait les réseaux. »

De fait, le phénomène des traversées de la Manche est apparu concomitamment au tarissement des passages en camion, résultat notamment de la sécurisation technique du port de Calais et du tunnel sous la Manche. Les ceintures de barrières coiffées de barbelés n'ont de cesse de fleurir dans la ville.

« Il n'y avait pas de passeurs

avant que la frontière ne soit verrouillée, corrobore Olivier Cahn, membre du Centre de recherche sociologique sur le droit et les institutions pénales (Cesdip). Si on considère le nombre de traversées, de naufragés et de morts, on est à la fin d'un système. La répression seule ne fait que renforcer les organisations mafieuses et augmenter le prix du passage. »

Des procédures de migration compliquées par le Brexit

« Cela fait des mois qu'on alerte le ministère de l'intérieur en disant que sans voies légales de migration, on va vers davantage de drames, ajoute Lucie Bichet, juriste au sein de l'ONG Safe Passage. On n'a jamais eu de réponse. » Safe Passage soutient notamment des mineurs isolés et des familles qui souhaitent rejoindre légalement le Royaume-Uni. « Depuis le Brexit, les procédures de réunification familiale sont extrêmement compliquées, constate M^{me} Bichet. Avant, le règlement de Dublin nous permettait d'accompagner des dizaines de personnes [le règlement européen prévoit qu'un demandeur d'asile peut rejoindre un membre de sa famille situé dans un autre pays de l'Union européenne que celui dans lequel il est enregistré]. Cette année, en s'appuyant sur le droit interne britannique, on n'a pu obtenir qu'un seul visa. Nous n'avons plus de solution. »

« Il faut organiser une répartition équitable des demandeurs d'asile entre nos deux pays », estime Thierry Le Roy, président de France terre d'asile, pour qui « les traités bilatéraux du Touquet et de Sangatte [qui localisent la frontière en France] font obstacle à ce que

*les gens puissent demander l'asile au Royaume-Uni ». D'après une étude de l'ONG britannique Refugee Council, depuis 2020, 98 % des personnes arrivées en *small boat* au Royaume-Uni y ont demandé l'asile. La majorité est de nationalité iranienne, irakienne, soudanaise ou syrienne.*

Pour beaucoup, l'Angleterre est aussi devenu un recours ultime. Patron de l'Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration, Didier Leschi constate que lors des démantèlements de campement à Calais, seul « un migrant sur deux ou trois accepte d'être hébergé ». Les autres préfèrent rester sur le littoral dans l'attente d'un passage.

A proximité du port de Calais, mercredi soir, ils étaient quelques-uns à s'être abrités sur les quais de chargement d'un hangar logistique. Leurs récits d'exil disent à quel point ils sont les perdants du système européen d'asile, qui veut qu'une personne ne peut solliciter la protection que d'un seul Etat membre.

Beaucoup de ceux qui échouent à Calais ou à Grande-Synthe n'ont pas réussi à obtenir une protection internationale et errent en Europe depuis parfois plusieurs années. Mohamed Moge, un Soudanais de 19 ans, a déjà passé un an et demi en Sicile avant de se rendre en Allemagne. En vertu du règlement de Dublin, il a été renvoyé en Italie. Aujourd'hui, il a l'Angleterre comme horizon.

« Je n'ai pas d'attache là-bas mais je dois y aller pour trouver un futur », explique-t-il. Son compatriote, Ali Abdi, est arrivé en Italie en 2019. « J'avais 17 ans, témoigne-t-il. Au bout de sept mois, je suis parti demander l'asile au Luxembourg. Il m'a été refusé. J'ai deux sœurs et deux frères au pays. Ma mère me demande souvent de leur envoyer de l'argent. J'ai besoin d'aller en Angleterre, par camion ou par la mer. Je resterai ici jusqu'à en mourir. » En mer, certains sauveteurs en sont à espérer que la météo tourne au mauvais temps pour dissuader les gens de tenter la traversée. Ils voudraient que le vent se lève.



Avec AFP
23/11/2021

Exécutions en 1988 en Iran: à son procès en Suède, l'accusé dénonce des "mensonges"

Un ancien responsable iranien accusé d'avoir participé aux exécutions de masse d'opposants en Iran en 1988 a dénoncé mardi les "mensonges" des accusations "fictives" portées contre lui, dans un procès inédit qui se tient en Suède.

Trois mois après l'ouverture de son procès et des dizaines d'auditions de parties civiles, Hamid Noury, 60 ans, est entendu pour la première fois cette semaine par le tribunal de Stockholm.

"Je n'ai que quatre jours pour répondre à tous les mensonges proférés au peuple iranien", a affirmé l'accusé, chemise et pantalon clairs et barbe blanche finement taillée.

"Quand on va dans les détails on voit que ça ne tient pas. Je vais mettre un point final à 33 ans de mensonges", a-t-il assuré, sans rentrer lui-même dans les détails.

A l'ouverture de l'audience mardi matin, la défense avait demandé et obtenu de la cour une déclaration liminaire de M. Noury, avant qu'il soit interrogé par les procureurs.

C'est la première fois qu'un Iranien est jugé dans cet épisode sanglant ordonné par l'ayatollah Khomeini à la fin de la guerre Iran-Irak (1980-1988), estimé à 5.000 morts par des groupes de défense des droits humains.

Les exécutions de 1988, prononcées par des "comités de la mort", visaient principalement l'organisation d'opposition des Moudjahidines du Peuple ira-



Des partisans de l'organisation d'opposition armée des Moudjahidines du Peuple iranien, le 10 août 2021, devant le tribunal de Stockholm au premier jour du procès de l'ancien responsable iranien Hamid Noury, accusé d'avoir participé aux exécutions de masse d'opposants en Iran en 1988, [afp.com/-](http://afp.com/)

nien (OMPI, ou MEK en persan), armée à l'époque et soutenue par le régime ennemi de Saddam Hussein.

Le procès a déjà permis d'entendre plusieurs témoins, en Suède mais aussi lors d'un déplacement ces derniers jours en Albanie, souvent des membres ou d'anciens membres de l'OMPI.

Selon l'accusation, Hamid Noury occupait à l'époque des fonctions d'assistant auprès de l'adjoint au procureur à la prison de Gohardasht, à Karaj, près de Téhéran, dont une maquette a été installée dans la salle d'audience.

L'Iranien nie son implication et affirme n'avoir pas été présent, selon ses avocats.

"Il dit qu'il n'était pas là, mais on a 58 personnes qui disent le contraire", a affirmé à l'AFP Kenneth Lewis, avocat des parties civiles.

Plusieurs témoins affirment

l'avoir formellement reconnu. "Quand j'étais dans le couloir de la mort, j'ai eu plusieurs fois l'occasion de le voir, et j'ai vu qu'à chaque fois que des noms de (prisonniers) étaient lus, il les suivait jusqu'à la salle d'exécution", a affirmé à l'AFP Reza Falahi, un des témoins du procès.

- Piégé par une croisière -

"Il revenait 45 minutes plus tard, et la scène se répétait plusieurs fois par jour", a raconté ce membre de l'OMPI âgé de 61 ans.

Possible du fait de la compétence universelle de la justice suédoise pour les chefs d'inculpation les plus graves, le procès est considéré comme historique par des organisations de défense des droits de l'homme.

Hamid Noury est poursuivi pour "crimes de guerre" et "meurtres" pour avoir, entre le 30 juillet et le 16 août 1988, "ôté la vie à un très grand nom-

bre de prisonniers sympathisants ou appartenant aux Moudjahidines du peuple", visés par un ordre d'exécution de l'ayatollah Khomeini.

L'affaire est très sensible en Iran, des militants accusant des membres du gouvernement d'y avoir joué un rôle, comme le président Ebrahim Raïssi récemment entré en fonction et accusé par Amnesty d'avoir été membre d'une "Commission de la mort".

Interrogé en 2018 et en 2020 sur ces exécutions, M. Raïssi a nié y avoir été impliqué, mais a rendu "hommage" à l'"ordre" donné selon lui par l'ayatollah Khomeini de procéder à cette épuration.

"Je veux que la communauté internationale arrive à la conclusion qu'il n'y a pas d'issue, que (les responsables) doivent faire face à leurs crimes", a dit à l'AFP Ahmad Ebrahimi, un autre rescapé des purges qui vit désormais au Royaume-Uni.

Quelques dizaines de membres de l'OMPI manifestaient mardi matin devant le tribunal pour réclamer justice.

Hamid Noury avait été arrêté en novembre 2019 à l'aéroport de Stockholm à l'occasion d'une visite en Suède, où il est détenu depuis.

C'est un ex-prisonnier de Gohardasht, Iraj Mesdaghi, qui avait permis son arrestation. Il avait attiré Hamid Noury sur le sol suédois en alléchant avec une croisière pour lui et sa famille.



Wladimir van Wilgenburg
25-11-2021

Kurdish shopkeeper arrested for saying ‘Kurdistan’ in Turkey

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) –

Another Kurdish man was detained in Turkey on Tuesday for saying “this is Kurdistan” during a visit of Mustafa Sarigul, the leader of the Party for Change in Turkey (TDP), to the province of Van.

Haci Tunc, a shop owner, [told](#) the visiting politician that everyone in the country should be allowed to speak their mother language and refer to the southeast as Kurdistan.

Sarigul responded by saying that everyone in the Republic of Turkey is free to speak about their nation and opinion.

“We will stand with those citizens who say (support) the unity of flag and borders,” he said.

Tunc wasn't the only shop owner arrested for saying Kurdistan. Another shopkeeper was also recently arrested in Turkey's Kurdish province of Siirt.

“A friend of ours in Siirt said, ‘This place is Kurdistan.’ This place was also Kurdistan 2,000 years ago and it will continue to be so. Let's not object to that,” Tunc said.

Tunc was referring to another shop owner, Cemil Taskesen, in the Kurdish province of Siirt. Taskesen was also arrested for calling Turkey's Kurdish-majority southeast Kurdistan when Turkish ultranationalist Good (İYİ) Party leader Meral Akşener visited last month. Shortly after that conversation,



Shopkeeper Haci Tunc told Turkish opposition leader Sarigul that south Turkey is Kurdistan. (Photo: Twitter)

Taskesan was briefly detained and released the following day.

Kurdish academic Hifzullah Kutum was also detained on Nov. 6 after writing the words “Long Live Kurdistan” on his social media account. Turkish police later released him. After his tweet, shared on Sept. 14, the Firat University in Elazig suspended Kutum from his position.

Kutum [called](#) for the release of Tunc over Twitter and spoke out against the denial of the existence of Kurdistan.

Also, the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Ministry of Peshmerga on Sunday responded to Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar's comment denying the existence of the Kurdistan Region.

The ministry described the Turkish official's remarks as “surprising” since they outright deny the very existence of a “historical, demographic, and geographic reality”.

Akar made the comment — in which he categorically denied the existence of Kurdistan, including Iraqi Kurdistan — during a recent session in Turkey's parliament.

Turkish judicial authorities have also repeatedly banned books that have the word Kurdistan in their title.

Nevertheless, Turkish government officials have also used the word Kurdistan themselves in the past.

Binali Yildirim, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's candidate for Istanbul during elections two years ago, used

the word “Kurdistan” during a visit to the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, a word the very administration he belongs to has banned in Parliament.

Also, President Erdogan himself used the word ‘Kurdistan’ in September 2013, when there was still a peace process between the Turkish authorities and the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which collapsed in July 2015.

During the peace process, President Erdogan was more supportive of Kurdish rights.

After the collapse of the peace process in 2015 and a failed military coup to overthrow the government the following year, Erdogan's Islamist-rooted AKP became more hardline on Kurdish rights and formed an [alliance](#) with the ultranationalist, anti-Western MHP party.

Tragédie de Calais : l'asile en question pour Paris et Londres

Après la mort d'au moins 27 personnes dans la Manche, la question fondamentale n'est pas celle des passeurs mais, désormais, celle du partage des demandeurs d'asile entre l'UE – la France en particulier – et le Royaume-Uni.

Ils étaient Kurdes en majorité, d'Irak ou d'Iran, et rêvaient de vivre en Angleterre. Leur voyage s'est achevé de manière dramatique lorsque, mercredi 24 novembre, un bateau de pêche a découvert une quinzaine de corps flottant au large de Calais. **Au moins vingt-sept personnes, dont sept femmes, sont mortes noyées dans la Manche.**

Cette phrase, qui résume le plus grave des naufrages de migrants survenus entre la France et le Royaume-Uni, n'aurait jamais dû être écrite. Insupportable, cette tragédie fait honte à ces deux pays. Elle traduit la faillite de leur politique de gestion de la frontière. Mais le désastre est aussi européen, puisque la Manche, depuis le Brexit, constitue une frontière extérieure de l'Union européenne (UE).

Depuis 1999, plus de 300 migrants sont morts sur le littoral, selon les associations humanitaires. Cela fait plus de vingt ans que la Manche est une plaie ouverte au cœur du continent européen. Des migrants sont morts écrasés par des trains ou asphyxiés dans des camions en tentant de traverser via le tunnel. Depuis 2018 et le bouclage des accès, ils s'embarquent sur de frêles bateaux gonflables et meurent parfois noyés, victimes du cy-



A Calais, au soir du 24 novembre 2021, après la mort de migrants dans le naufrage d'une embarcation au large de Calais, des bénévoles et membres d'association se sont regroupés à l'entrée du quai Paul-Devot. AIMÉE THIRION POUR « LEMONDE »

nisme de passeurs mais aussi de l'irresponsabilité de Paris et de Londres.

Rhétorique vaniteuse

Sous le choc du drame de mercredi, le premier ministre britannique, Boris Johnson, a accusé la France de « ne pas faire assez » d'efforts pour empêcher les migrants d'atteindre ses côtes. « La France ne laissera pas la Manche devenir un cimetière », a proclamé le président Emmanuel Macron. Comme tous leurs prédécesseurs, ils rivalisent de fermeté dans la lutte contre les gangs de passeurs et la protection de la frontière.

Après la tragédie de mercredi, il serait temps d'admettre la vanité de cette rhétorique. Si les traversées désespérées se multiplient, si les passeurs prolifèrent, c'est qu'il n'existe pratiquement aucune voie légale d'immigration au Royaume-Uni. C'est surtout que les extravagants accords du Touquet signés par Nicolas Sarkozy en 2003 font de la France la gardienne de la frontière du Royaume-Uni. Et que ces accords permettent en réalité à ce pays, l'un des fondateurs de la convention de Genève sur l'asile de 1951, de refouler massivement les demandeurs d'asile.

La question fondamentale n'est pas celle des passeurs mais, désormais, celle du partage des demandeurs d'asile entre l'Union européenne – la France en particulier – et le Royaume-Uni. Emmanuel Macron, qui menaçait de dénoncer les accords du Touquet quand il était ministre, doit actionner ce levier afin d'amener les Britanniques à une négociation sur ce sujet. Des critères et des modalités d'examen des demandes d'asile à la frontière doivent être définis en commun. L'UE, dont la France assurera la présidence tournante à partir de janvier 2022, doit appuyer ces avancées si elle veut sortir d'une situation aberrante où des migrants, à Calais, sont empêchés de quitter son sol.

Le statu quo n'est plus une option, ni pour Londres, ni pour Paris, ni pour Bruxelles. Ces corps flottant dans l'eau glacée de la Manche, au cœur de l'une des régions les plus riches du monde et d'un continent à l'histoire trop pleine de tragédies d'exils forcés et de déportations, font horreur. Dans un monde aux frontières de plus en plus disputées, comment les deux pays alliés et amis que sont le Royaume-Uni et la France pourraient-ils continuer de donner le spectacle affligeant de leur mortelle querelle de voisinage ?

Kirkuk Minute November 25, 2021

Kirkuk

On Monday, November 22, Iraqi army scouts raided a Kurdish village in Chiman village and demanded land titles from the villagers and farm owners. Following the raid, Kurdish farmers held a protest, but army officials told them the lands were under the names of Arab Sheikhs. The area suffered from Arabization policies and Kurds returned to their lands in 2003, but following the events of October 16, 2017, Kirkuk's imposed administration restored Arabization policies. In 1987, over 180,000 Kurds were executed in an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Kurds by Saddam Hussein's regime.

On Monday, November 22, the Kirkuk Misdemeanors Court sentenced several officials in Kirkuk's governorate after being charged with corruption. The court issued nine month prison sentences for each, Ali Jabouri, the brother of the acting governor Rakan Jabouri, and three others, including Qassim Ibrahim, head of planning department in the governorate, and two other employees, Khalid Naif Ahmed and Ryad Ahmed. All of the defendants have been nominated to their posts by the imposed/acting governor Rakan Saed, who also faces several [corruption cases](#).

Over the course of one week, seven anti-government protests were held in Kirkuk against the deterioration of primary services and issues facing locals. The protests included graduate students demanding jobs, store owners protesting against a newly imposed tax, owners of public power generators, and Kurdish citizens in Kurdistan neighbor-

hood demonstrated against the unfair distribution of projects by Kirkuk's governorate. Additionally, wounded police officers held a rally, demanding residential land from the government similar to active officers.

On Monday, November 22nd, Kirkuk's Operation Command announced the discovery of an ISIS (Da'esh) drone during a security search near Ryad sub-district. According to the statement, the drone was near a farm, and the farmer had fled.

According to local witnesses, a Turkish spy drone allegedly hovered over the Kurdish district of Qara Hanjeer for 30 minutes on Sunday. Kurdish security officials have been banned from making public statements since the latest Turkish airstrike on the [area last month](#), targeting Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

After failing again to win a seat in the parliamentary elections, the Muslim Brotherhood wing Arshad al-Salihi and the current leader of the Turkish-backed Iraqi Turkmen Front, Hassan Turan face pressure from the party to hold a new congress and replace them. Turan was assigned as a new leader of the Turkmen Front in February of 2021; he is considered an ally of Turkey's authoritarian President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The pressure comes from the winner of the only seat for the Turkmen population, Arshad al Salihi, an ultra-right-wing figure backed by Turkish nationalists. Last week, [Salihi said](#) Kirkuk is an "inheritance" of the deceased Turkish leader Attaturk, for the Turkmen in Kirkuk, resulting in Kurdish officials responding firmly to the controversial remark.

Iraq Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) flew its first plane to "Kirkuk International Airport" as a test for equipment and runway after the completion of the airport reconstruction. Though the test was successful, there was no official opening of the airport due to security concerns which prevented international airlines from signing contracts with the airport.

The National Security's Kirkuk branch announced the confiscation of two million in counterfeit US dollars in the Mosala neighborhood. The fraud band consisted of three people bringing the counterfeit currency from Turkey. [Last May](#), the Kirkuk police confiscated 16 million counterfeit US dollars.

Khanaqin

On Sunday, November 21, several Kurdish activists gathered in the "Polish Cemetery" in the town. They appealed to the government of Poland to open up its corridors for the [Kurdish asylum seekers](#) stuck on the borders with Belarus. Later the activists held another gathering in front of an old Polish church in Khanaqin. From 1939 to 1942, many [Polish servicemen](#) linked with the occupying British military in Khanaqin. The town has a Polish cemetery and Church.

Iraqi border guards announced the seizure of five smuggled oil tanker trucks attempting to cross the Monthiria border crossing to Iraq. According to the statement, the drivers admitted trying to smuggle the oil to Iran.

Tuz Khurmatu

Iraqi Air Force using F-16

fighter jets destroyed a Da'esh tunnel near Yangija village west of Tuz Khurmatu. According to a statement by Iraqi security forces, 7 Da'esh terrorists were killed during the airstrike. Further, Saladin Operation Command announced the arrested of three Da'esh terrorists, including a senior leader, during a raid in the Jumaila neighborhood on Tuesday.

Makhmour

The Joint Peshmerga-Iraqi army operation command announced the seizure of four Katyusha rockets ready to launch on the Makhmour town center. The area remains vulnerable to weekly Da'esh attacks.

Eight employees of the silo were arrested and accused of the disappearance of 40 tons of wheat worth \$51,000. The employees face prison time if charged with theft.

Shingal (Sinjar)

On Sunday, November 21, a team of the Iraqi Martyrs Foundation exhumated a mass grave consisting of seven people from one family killed by Da'esh during the Yazidi Genocide. The Excavation process is to relocate the corpse of the victims since its location will be developed.

In a press conference, the governor of Nineveh Najim Jabouri said there are obstacles to establishing a new police force from the Yazidi community. Jabouri said there are "actors" behind hindering the plans of forming the security forces. Baghdad-Erbil security agreement includes the creation of local Yazidi forces in Shingal.



bbc.com
26-11-2021

Why Iraqi Kurds risk their lives to reach the West

Many of the 27 men, women and children who lost their lives in the English Channel on Wednesday as they tried to cross from France to the UK in an inflatable dinghy are believed to have been Kurds from Iraq.

Iraqi Kurds have also died in recent weeks on the border between Belarus and Poland, while hundreds more trying to get into the European Union are stranded there in freezing temperatures.

The tragedies have left many wondering why so many people from the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which has oil resources and a reputation for being relatively secure, stable and prosperous, would want to undertake such perilous journeys.

Many of the Iraqi Kurds stuck at camps dotted along the northern French coast and Belarus-Poland border say they are trying to escape economic hardship in the region and build better lives.

They complain about high unemployment, low pay and unpaid salaries, as well as poor public services, widespread corruption and the patronage networks linked to two main families - Barzani and Talabani - and their political parties, which have shared power for almost three decades.

"There is no hope in Kurdistan. Every young person has to migrate, except for those backed by the ruling parties," a young man at a camp in Dunkirk recently told [Pishti News](#).

A woman at the same camp said her husband had served in the region's Peshmerga security forces for years, but that



Unidentified migrants prepare to cross the English Channel, Image source, Reuters

they had left for Europe after he was not paid for months.

"We have hope for a better life once we reach [the UK], a better future for our kids."

Economic hardship

The Kurdistan Region has a population of more than five million, some 1.3 million of whom are employed by the government.

That means that many families suffered badly when the gov-

ernment cut public sector pay by up to 21% early last year and then failed to pay its employees at all for several months because of a financial crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the related crash in global oil prices, and disagreements with the federal government in Baghdad over budget allocations.

Although the salary cuts were reversed this July, it is not clear if the workers have received the money they are owed.

Oil prices have now rebounded

and the economy is recovering, but job shortages, low pay and poverty continue to trigger protests.

This week, thousands of university students have taken to the streets of the two biggest cities, Irbil and Sulaimaniya, to demand the restoration of monthly grants that were suspended in 2014 after another fall in oil prices and the start of the war with the jihadist group Islamic State (IS).

"There are students who can't afford to pay to travel home to the provinces, others who haven't got enough for three meals a day," one student told AFP news agency.

Some of the protests have become violent, with people setting fire to government buildings and offices of political parties. Security forces have detained dozens of students.

The government has faced criticism of its response to dissent. In May, the UN warned that journalists, human rights activists and protesters who questioned or criticised the authorities risked not only intimidation, restrictions on their movements and arbitrary arrests, but also prosecution on defamation and national security charges.

Fighting with Turkey

Escalating hostilities near the northern border with Turkey are also thought to be driving some emigration from the Kurdistan Region, with hundreds



Image source, Getty Images, Image caption, Iraqi Kurdistan is known for being relatively stable and secure

of people from two towns in Duhok province - Shiladze and nearby Deralok - reported to be among those who have sought to reach the European Union via Belarus since the spring.

The mountains that straddle the Turkish-Iraqi frontier are used as bases by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebel group, which has fought for Kurdish autonomy in Turkey since 1984 and is designated as a terrorist organisation by the US, UK and EU.

The Turkish military is said to have stepped up its attacks on the PKK since April, with warplanes and drones targeting PKK positions and high-ranking rebels, and Turkish soldiers battling PKK fighters on the ground inside northern Iraq. Iraqi Kurdish officials say civil-



Image source, Getty Images, Image caption, The Kurdish PKK has been fighting an insurgency since 1984

ians have been killed in Turkish strikes, while several local Peshmerga fighters have died in attacks blamed on the PKK.

"Our area is besieged, it's in the hands of the PKK and the Turks. Our region is nice, but we are afraid and we don't trust

in staying here," a man from Shiladze, whose 19-year-old son had travelled to Germany, told Reuters news agency last month.

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani has insisted that the recent exodus of Iraqi Kurds to

Europe is "not a migrant issue, but a criminal human trafficking issue, with the migrants exploited by criminal networks and caught in a dispute between Belarus and the European Union."

He has appealed to European countries for help with stopping people smugglers, as well as financial assistance to support reforms and increased investment in the Kurdistan Region to help create jobs.

Mr Barzani has also asked for more aid to help the Kurdistan Region cope with continuing to host some 1 million Iraqis internally displaced by the three-year conflict with IS, and more than 200,000 registered refugees from Syria, who have strained health, education and other public services.



avec AFP
le 26 novembre 2021

Plus de 800 Irakiens seront rapatriés vers leurs pays

Migrants au Bélarus

L'Irak a annoncé deux nouveaux vols pour rapatrier vendredi et samedi plus de 800 migrants irakiens coincés à la frontière entre le Bélarus et la Pologne, après trois opérations similaires ayant permis le retour de plusieurs centaines d'entre eux, principalement des Kurdes.

Un quatrième vol aura ainsi lieu vendredi soir et transportera 431 personnes, tandis qu'un cinquième avion transportera samedi 430 personnes, a annoncé, dans un communiqué, le porte-parole irakien des Affaires étrangères, Ahmed al-Sahaf.

Plus d'un millier de migrants ont déjà été rapatriés depuis le



Des milliers de migrants dans un centre de migration au Bélarus, le 26 novembre 2021. Photo Maxim GUCHEK / BELTA / AFP

début de ces opérations le 18 novembre. Les autorités fédérales de Bagdad coordonnent leur action avec la région autonome du Kurdistan. Les avions

se sont généralement posés d'abord à Erbil, en raison de la présence de nombreux passagers Kurdes, avant de continuer vers Bagdad.

Depuis le début de la crise en été, des milliers de personnes se sont massées à la frontière du Bélarus et de la Pologne, dépensant toutes leurs économies et s'endettant pour tenter de fuir la misère dans leur pays et rallier l'Europe occidentale. Des milliers d'entre eux, dont des Kurdes irakiens, sont toujours bloqués dans le secteur.

Les médias polonais estiment qu'au moins une douzaine de personnes sont mortes des deux côtés de la frontière. L'Occident accuse le Bélarus de créer artificiellement la crise en délivrant des visas pour se venger des sanctions occidentales. Minsk a démenti cette accusation, reprochant à l'Union européenne de ne pas accueillir les migrants.

The New York Times

Jane Arraf
Nov. 27, Updated Nov. 28, 2021

They Twice Gave Up Everything to Flee Iraq. They Keep Getting Sent Back.

Bria Ali and her family have twice tried to make it to Germany, desperate for a better life. They are now back home with thousands of others who made it to Europe in recent months only to be deported.

ERBIL, Iraq —

In the hostile world of the video game PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds, or PUBG, to survive you have to parachute onto a remote island and fight to be the last one standing.

Bria Ali was a top player, so good that she was able to sell her account with its accumulated virtual weapons for \$8,000. Then she used the money to try to pull off another survival act: helping her family get out of Iraq.

Ms. Ali and her family are some of the thousands of Iraqi migrants making desperate and at times dangerous attempts to flee Iraq's semiautonomous Kurdistan region. As in the rest of Iraq, despair over the lack of jobs and widespread corruption, combined with efforts by Belarus to drive migrants across its borders, has encouraged a surge of Iraqis to flee for Eastern Europe in recent months.

The idea was to travel to Belarus in Eastern Europe and from there make their way to Germany. But the family's hopes came crashing down at the Warsaw airport three weeks ago when Ms. Ali, 21, her mother and her brothers were forced to board a plane with dozens of others [to be sent back to Iraq](#).

"I thought about breaking my fingers so they would take me to the hospital and we would be able to stay," Ms. Ali said. "I told my brother, 'I'll close my



Bria Ali at her home in Erbil, Iraq, this month. Bria and her family were deported from Poland on Oct. 31 after crossing the Belarusian border. Credit... Hawre Khalid for The New York Times

eyes, and you break my fingers."

She and her brother, Abdulrahman Ali, 19, decided against the plan because they feared they might be separated from their mother and younger brother, who is 11. Now, they are back home with more than 2,000 other Iraqi migrants who made it to Belarus and neigh-

boring countries in recent months only to be deported.

Like Ms. Ali's family, a vast majority are Iraqi Kurds following a well-blazed trail out of Iraq. Today, they are one of the largest ethnic minorities in Europe. Ms. Ali's mother, Yadgar Hussein, had hoped they could join some extended family who were given refuge in Germany in past years.



Iraqi migrants arriving at Erbil International Airport in Iraq this month. Credit... Gailan Haji/EPA, via Shutterstock

But that door slammed shut after European countries adopted [stricter measures on migrants](#) three years ago.

The Ali family's journey to Belarus was the second time they had tried to make it to Western Europe in six years.

For the tens of millions of Kurds spread among five countries in the Middle East and Turkey, it is common to feel like a stranger in a strange land. But Ms. Ali and her family, now back in Erbil and penniless, sometimes feel like strangers in a land that is all too familiar.

Iraqi Kurdistan was founded in the early 1990s after years of mass arrests and the state-sponsored slaughter of Kurds. Stifled by the conservative, patriarchal society, the family is convinced that they would fit in more in a place like Germany than in their own homeland.

Ms. Ali speaks English and Farsi, as well as Kurdish and Arabic. Her brothers taught themselves English from YouTube and video games.

Their mother, Ms. Hussein, 47, was married at 13 and wants a very different life for her daughter. She was so immature when she wed, she said, that she brought her soccer ball to her new home. Five years later, with two children and a third on the way, Ms. Hussein became a widow after her husband stepped on a land mine.

Ms. Hussein remarried and

had three more children: Bria, Abdulrahman and the youngest, Bureen. But after her husband took a second wife, a legal practice in Iraq, without telling her, the marriage ended in divorce.

There are days now when Ms. Hussein has to force herself to hold it all in until her children leave the house — and only then allows herself to sob, she said. Bureen is in the sixth grade, Ms. Ali attends a technical institute (though unpaid tuition bills have left her academic status in doubt) and Abdulrahman is also looking into classes.

The first time the family tried to flee Iraq was in 2015.

That year, Ms. Hussein sold her house to pay smugglers who led her and her children for four months across European borders, encountering obstacles that seemed straight out of a movie. In one forest near the Bulgarian-Greek border, they said, their group was threatened by a large bear as their hashish-smoking Afghan guide slept.

After finally reaching Germany, the family spent five months in a detention facility waiting for their asylum case to be decided. But home had not lost its pull.

Ms. Hussein's father was sick. Her younger son missed his own dad. And she thought there was a chance her ex-husband might return to her.

So Ms. Hussein asked Germany to deport them.

"Bria told me I destroyed their lives," she said earlier this week. "She said, 'You brought us back from Germany' — and she is right. I always try to escape that fact, but I can't."

As she wiped away tears, Ms. Ali, her daughter, tried to console her.

In their rented apartment in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, the living room was bare,



The Polish police patrolling the razor wire-lined border. On the Belarus side, the remains of an old migrant camp stood abandoned near the official border crossing on Monday. Credit... James Hill for The New York Times

apart from a beige sectional sofa and a thin carpet, curling up at the edges.

That was more comfort than they enjoyed at the detention center in Germany six years ago, when they slept on a bare floor with no pillows and blankets, though Ms. Ali said she had been happy.

"I was imagining my future," she said. "In my mind I was thinking that we would leave the camp, be free, study, make friends and hang out. My mother would feel comfortable and people wouldn't talk about us."

In Erbil's conservative culture, the young woman said, she cannot have male friends or smoke shisha in cafes. And Ms. Hussein said that as a single mother she is treated suspiciously. When she or her children go out, her landlord asks where they are going.

The family was also prompted to flee by fear that Ms. Ali's father would try to force her to marry a well-off student at her college. Turning up the pressure, they said, he had already cut off tuition payments.

Ms. Hussein showed me a photo of her taken in Istanbul, where they flew in September en route to Belarus. "I was happy," she said. Sitting in her living room in Erbil, her face was

drawn and her hair was thrust back into a makeshift ponytail.

On the grueling trek from Belarus to Poland, she said, she imagined the calm life that lay ahead for her in Europe. In her mind, she was in a kitchen, wearing a white chef's hat like those seen on cooking shows.

"I would say, 'Bureen, come, I baked a cake for you,'" she said.

In Belarus, they froze in the forest — at one point Ms. Hussein thought her youngest child had died of hypothermia, she said. They walked for days, trudging through deep mud and streams of sewage.

Arriving in Poland after, the family recounted, the Belarusian police cut the border fence, Abdulrahman was hidden in the trunk of a car while their panicked smuggler sped along roadways, trying, unsuccessfully, to evade police checkpoints.

After they were arrested, Ms. Hussein collapsed and spent five days in a hospital.

She said she kissed the ground when she was told in court that her family would be able to stay until January while their case was decided. But 10 days later, they and about 20 other Iraqis with them were told to sign de-

portation documents they did not understand. One of them, reviewed by The Times, certified they were not asking for a lawyer.

Ms. Hussein said that when she hesitated, a police officer put his hand over hers and moved it on the paper to get her to sign.

Back in Erbil, the family said they were still in shock over being back in Iraq. Ms. Ali worried that without being able to pay tuition she would be kicked out of college. Even after the ordeal, Ms. Hussein and her two eldest children said that they would try to get to Europe again if they could.

She has not had the heart to tell her youngest son, Bureen, that everything they saved and borrowed in their desperate bid for a new life is gone.

"He asked me yesterday, 'If we get to Germany, can I visit the United States?'" Ms. Hussein said. "He doesn't know that the smuggler took all our money."

Jane Arraf is the Baghdad bureau chief. She has covered the defining events of Iraq's history for three decades, as well as many equally important stories that never made it into the history books. @janearraf

Il y a six ans aujourd'hui, l'avocat Tahir Elçi était assassiné à Amed.

Le 28 novembre 2015, Tahir Elçi, avocat et président du barreau de Diyarbakir, qui a passé sa vie à défendre les populations contre la violence de l'État turc, a été assassiné à Amed (Diyarbakir).

Tahir Elçi, le président assassiné du barreau d'Amed, avait participé à l'émission « Neutral Zone » présentée par Ahmet Hakan sur CNN Türk le 14 octobre 2015.

Interrogé par Hakan sur la question de savoir si le PKK était une organisation terroriste, Elçi avait répondu : « Le PKK n'est pas une organisation terroriste ».

Après cette émission, le prestigieux avocat avait été victime d'un lynchage croissant. Six jours après l'émission de CNN Türk, Elçi a été placé en garde à vue dans le bâtiment d'aide juridique de l'association du barreau d'Amed et emmené à Istanbul pour un interrogatoire. Elçi a été libéré après son témoignage, mais soumis à un contrôle judiciaire avec interdiction de quitter le territoire.

Un avocat qui défendait les personnes opprimées

Il était avocat indépendant à Amed depuis 1992. Entre 1998 et 2006, il a travaillé comme responsable au sein du barreau d'Amed. Pendant cette période, il a étudié le droit pénal international et les procédures pénales à l'Académie de droit européen en Allemagne et a participé à de nombreuses conférences nationales et internationales en tant qu'orateur.

Il a représenté des victimes dans de nombreux procès na-

tionaux et devant les tribunaux nationaux et la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme (CEDH). Il a été membre de l'Association du Barreau turc (TBB), du Conseil consultatif du Centre des droits de l'homme pour la science, du Comité fondateur de la Fondation des droits de l'homme de Turquie (TIHV) et a participé à la création et au fonctionnement de plusieurs organisations de la société civile. Élu président du barreau d'Amed en 2012, il a poursuivi sa fonction jusqu'au 28 novembre 2015, jour où il a été assassiné.

Ahmet Şık, journaliste d'investigation précédemment emprisonné par le gouvernement turc, avait alors écrit sur Twitter : « Ils ont choisi d'assassiner Tahir Elçi, au lieu de l'arrêter ».

28 novembre 2015 : Un meurtre planifié

Le 28 novembre 2015, Tahir Elçi a été tué par balle lors d'une conférence de presse dans la ville d'Amed. Il était 10h53 lorsque l'avocat a été abattu d'une balle dans la nuque devant le Minaret aux quatre pieds.

Lors de la conférence de presse, M. Elçi avait lancé un appel au calme dans la ville, dans un contexte de violences extrêmes. Les semaines et les mois qui ont suivi sa mort ont toutefois été marqués par une escalade du conflit qui a entraîné la destruction quasi-totale du centre historique d'Amed, Sur, la mort de centaines de civils et le déplacement de milliers d'autres.

Dans un discours public prononcé le jour du meurtre, le

Premier ministre turc de l'époque, Ahmet Davutoğlu, s'est engagé à appréhender les « auteurs inconnus », et a promis que l'enquête de l'État permettrait de découvrir la vérité. « Les assassinats à motivation politique », a-t-il ajouté, « ne seront pas tolérés ».

Pourtant, pendant que le Premier ministre prononçait son discours, promettant de retrouver les tueurs, les autorités ne prenaient aucune mesure pour sécuriser le lieu du crime.

Au final, les enquêteurs ont rassemblé 43 éléments de preuve qui avaient été préalablement identifiés et étiquetés pour être collectés. Quarante autres pièces provenant de la zone située immédiatement autour de la base du minaret, où Elçi a été assassiné, n'ont pas été recueillies. Des photographies et des images montrent des civils marchant autour de la scène du meurtre, qui était clairement compromise.

En effet, la balle qui a tué Elçi n'a jamais été retrouvée. Ce n'est que quatre mois plus tard, en mars 2016, que les enquêteurs sont revenus pour procéder à un nouvel examen de deux jours de la scène du meurtre.

Les policiers que l'on pouvait clairement voir tirer en direction d'Elçi lors de la conférence de presse n'ont jamais été interrogés en tant que suspects, mais seulement en tant que témoins.

Rapport de l'Université de Londres : La police a tiré sur Elçi

Plus tard, en 2016, le barreau

de Diyarbakir a chargé le groupe de recherche [Forensic Architecture](#) de l'université londonienne Goldsmiths d'examiner les preuves en sa possession. Cela comprenait des témoignages, des séquences vidéo, des photographies et du matériel provenant de l'enquête sur la scène du crime, ainsi que des rapports officiels et indépendants.

Le gouvernement turc prétendait qu'Elçi avait été tué par des militants du PKK qui étaient armés sur les lieux ce jour-là. Cependant, Forensic Architecture a rejeté cette allégation avec une reconstitution rigoureuse du déroulement des faits ce jour-là : « Les résultats de notre analyse confirment avec une quasi-certitude qu'aucun des militants du PKK n'a pu tirer le coup de feu qui a tué Elçi. En effet, pendant une grande partie du laps de temps dans lequel Elçi a été touché, Gürkan [militant] tenait clairement son arme par le canon, et était donc incapable de tirer. Yakişir [deuxième militant] ne semble viser Elçi à aucun moment de l'intervalle de temps, et finit par jeter son arme sur la police. »

« Sur la base de notre analyse, nous avons conclu que les policiers A et D avaient des lignes de tir directes mais partiellement obstruées vers M. Elçi pendant la période où ils tiraient visiblement avec leurs armes. L'un ou l'autre aurait donc pu tirer le coup fatal. Le policier C'est le seul à avoir eu une ligne de vue claire et dégagée vers Tahir Elçi pendant la période où il a tiré les coups de feu 24, 26, 28 et 29. Lui aussi aurait pu tirer le coup fatal », conclut le rapport.

Maryam voulait faire une surprise à son fiancé et le rejoindre en Grande-Bretagne: elle est l'une des victimes décédées dans la Manche

On connaît désormais le visage de l'une des 27 victimes du naufrage meurtrier survenu il y a quelques jours dans la Manche. Maryam, 24 ans, originaire du Kurdistan irakien, voulait faire une surprise à son fiancé installé en Grande-Bretagne. Elle avait plusieurs fois tenté d'obtenir un visa pour l'Angleterre avant de tenter cette traversée clandestine.

Elle s'appelait Maryam. Elle était âgée de 24 ans. Elle devait rejoindre son mari Carson, déjà installé en Grande-Bretagne. Elle comptait lui faire la surprise, mais lorsque son embarcation a commencé à prendre l'eau, elle l'en a informé par téléphone avant que le contact soit rompu.

C'est son mari qui a appelé la famille dans le Kurdistan irakien pour leur annoncer son décès. Au domicile de la défunte, des centaines de proches se sont rassemblés en son hommage. La mère de la victime, effondrée, refuse de parler aux médias.

Elle voulait une vie meilleure en Grande-Bretagne. Elle a fini dans la mer

Son père raconte qu'il a parlé à sa fille au téléphone quelques heures avant le drame. *"Je ne savais pas qu'elle allait partir illégalement et quand je lui ai parlé elle était très heureuse et détendue. Elle était dans un hôtel en France. Elle voulait une vie meilleure en Grande-Bretagne. Elle a fini dans la mer"*, confie Nuri Hama Amin.



D'après sa famille, Maryam avait tenté d'entrer au Royaume-Uni de manière légale à deux reprises, en vain. Mais elle finit par obtenir un visa de travail en Italie. Elle se rend ensuite en France avec pour objectif, à terme, de rejoindre la Grande-Bretagne. *"L'instabilité politique et économique dans notre région est telle que ces jeunes risquent leur vie pour un avenir meilleur, même s'ils savent que les routes sont très dangereuses"*,

explique Kermaj Ezzat, un cousin de Maryam.

Une enquête a été ouverte par le parquet de Lille pour mieux connaître les circonstances du drame.

"Une tragédie"

27 migrants sont décédés mercredi dans le naufrage de leur embarcation au large de Calais. Ce drame, qualifié de "tragédie" par le Premier ministre Jean Castex, est de loin le plus

meurtrier depuis l'envolée en 2018 des traversées migratoires de la Manche, face au verrouillage croissant du port de Calais et d'Eurotunnel emprunté jusque-là par les migrants tentant de rallier l'Angleterre. Avant ce naufrage, le bilan des décès depuis le début de l'année s'élevait à trois morts et quatre disparus. En 2020, six personnes avaient trouvé la mort et trois autres avaient été portées disparues. Quatre décès avaient été recensés en 2019.