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### **ROJAVA: AGAINST THE KURDS, ANKARA MAKES EXTENSIVE USE OF JIHADISTS... INCLUDING ISIS**

**A**fter the jihadist attack on the Hasakah prison on 20 January, February was marked in Rojava by the elimination of the leader of ISIS. While the international community had largely lost interest in north-eastern Syria in recent times, these events were a rude awakening: not only is the jihadist danger far from being averted, but the countries of origin of many prisoners left in

the custody of the Autonomous Administration (AANES) have been made to shoulder their responsibilities. Finally, more than ever, the relationship between the Ankara government and ISIS raises questions, particularly after the publication of several damning reports: are we still in the context of an anti-Kurdish “objective alliance”? Or has ideological proximity already led to an assumed alliance with ISIS?

Even if it were “only” a case of circumstantial cooperation, with the Turkish secret services (MIT) pretending to manipulate former jihadist fighters for their own benefit, the situation would be extremely worrying: in secret operations, the classic question is who is manipulating whom... As a member of NATO, Ankara is putting itself in the position of serving the interests of the most dangerous terrorist organisation of the decade, with the objective

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of destroying the West's best allies in the region...

The death toll from the jihadist attack in Hasakah and the ensuing fighting was 373, including 98 Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) members and 7 civilians. SDF commander Mazlum Kobane said on the 7<sup>th</sup> that after this event, it was clear that the 700 American troops in his region were no longer enough (*New York Times*). On the 14<sup>th</sup>, SDF commander Newroz Ahmed explained that a previous attack had been thwarted three months earlier: *"At that time, we alerted the coalition and the international community that an attack was imminent. Unfortunately, since the battle of Baghuz, the world has had the impression that the EI has been defeated. The attack on the prison has shown that this analysis is dangerously wrong"* (*Le Monde*).

In a solemn speech on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, President Biden congratulated himself on the success of the operation by the American special forces, which, supported by the SDF, had eliminated the leader of ISIS, Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashimi Al-Qurayshi, that very morning. According to the American President, this ended a *"major terrorist threat"*. It should be noted that, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the American helicopters that carried out the operation took off from a military base in Kobanê under Kurdish control and not from the large American base in Incirlik in Turkey, which is closer. Thanking the SDF repeatedly for their *"essential"* contribution, Biden recalled the important role played by the jihadist leader in *"the genocide of the Yazidi people in northwestern Iraq in 2014"*. Yet Biden is well aware that the elimination of al-Qurayshi, no more than that of his predecessor in October 2019, means the end of ISIS.

Dozens of jihadists who took advantage of the Hasakah attack to flee have not been caught. The jihadist organisation, which has become clandestine and more decentralised, proved last month that it knows how to exploit the weaknesses of its opponents to organise destabilising military operations when the opportunity arises.

The question is: when will the next opportunity come? If the international community does not provide more support to AANES, it could come soon. Firstly, many foreign nationals are still abandoned by their countries of origin in camps or internment centres run by the autonomous administration, which does not have the necessary means to operate them. Among these *"forgotten"* internees placed in appalling conditions are women and many children, who risk becoming the next generation of jihadists. Rapid humanitarian and legal action is needed, and AANES has renewed its demand for the repatriation of the relatives of jihadists and the creation of an international tribunal to judge them.

Secondly, the support of the AANES also requires a proper assessment of Turkey's role in the recent events.

Like his predecessor, the last leader of ISIS had taken refuge in an area controlled by Syrian rebels who have excellent relations with Ankara. Georges Malbrunot noted in the columns of *Le Figaro* on the 13<sup>th</sup> that the house where al-Qurayshi had been living *"was only 200 metres from a checkpoint belonging to the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group, former jihadists who have come under the control of Turkish intelligence"*... On the *Ahval* website, David Phillips notes that al-Qurayshi's cache was only 15 km from al-Baghdadî's,

in a region, Idlib, that has become the last refuge of all jihadist groups supported by Ankara. Like all Syrian regions controlled by Turkey, it is literally teeming with Turkish MIT intelligence agents. Moreover, Turkey has the second largest army in NATO, which it uses to seek out and target Kurds deep in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan, in refugee camps, and even among the Yezidi survivors of the genocide perpetrated by ISIS. Can anyone seriously believe that it is unable to locate two of the world's most wanted terrorists *"hiding"* in an area controlled by its own mercenaries? Indeed, many of the factions serving Ankara, including the so-called *"Syrian National Army"*, have many *"former"* members of ISIS and al-Qaeda in their ranks.

Throughout the jihadist attack in Hasakah and the fighting that followed, according to SOHR reports, Turkish drone attacks and strikes on AANES territories were unusually intense. Finally, intelligence obtained after the attack showed that Al-Qurayshi had played an important role in its preparation. This makes it all the more disturbing that, according to some reports, among the weapons found on the Hasakah jihadists, some bear Turkish markings and appear to have come from NATO... Ankara had already played a big role in the emergence of ISIS in 2013, allowing more than 40,000 foreign jihadists from 80 countries to transit through Turkey on their way to Syria, a route that came to be known as *the "Jihad Highway"*...

In addition to Phillips, who in the US is calling for a parliamentary enquiry that could possibly decide to suspend Turkey from NATO, there are many voices calling for more international support for the AANES and for a better

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consideration of Turkey's dangerously ambiguous role. On 1<sup>st</sup> February, the magazine *Politis* published a text entitled "*Ne laissons pas ISIS et l'État turc détruire nos alliés en Syrie*" ("Let's not let ISIS and the Turkish state destroy our allies in Syria"). Beginning with a reminder that, in the context of the attacks in France, "*the Turkish state has long been suspected of providing weapons and financial support to ISIS*", the signatories call for "*sanctions against Turkey's invasion and occupation of Syrian territory*" and "*a no-fly zone to stop Turkish military drone attacks*".

Turkish journalist Fehim Taştekin, for its part, does not hesitate to accuse Turkey of having played "*a key role*" in the preparation of the Hasakah attack, mentioning the presence of ISIS cells "*mainly in Ankara but also in many other cities such as Konya, Bursa and Istanbul*". Taştekin also questions the Turkish Interior Ministry's claim that 7-8,000 ISIS members have been arrested on Turkish soil. They might have been arrested, true, but it seems they were not sanctioned in any way (*Kurdistan au Féminin*).

In a revelation that comes at a bad time for Ankara, the Turkish-language *Deutsche Welle* reported this month that a large number of intermediaries located in Turkey have long helped ISIS transfer large amounts of money out of or into Syria. In one case, a Gaziantep-based remittance company transferred US\$ 400,000 from ISIS to a bi-national Turkish-Lebanese intermediary. The intermediary regularly transited through Turkish territory on his way from Lebanon to Syria, where he met with ISIS representatives. Another intermediary, owner of several jewellery shops in Istanbul, had created a fund to

assist the families of killed jihadists and hosted ISIS meetings in one of his shops. He was only arrested in December 2019. Of 365 people whose property was frozen in April 2020 for terrorism, 86 were linked to ISIS (*Duvar*). At the end of the month, the SDF announced that it had captured an Iraqi ISIS member near Raqqa who confessed to travelling to Turkey for "treatment". The "Jihad Highway" still seems to be working...

At the same time, in continuous violation of the 2 separate ceasefires agreed in October 2019 with Russia and the United States, the Turkish army continues its artillery fire on the territories of the AANES. The SOHR even reported in late February an increase in drone strikes since the end of January.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, Turkish fighter jets struck a power plant in Derik (Al-Malikiya), killing 4 SDF members guarding it and wounding 5 employees (WKI). According to the Turkish Ministry of Defence, the raids targeted "*shelters, bunkers, caves, tunnels, ammunition depots, and headquarters and training camps*" used by the PKK and the YPG ("People's Protection Units", the Kurdish core of the SDF). The SOHR reported the next day new strikes on "*some 20 villages and sites (...) in the Hasakah region and northern Raqqa province*", with more than 40 rockets and shells fired since the previous day, with some 60 aircraft, planes or drones, also mobilised in the operation (*Anadolu*). "*Turkey is trying to continue what the EI started*", the YPG accused on Twitter.

Throughout the month, Turkish artillery and drones hit Manbij Military Council positions. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, a drone hit two positions that had just been evacuated; on

the 22<sup>nd</sup>, clashes resumed and a Turkish drone again hit a Council position; on the 28<sup>th</sup>, heavy artillery shells were used, without causing any casualties. Northern Aleppo province also saw Turkish attacks. On 7 July, violent clashes between the regime's army and the pro-Turkish "National Army" took place near Marea. On the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, the Turkish army and the "National Army" again "exchanged artillery fire with the Kurds in about ten villages. Turkish shells also hit a regime checkpoint and injured several children in a stadium in Tell Rifaat. The SOHR also reported regime fire... North of Raqqa, near Ain Issa, two SDF fighters were killed and a third wounded by intensive Turkish rocket fire on the 13<sup>th</sup>. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, after a tense calm of almost a week, the Turks resumed firing on this area, without causing any casualties. More rocket fire hit on the 25<sup>th</sup>, again without causing casualties. The area of the Christian town of Tall Tamr (Hasakah), along with the strategic M24 highway, remain Turkish targets. In the middle of the month, artillery fire was directed at the latter and the areas near Ain Issa and Girê Spî (Tell Abyad). On 23 February, Turkish artillery fire again hit several villages, without causing any casualties. Finally, at the end of February, Turkish drones also hit the Qamishli-Amuda road and injured four civilians, including three women (SOHR).

In Turkey, HDP foreign affairs co-spokespersons Feleknas Uca and Hişyar Özsoy issued a statement on the 3<sup>rd</sup> denouncing the Turkish strikes, both in Iraq and Syria, the first of which came as the funerals of the 121 fighters, prison guards and civilians killed in the Hasakah prison attack were just finishing. They note that, "*Intentionally or not, these attacks by Turkey clearly make the fight against ISIS even*

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more difficult, allowing the organisation to regroup and continue to fight as the most dangerous force in the region”, adding that the silence of the “international community” in this regard can only be interpreted by the Kurds as “approval or complicity” (HDP)...

On 5 February, the SOHR published an estimate that in January, Turkish *jandarma* had killed 3 civilians, including 1 child, on the Turkish-Syrian border in Qamishli, Kobanê and Idlib, and tortured 6 others trying to enter Turkey. In February, the SOHR reported new cases of *jandarma* abuses: the shooting of a 12-year-old boy in Idlib on the 10<sup>th</sup> and the beating of two Syrian youths on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

On the other hand, in Afrin and in the other territories they occupy, Ankara’s mercenaries have

continued their exactions, of which we can cite only a few examples here. Earlier this month, a *Liwa Al-Suqur Al-Shamal* commander confiscated thousands of olive trees in Bulbul under the pretext that their owners were “supporters of the autonomous administration”, before cutting down hundreds of them to sell them as firewood. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the SOHR reported that members of *Ahrar Al-Sharqiyyah* had felled 200 olive trees in 2 villages in Sharran district for the same purpose. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, an elderly man from the village of Midanki died of grief, 4 years after being robbed of his house by the *Al-Sham* legion. In addition, four displaced civilians from Aleppo, including a woman and a child, were arrested by *Ahrar Al-Sharqiyyah* for “forming a terrorist cell”. The SOHR reported many other arrests of this type, often as a pretext for ransom demands... Thus, on the 5<sup>th</sup>, the

“military police” released three civilians from the village of Shadira (Jendires) arrested on 20 January for “relations with the former autonomous administration”, after having received a total ransom of US\$ 900 from the families. Pro-Turkish militias also continue to ransack the archaeological heritage of the areas they occupy for profit, in particular the “National Army”, which even used bulldozers to excavate the sites of Tell Laq (Sharan) and Tell Al-Sultan Baraboush (SOHR).

A spokesman for the Afrin Human Rights Organisation, Ibrahim Shekho, told the Kurdish *Hawar* agency that in 2022 pro-Turkish factions had already kidnapped 96 people in Afrin, including 11 women and 5 children, cut down 5,000 trees, ransacked 9 archaeological sites and murdered 10 people.

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## TURKEY:

### ATTACKS ON HDP AND KURDS CONTINUE, OPPOSITION AMBIGUOUS

**T**here seems to be no end to the deterioration of the economic situation in Turkey. On 2 February, official figures showed that inflation had approached 50% annually in January, a 20-year high. The figure of the National Statistics Office (Tüik) is 48.69%, but the opposition and some economists, who calculated more than 110%, still accuse this institution of underestimation. Its director was however sacked at the end of January by President Erdoğan, for the fifth time since 2019. This is more than for the Director of the Turkish Central Bank, replaced “only” three times over the same period... Mr Erdoğan holds to his Islamic line in economic matters: as the Koran prohibits usury, he imposes very low interest rates on the country, causing the currency to fall for months (-44% against the dollar in 2021) and hyperinflation

(*Challenges*). The increases in the minimum wage decided by presidential decree (50% on 1<sup>st</sup> January), quickly erased by inflation, only accelerate it in the long term.

Energy prices are also soaring. Electricity bills have risen so much that angry consumers have started posting them on social networks, launching a protest movement that is sweeping away even the traditional supporters of the AKP, the presidential party. In the opposition, the leader of the main party, Kemal Kilicdaroglu (CHP, Kemalist), even announced that he would refuse to pay his! Criticism is made even more bitter by the fact that some of the private electricity distribution companies accused of profiteering from the situation are owned by people close to Mr Erdoğan... (*New York Times*)

To divert the anger of the citizens, the AKP-MHP (the ultranationalist far-right party supporting Mr Erdoğan) turns to scapegoats. These are well known, and have been the same for months: the Syrian refugees and, inside, the Kurds.

Syrian refugees are trembling with fear after several racist murders, such as the one of the three young people burnt alive in Izmir last month. Many avoid speaking Arabic in public or even going out. Some have been forcibly repatriated to Idlib, the last bastion of Islamists opposed to the regime.

Racist attacks against Kurds or the HDP are also multiplying, with the indifference or even the approval of the Turkish justice system at the orders of the government. Thus, in Konya, in the trial against the murderer of

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an entire Kurdish family at the end of July, the court refused to talk about racism, despite the protests of the survivors' lawyer (WKI). The accused, an ultra-nationalist, had shot and killed his 7 victims before setting their house on fire. Other attacks took place this month. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, unidentified people attacked the HDP offices in Yüreğir (Adana) with Molotov cocktails and firearms, causing a fire to start, which was quickly extinguished by neighbours (*Bianet*). After a protest rally in front of the building, police prevented local HDP officials from speaking. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, on the campus of Akdeniz University in Antalya, a mob of 30 ultranationalists attacked three Kurdish students who were seriously injured and hospitalised.

Unfortunately, the ruling AKP-MHP opposition is no clearer about the Kurds than it is about the Syrian refugees, whose expulsion it promises. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, six opposition parties met at the invitation of the CHP to discuss their plan to return to a parliamentary system. The HDP was not invited, and during the party's 4<sup>e</sup> congress, held the next day, its co-chairwoman Pervin Buldan warned: *"When the time comes, we will know exactly how to ignore those who ignore us"*... The HDP congress, held in Izmir, was dedicated to the young Deniz Poyraz, murdered on June 17, 2021 in an attack on the HDP's office in the city. Banners in Kurdish and Turkish were displayed, demanding justice for Poyraz as well as for Aysel Tuğluk and all the sick prisoners (*Bianet*). Currently, the HDP is setting up a "Democratic Alliance" composed of Kurdish and left-wing parties (WKI).

The economic crisis also has international consequences. Seeking to break the diplomatic isolation he created for himself by his outrageous language, the

Turkish president is resuming contact with many states whose leaders he did not hesitate to insult a short time ago: Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel. His visit to Abu Dhabi in mid-February is just the latest example. These renewed links bring Turkey desperately needed cash, through cooperation agreements and the creation of investment funds. They also allow Ankara to sell its *Bayraktar* military drones, as it did for Ukraine, which bought about twenty and where Mr Erdoğan visited on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. As a collateral consequence of the Turkish-Emirati thaw, the embarrassing revelations for the regime of the mafia leader Sedat Peker, based in Dubai, have suddenly "dried up"... (*Le Monde*)

After the outbreak of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Turkey, which is highly dependent on Russia for energy and to which it is also linked militarily through the purchase of S-400s, initially remained very cautious: disapproval, but no sanctions. Then, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, once Russia had moved all its warships into the Black Sea, Ankara announced the application of the wartime provisions of the Montreux Convention, which prohibits ships from countries at war from crossing the straits. While *France Info* believes that *"The conflict between Russia and Ukraine puts Turkey, another Black Sea neighbour, in a difficult position"*, given its relations with both belligerents, it could also benefit it: facing Putin, Erdoğan could once again become the necessary ally, a NATO member that no one in the Alliance will dare criticise. This could give the Turkish president an even freer hand to carry out his already intense repression against the Kurds (and all his opponents).

The month started symbolically with a new denial of repression by the ruling party. On the 1<sup>st</sup>, the AKP, with the support of the MHP,

rejected the request made by Şanlıurfa's HDP MP Ömer Öcalan in parliament for an investigation into civilian deaths caused by armoured vehicles. *"During the past two decades of AKP rule"*, *Duvar* notes, *"and especially since the breakdown of peace talks with the PKK and the Turkish military's subsequent operations in the Kurdish regions of eastern Turkey, dozens of civilians have died after being run over or crushed by armoured vehicles. [...] Most of these incidents occur in Kurdish-majority Turkish cities near the Syrian border, such as Mardin, Diyarbakır and Şırnak"*. Öcalan, who recalled in his speech that between 2008 and 2022, 141 people, including 22 children, had lost their lives in 93 incidents with armoured vehicles, was rebuffed. The AKP MP for Antalya, Kemal Çelik, replied: *"[Thanks to these armoured vehicles], we have brought peace and security to the region"*.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the police arrested several Kurds and HDP members, including three in Idil and three in Kızıltepe (Mardin). In addition, the police violently repressed demonstrations against the deaths of prisoners, notably in front of the Forensic Institute in Istanbul, where the organisers of the HDP-supported "Solidarity with Prisoners" initiative were prevented from speaking and some of them arrested. Also earlier this month, the HDP, which had voted against military operations in Iraq and Syria, also criticised the violent strikes against Kurds in these two countries.

On the 7<sup>th</sup>, the so-called "Kobanê" trial resumed against 108 defendants, all members of the HDP, including its former co-chairs. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, the court started hearing the plaintiffs even before the defence had finished its statements, despite protests from lawyers. But all the plaintiffs, some of whom are imprisoned in other cases, took turns to say they did not know the defendants and

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did not wish to testify against them. One of them said, changing his previous statement: *"I don't want innocent people to be convicted because of my statement" ...*

At the same time, the government continues to progressively silence all voices that might express any independent or critical thinking, whether they be academics, journalists or civil society activists. In Istanbul, it has taken a new step in putting Boğaziçi University under control. On 18 January, Naci İnci, the rector appointed by presidential decree against the advice of the teaching staff, had prepared the ground by dismissing three deans of departments in favour of his followers, which gave him the "majority" in the university Senate. On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, he was thus able to have the programme of the Faculty of Law opened by decree last year voted on without consulting the faculty. *"A Faculty of Law established without respecting the law – this is, in short, the government's way of proceeding since 2015"*, noted Zeynep Gambetti on her *Médiapart* blog on the 8<sup>th</sup>. For the researcher, *"Boğaziçi is sure to lose its stature as a centre of excellence and will become, like other universities in the country, an institution where fear and self-censorship are rampant"*. Besides academics, journalists are the other obvious target. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, *Bianet* and *Mezopotamya* reporter Zeynep Durgut was detained in Şırnak during a raid on her home. Her equipment was also confiscated. She had already been one of four journalists charged with "belonging to a terrorist organisation" for covering the case of the two citizens thrown from a military helicopter by soldiers in Van. Durgut and her four colleagues had just been acquitted on 6 January. No official reason has been given for this new arrest, but it is clear that it is to silence her (*Bianet*).

Civil society also remains in the

government's sights, as shown by the case of Osman Kavala, a businessman and human rights defender who has been held in prison for more than four years on fabricated charges. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Turkish President had a new distance confrontation with the Council of Europe. The latter declared that it had referred the matter to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to determine whether Turkey had failed to fulfil its obligations by keeping Kavala in prison despite the ECHR's ruling that he should be released. This referral to the ECHR effectively launches an "infringement procedure" that could lead to the suspension of Turkey from the Council of Europe, even though it is a founding member. Asked about this, Mr Erdoğan replied at a press conference that *"Turkey will not recognise those who do not recognise its courts"*. Officially, Turkey did execute the ECHR decision, with Kavala now being held in a new, equally fabricated court case. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, the Istanbul Criminal Court decided to keep Kavala in detention, arguing that the case has not evolved since the previous review.

Besides, the Kurdish language, although no longer officially banned in Turkey, is still subject to continuous discrimination. At the end of January, the Istanbul police jailed four young musicians who had sung in Kurdish on İstiklal Avenue. Even after their release, the case provoked anger on social media, where the song in question went viral. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, *Rûdaw* reported that on 31 January, HDP MP Meral Daniş-Beştaş had in protest organised a press conference in Parliament where she herself sang in Kurdish.

On the 15<sup>th</sup>, on the occasion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the arrest of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, demonstrations protesting against the permanent isolation imposed

on him by the authorities took place in Turkey, including in Diyarbakir, Van, Batman, Siirt, Şırnak, and İzmir, as well as in many European countries with a Kurdish diaspora. In Diyarbakir, police barred access to Dağkapı Square and surrounded dozens of protesters. In an attempt to prevent these rallies, it had launched dozens of arrests in several cities since the 11<sup>th</sup> (*WKI*). On the 13<sup>th</sup>, it violently arrested Free Women's Movement (*Tevgera Jinên Azad*) activist Hacire Tanırğan at her home in Kızıltepe, which was searched. In Van and Diyarbakir, several members of the HDP Youth Assembly were arrested, including Mehmet Şerif Demirağaç, who is 90% disabled (*Rojinfo*).

On the 16<sup>th</sup>, the Court of Appeal upheld the three-and-a-half-year prison sentence for "insulting" the Turkish president of Selahattin Demirtaş, who has already been jailed since 2016 and faces over 140 years in prison on other charges. Returning from Moscow, Demirtaş had told reporters at Istanbul airport in 2015 that Erdoğan had "flown from hallway to hallway" at a conference in France to take a photo with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin... (*Rûdaw*) In other news, Ankara's Criminal Court held a new hearing against HDP co-chairwoman Pervin Buldan for some of her speeches. A further hearing will be held in May (*WKI*).

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, the TJA, the HDP's Van Women's Assembly and the STAR Women's Association issued a joint statement denouncing the sexual assault of 3 children by village guards within a year in the village of Çatak. Recruited by the state since the 1980s to fight the PKK, the Kurdish paramilitary village guard militia has been involved in numerous human rights violations, including extra-judicial killings, as well as drug trafficking. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, on the occasion of the



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10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “Roboski massacre”, perpetrated near the village of that name by the Turkish Air Force against a group of young smugglers, Güler Tunç, a former elected representative of Cizre, posted on social networks images of the event. She was charged with “terrorist propaganda”. The same happened to a Kurdish woman called Zilan, who posted on Twitter two photos of female fighters: a Yezidi and a

member of the Zapatista movement, and photos of three Kurdish politicians killed by the Turkish army in Silopi... In both cases, the families of the victims denounce the impunity of the perpetrators of the shooting or bombing. In Silopi, the three women, including a DBP MP, had gone to the town when it was under siege by the Turkish army. They were able to phone the BBC Turkish channel to say they were

injured and to ask for an ambulance. However, the provincial governor refused to send an ambulance because of the ongoing fighting, and Şırnak MP Leyla Birlik, who later identified the bodies, believes that the three already injured women were brutally executed by the military. Urfa HDP MP İbrahim Ayhan said: “They were civilians and well-known personalities. We believe they were targeted and murdered”.

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## IRAQ: THE IRAQI SUPREME COURT INVALIDATES THE KURDISTAN OIL LAW

**T**his month, a real legal shockwave hit the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq (KRG): on 15 February, while difficult negotiations were going on to designate a Kurdish candidate for the country’s presidency, a prerequisite for the formation of the government, the Supreme Court in Baghdad issued an unexpected ruling declaring the KRG’s oil and gas law “unconstitutional”. Two days earlier, the same Court had already judged “unconstitutional” the presidential candidacy of Hoshiyar Zebari, the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) candidate for the post, against the incumbent Barham Saleh (PUK).

If the status of hydrocarbon resources is one of the major issues of disagreement between Iraqi Kurdistan and Baghdad, the other remains that of the so-called “disputed” territories, a strip of land running south of Kurdistan from the Iranian border to the Syrian border. This month they were again the scene of numerous attacks by the jihadists of ISIS, who take advantage of the security vacuum caused by the lack of coordination between Kurdish peshmerga fighters and the Iraqi military. Moreover, like all of northern Iraq, these territories have become prime targets for Turkish strikes.

Ankara’s army uses the presence of pro-PKK forces in certain places as a pretext to strike or occupy vast areas. For two years, the Kurdish villagers, terrorised, have abandoned hundreds of villages, where the Turkish military then forbids them to return. The Iraqi Kurds fear that Ankara will eventually impose a lasting demographic change and the creation of Turkish control zones similar to those already established in Northern Syria...

The Supreme Court of Baghdad pronounced on 15<sup>th</sup> the “unconstitutionality” of the Oil and Gas Law adopted in 2007 by the Kurdistan Region to regulate its oil sector. It thus responded, after ten years, to a complaint lodged in 2012 against the KRG by the Federal Government, furious at seeing Kurdistan export its oil directly to Turkey. A second complaint was filed in 2019. The ruling, published by the Court on its website, stipulates “the obligation for the [KRG] to deliver the entire production of the Kurdistan oil fields [...] to the Federal Government”. Furthermore, all oil contracts concluded by the KRG with oil companies are potentially null and void, as the Court authorises the Federal Government to review them all and possibly cancel them.

The Kurdistan Regional

Government reacted immediately by describing this decision as “unjust and unconstitutional”, adding: “The Kurdistan Regional Government will not renounce the rights of the region as prescribed by the constitution, and will continue its attempts to reach a solution [...] on this issue with the Federal Government” (AFP). All Kurdish parties in Iraq, with the exception of *New Generation*, denounced the Supreme Court ruling. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, the “four presidencies” of Kurdistan, *i.e.* the President of the Region, the President of the KRG (the Prime Minister), the Speaker of the Regional Parliament and finally the President of the Judicial Council of Kurdistan, met to reject the Supreme Court ruling. The Presidency of the Region then stressed in a new communiqué that “the Kurdistan Region will continue to exercise its constitutional rights and will not renounce its legal rights and powers”.

Beyond oil, the Kurds fear future rulings claiming to dissolve the Peshmerga or simply invalidating their Regional Government. The ruling on oil management came two days after a previous ruling by the same Court, which had already been widely interpreted by the Kurds (at least those close to the KDP) as targeting them: the definitive invalidation as “unconstitutional” of the candidacy for the Iraqi Presidency

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of former Foreign Minister and KDP leader Hoshiyar Zebari, a *bête noire* of Iran because he is considered to be pro-Western.

His candidacy had been temporarily suspended on the 6<sup>th</sup> because of suspicions of corruption, precisely to allow the Supreme Court to rule on the complaint filed by several deputies who believed that Mr. Zebari did not meet the conditions of “good reputation and integrity” required by the Constitution. This is a surreal accusation in a country cut off by various pro-Iranian Shiite factions where, according to some estimates, more than 300 billion of the 820 billion in oil revenues collected between 2005 and 2016 were embezzled by the Shiite leaders. The parliamentary vote, scheduled for the 7<sup>th</sup>, had to be delayed. By issuing its ruling on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Court eliminated one of the favourites for the presidential election.

The position of President is largely honorary in Iraq, but it is of undeniable importance in the post-election period, as it is the President who must appoint the Prime Minister within a fortnight of his appointment. Since 2005, the Iraqi President has been Kurdish, the Prime Minister Shiite and the Speaker of Parliament Sunni. This distribution is not written into the constitution and is the result of an agreement between the three communities. At the Kurdish level, the two main parties had originally agreed to share the posts: the KDP as President of the Kurdistan Region and the PUK as President of Iraq. This made it easy to designate a single candidate for the latter post, so that the Kurds spoke with one voice in Baghdad. Neither the KDP nor the PUK had challenged each other's candidates until 2018, when, on the strength of its favourable electoral score and after the

death of President Jalal Talabani, the KDP presented its own candidate for the post. This happened again this time, with the KDP fielding Mr Zebari against the PUK's candidate, the incumbent Barham Salih.

Beyond the intra-Kurdish disagreement, the situation endangers the government alliance concluded in Baghdad between the winner of the last legislative elections, Moqtada Sadr, the KDP and the Sunni party *Taqqadum*, since the pro-Iranian parties have decided to support Barham Salih. To set the agenda for the appointment of the president, the alliance is forced to wait for the Kurds to agree. But this agreement seems more difficult than ever to obtain, because the PUK takes a very dim view of the agreement concluded by the KDP with the Sadrists and the Sunni coalition *Taqqadum*, which it considers prejudicial to the Kurds: its co-president Bafel Talabani declared at the end of January: “*The KDP has taken measures independently and concluded agreements with certain political parties without taking into account the will of the Kurdish parties and Kurdish unity*”. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, after the provisional suspension of the Zebari candidacy, Bafel Talabani had come to Erbil to meet KDP leader Masoud Barzani, but the meeting had come to nothing (*Rûdaw*).

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, taking note of the invalidation of H. Zebari's candidacy, the KDP finally chose the Kurdistan Minister of the Interior, Rebar Ahmed, as its new candidate. But this did not restore the unity between the two Kurdish parties, as the PUK kept Barham Salih as its candidate.

The Iraqi Supreme Court's ruling on Hoshiyar Zebari's candidacy is purely political and opportunistic. It was dictated

under pressure from pro-Iranian Shiite parties.

As for its decision on the Kurdistan Hydrocarbons Law, it invokes laws dating back to the Saddam Hussein regime and ignores some explicit provisions of the 2005 Iraqi Constitution approved by referendum. This constitution in its article 140 provided for the settlement by referendum of the status of the so-called “disputed” Kurdish territories under the administration of the central government. This fundamental article for the Kurds has never been applied despite recurrent requests and the Iraqi Supreme Court, which is politicised and has a very large Arab majority, has refused to rule on this issue. Similarly, Articles 111 and 112 of the Iraqi constitution give the KRG the right to exploit oil on its territory: “*Article 111: Oil and gas belong to all Iraqi people in all regions and governorates*”. Article 112 provides that “*The federal government, together with the producing governorates and regional governments, shall take charge of the management of oil and gas extracted from the existing fields, provided that it distributes its revenues equitably, in proportion to the distribution of the population in all regions of the country, specifying an allocation for a specified period for the damaged regions that were unjustly deprived of it by the former regime, and the regions that were damaged afterwards, in such a way as to ensure a balanced development between the different regions of the country, this to be regulated by a law*”. This article was clearly written with Kurdistan in mind, but the law mentioned never saw the light of day.

Interviewed by WKI, Prof. Brendan O'Leary, a specialist in federalism who participated as a legal advisor in the drafting of the Iraqi constitution, recalls that in case of conflict between federal and regional laws,

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Article 115 of the constitution gives supremacy to the latter. Article 110, which lists exclusive federal powers, does not mention oil or gas. Therefore, if there is a conflict between Kurdistan's oil and gas laws and federal oil and gas laws, Kurdistan's laws prevail... O'Leary adds that other articles of the constitution unequivocally limit federal authority to the management of fields in production at the time of the constitution's entry into force, with subsequent fields being the responsibility of the regions: "After 2005 [he explains], there was a long negotiation between the KRG and the federal government. These negotiations came to nothing. So the Kurds decided to write their own law, as they had every right to do. And they took very careful steps to make sure that their draft law was in line with the Iraqi constitution in order to avoid exactly the kind of scenario that we are facing today. [...] No equivalent federal oil and gas law has been passed. Article 112, which provided for the drafting of federal oil and gas laws, also failed.

Furthermore, the KRG challenges the very status of the so-called "Federal Supreme Court of Iraq". Article 92-2 of the Constitution, which provided for its creation by a 2/3 vote in parliament, has never been implemented. The current Court is a legacy of the transitional period between the US-British occupation authorities (*Coalition Provisional Authority*) and the government of Iyad Allawi.

For the Kurds, this double battle over oil and the presidential office, where the Supreme Court plays an important role, bears the obvious mark of Iranian

pressure. Facing the Sadr-PDK-*Taqquadum* alliance are the losers of the last legislative elections, the pro-Iranian Shiite deputies of the *Fatih* ("Conquest") alliance and the "Coordination Framework", the showcase of the *Hashd al-Shaabi* militias. For many local observers, the Supreme Court's decision on Kurdish oil is a new Iranian attempt to pressure Sadr's coalition to offer more to its pro-Iranian opponents, which he still refuses to do...

Moreover, the Turkish army, which has been present for decades in the whole of northern Iraq and which has installed nearly 40 permanent bases there since 2018, has since the beginning of the month intensified its strikes. On 1<sup>st</sup> of February, the Turkish air force struck the refugee camp of Makhmour, killing two camp guards and injuring many civilians, and several places in the Yezidi-majority town of Sinjar (Shingal). A statement from the Kurdistan Anti-Terrorist Services also reported strikes in the Shila area of Iraq, close to the Syrian border, and said that "the bombing caused human and material losses" (*Le Figaro*). In a statement, the Iraqi security forces denounced a "violation of Iraqi airspace", saying they were ready "to cooperate to stabilise the situation at the border" (*AFP*), but several Kurdish groups close to the PKK denounced the indifference and inaction of Baghdad in the face of continuous Turkish strikes.

Condemnations never stopped Ankara. In the middle of the month, new strikes hit the district of Amêdî (Dohouk) and the Shiladze region. Then on the

28<sup>th</sup>, a Turkish military plane bombed the vicinity of a village in the Barzan region, terrifying girls who were playing near the school. The teacher was forced to send them home earlier than usual (*Rûdaw*).

Also in the disputed territories, there may be an improvement regarding the presence of ISIS. Earlier this month, the Peshmerga completed a joint operation with Iraqi forces in the Sargaran district, which, according to the Peshmerga Ministry, cleared the area of ISIS. Furthermore, *Le Figaro* reported on 13 September that the number of attacks had decreased somewhat, as calculated by a study by the West Point military academy. While in 2020 there were still more than 800 attacks per quarter, they have since fallen to an average of 330. The American military institution explains this decrease by several factors: the isolation of the jihadists from the population, the rise of the security forces and the elimination of the organisation's top leaders. "A jihadist stronghold since the mid-2000s, Diyala province and its "capital" Baqouba remain the only urban centre where ISIS still commits attacks on a regular basis, as at the end of January when 11 soldiers were killed during the night in their barracks..." (*Le Figaro*) This improvement must be put into perspective by noting that 300 attacks per quarter still makes 100 per month, or nearly 3 attacks per day. Moreover, as soon as the conclusion of the joint Kurdish-Iraqi operation was announced, it was learned that the deployment of the joint unit between peshmerga and federal soldiers was delayed until the formation of the future government... (WKI)

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## IRAN: NEGOTIATIONS IN VIENNA, INCREASED REPRESSION IN KURDISTAN

**T**he day before the Russian invasion of Ukraine began, on 24 February, *Le Monde* ran the headline: “*The nuclear agreement with Iran is about to be saved*”. “*A draft agreement is on the table*”, explained a source close to the matter to *Le Monde*, while the French Foreign Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, said: “*We need political decisions from Tehran*”. The day after the invasion, observers wondered about the consequences for the negotiations underway in Vienna: while Moscow hardly wants a nuclear-armed Iran on its southern border, which has been the key to its participation until now, Russia’s renewed antagonism with the West, and especially with the United States, could lead it to “take the talks hostage”... Yet reaching an agreement is vital: “*According to experts, the country would have already enriched enough uranium to move on to making a bomb if it so decided*” (*Le Monde*). For the West, the end of February is the limit for the agreement to lapse... On 28 February, Iran asked for Western commitments on three key points: the extent of the lifting of sanctions, the guarantee that the United States will not leave the pact again, and the resolution of questions relating to the traces of uranium discovered at several old but undeclared sites in Iran (*Reuters*).

If a new agreement is finally reached, it could be accompanied, as was the case when the first one was concluded, by the reciprocal release of prisoners. In January 2016, Washington had released or dropped charges against 7 Iranians, and Tehran released 5 Iranian-Americans. On 22 February, Washington’s special envoy for Iran, Robert Malley, has called in a tweet for the release of 4 Americans detained in Iran,

while Tehran is still asking for the release of more than a dozen of its nationals imprisoned in the United States, most of them detained for violating US sanctions (*Le Monde*).

However, the problem of foreigners “taken hostage” in Iran is far from being solved. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, the dissident Iranian news agency *KurdPA* denounced on its website the risk of execution faced by the German citizen of Iranian origin Jamshid Sharmahd. He was illegally abducted in Dubai by Iranian agents in 2020, as had been the Iranian dissident Rohollah Zam living in Paris, and is accused of planning terrorist acts in Iran. With the indictment containing the dreaded term *Mofsed-e-filarz*, “corruption on earth”, Sharmahd, virtually incommunicado and prevented from choosing a lawyer, faces the same fate as Zam, who was brought back to Iran and executed in December 2020 after a sham trial. The Centre for Human Rights in Iran (*CHRI*) has called on the various United Nations bodies and its member states to demand Sharmahd’s release, an immediate end to the abductions and an end to the criminalisation of dissent in Iran. Several other dissidents abducted abroad are being tried in Iran, such as the Swedish-Iranian Habib Chaab, abducted in Turkey, whose trial began in Tehran on 18 January.

The presence in the Iranian presidency of the former head of the judiciary Ebrahim Raisi, who was a member of Tehran’s “Death Commission”, gives little hope that *CHRI*’s demands will be heard. Along with eight other human rights organisations, *CHRI* urged on the 18<sup>th</sup> the governments of the countries negotiating with Iran in Vienna not to lift sanctions against Iran until human rights are respected,

and in particular to maintain sanctions against its president, who is guilty of crimes against humanity. The signatories recall that the “Death Commissions” organised in 1988 the extrajudicial mass execution of tens of thousands of political prisoners already on trial and serving their prison sentences. Raisi should be tried for his participation.

On the other hand, the regime’s exactions continue in Iranian Kurdistan. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, the police killed Mohammed Ahmadi, a Kurd from Kermanshah who was travelling with his family, in his car. According to several local human rights groups, he had refused to pay a bribe at a checkpoint. Also in Kermanshah, Muhseen Mahmudi, jailed for his participation in the 2019 protests, committed suicide in prison. He had gone blind after being shot during the protests (*WKI*).

Near Salas-e Babajani, the *pasdaran* (Revolutionary Guards) seriously injured a man they accused of smuggling. Maziar Azizi is just one of many victims of the regime’s deadly hunt for *kolbars* (cross-border carriers). Others are victims of mines dating from the Iran-Iraq war and deliberately left in place to prevent the crossing of the border, as in Dehloran on the 5<sup>th</sup>, where a member of the Zanganeh tribe who had come from Kermanshah to graze his cattle had to have a leg amputated. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, another mine injured the legs of 3 *kolbars* from Sardasht who had to be hospitalised in Baneh, while another Paveh porter suffered the same fate near Nowsud. The border of Shoosmi (Kermanshah), is riddled with mines that regularly injure or kill *kolbars* or ordinary people (*KurdPA*).

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On the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, three *kolbars* were fired upon without warning and wounded by the *Pasdaran* near Nowsud, Paveh and Baneh respectively. All three had to be hospitalised. On the 25<sup>th</sup>, a civilian driving a car, Saadi Piran, father of two, was shot dead by soldiers near Baneh. Suspecting him of carrying contraband, they opened fire without warning (*KurdPA*). Iranian border guards injured another *kolbar* in another attack near Sarvabad (*WKI*).

These Kurdish porters, regularly killed without warning by the forces of repression, are reduced to this dangerous job by the deliberate policy of economic discrimination that Iranian Kurdistan is undergoing. The rest of Iran is not spared, as shown by the recent suicides of several teachers, in Minab (Hormozgan) on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, or in Gerash (Fars) last September. In addition to the high inflation of the previous three years, food prices have risen by more than 60% in recent months, while teachers receive less than \$200 per month and are frequently in arrears. Numerous teacher protests took place earlier this month throughout the country, including in Kurdistan. Many were arrested and imprisoned for protesting against their working and payment conditions (*WKI*). In Mariwan, they gathered on the 7<sup>th</sup> to demand the release of several of their colleagues, such as Shaaban Mohammadi, arrested on 30 January 2021 (*HRANA*).

Finally, in Khorramabad, the capital of Lorestan, a street vendor set himself on fire after the municipality banned him from working.

Everyone in Iran is susceptible to repression, but ethnic and religious minorities, including the Kurds, are always particularly targeted. For

example, Zara Mohammadi, a native of Sanandaj and co-founder of the humanitarian and cultural organisation *Nozhin*, was imprisoned for teaching Kurdish children their own language. Her sentence, originally set at 10 years in prison, was reduced to 5 years under public pressure, but she does not actually deserve any imprisonment! The Kurdish Institute in Washington tells her story in a short video published on *Youtube*, entitled *Unsilenced Voice* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQencSE0sZA>),

in which her brother testifies. Significantly, it was on the occasion of the "International Mother Language Day", on 21 February, that a young couple of very active *Nozhin* members, Pajam Meri and Waran Nazhad, were in turn arrested in Sanandaj while distributing documents and posters dedicated to this day (*WKI*)...

The *Hengaw* Human Rights Organisation reported that in January the regime arrested 50 Kurdish activists. February was also marked by numerous arrests and convictions. For example, on 1<sup>st</sup> February, trade union activist Rebwar Abdollahi, who had been arrested the day before without a legal warrant, told his family by phone that he was being held at the Sanandaj Security Office. The following week, another activist, Khabat Shakib (or Dehdar, depending on the source) was arrested in the same town. In Oshnavieh, 5 Kurds were transferred to prison after weeks of interrogation by the *Etelaat* (Security). They are reportedly accused of "belonging to Kurdish parties". In Paveh, 18-year-old Roya Mehedini was sentenced to one year in prison on the same charge. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, Soran Mahmoudi was arrested without a warrant at a checkpoint in

Kermanshah and taken to an *Etelaat* detention centre. He was able to inform his family by phone, but they could not find out what charges he was facing. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, four residents of Piranshahr were arrested in the same conditions. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, Ebrahim Tarimoradi, an inhabitant of the village of Amroleh (Sanandaj), who had been arrested last July in a raid on his home, was sentenced on appeal to one year's imprisonment for "*propaganda against the regime and affiliation with one of the Kurdish opposition parties*" (*KurdPA*). In addition, a soldier of Kurdish origin, Mohammed Azizi, was arrested, according to *Hengaw*, because his sister belongs to a Kurdish party... The *IRGC* (*pasdaran*) also raided a Kurdish publishing house in Ilam called *Bashur*, as well as the home of its owner, the poet and writer Mohammed Nisari (*WKI*).

On the 15<sup>th</sup>, Kurdish activist Kiomars Latifi, who had been under surveillance for a long time by the Security Police, was arrested in Sanandaj. He had been in hiding for 6 months, but was spotted by a surveillance camera placed near his home. His sister was also taken into custody after a raid on her home. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Piranshahr resident Loqman Seyedehe was arrested and held incommunicado during a security raid on his home. In addition, Kermanshah poet and activist Kamaran Takouk was sentenced to two years and four months in prison for "*disrespecting the Supreme Leader*" and "*propaganda against the state*". Other arrests included residents of Bokan, and a Kurdish language teacher, Maisam Khorani, in Ilam (*WKI*).

As mentioned, most of the arrests this month were made without a legal basis, as no warrants were shown and no charges indicated.

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## AFTER THE HASAKAH ATTACK, THE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF THE RELATIVES OF JIHADISTS FACE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

She jihadist attack on the

**T** Ghwayran prison in Hasakah on 20 January brought the issue of the fate of the families of jihadists, especially children, back to the forefront. Indeed, it appeared that hundreds of minors aged between 12 and 18 were incarcerated in this facility.

After the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) took control again, at the cost of hundreds of deaths, Unicef announced in a statement that it had been able to meet with the children still present there, without specifying their number, and indicated that, despite some essential services now guaranteed, *“the situation of these children [was] incredibly precarious”*. SDF spokesman Farhad Shami told AFP that *“hundreds”* of minors were still being held in Ghwayran, but refused to give an exact number. Before the assault, *Save the Children* and *Human Rights Watch* estimated their number at more than 700... (AFP)

The Kurdish authorities (AANES) have repeatedly called for the repatriation of relatives, women and children, but also of the foreign jihadists themselves, criticising their countries of origin for not taking their responsibilities. Already in January 2021, the UN had called

for the repatriation of the children of foreign jihadists in Syria. After the Ghwayran attack, this issue is again in the news. UNICEF's representative in Syria, Bo Viktor Nylund, once very critical of AANES, has softened his tone somewhat, saying: *“UNICEF recognises the efforts of the local authorities to stabilise the situation inside and outside the prison”*. He said his organisation was *“ready to help fund a new safe house in north-eastern Syria to care for the most vulnerable children”*, adding: *“We call on the member states of foreign children to repatriate these children as a matter of urgency, in accordance with their best interests”*.

There are about ten young Frenchmen among the Ghwayran minors, and up to 200 children throughout Syrian Kurdistan, for whom the request for repatriation, as well as for their mothers, was renewed at the beginning of February by several French MPs. The European Court of Human Rights was also seized of this issue. Then on 15 February, several NGOs meeting at a press conference sounded the alarm about the *“danger of death”* that threatens these French children of jihadists, some of whom have been detained in Syria since 2017, urging the French authorities to repatriate them. Françoise Dumont, Honorary President of the League of Human Rights, urged the French government to

*“break the legal, humanitarian and security deadlock”* in which it has placed itself. Patrick Baudoin, Honorary President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH / IFHR), recalled that children who are forcibly recruited in conflicts are never considered as guilty, but as victims of the conflict: *“International conventions oblige France to protect them. As for women, French justice is fully competent to judge them”*. But French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian ruled out any repatriation of adults. Yet several European countries have recently repatriated women and children from Syria, including the Netherlands and Sweden. Repatriation, this is also the demand of the Syrian Kurds, who say they can no longer ensure the security of the camps in the face of the resurgence of ISIS...

On 24 September, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a statement claiming that France is violating the rights of children held in Syria by refusing to repatriate them.

Beyond the sole case of France and these children, it is all the countries whose nationals, children or adults, are still in the places of detention administered by the Kurds, who must now assume their responsibilities – and even more so since the Ghwayran attack.



# « Ne laissons pas Daech et l'État turc détruire nos alliés en Syrie »

**S**ans un soutien international accru, la déstabilisation du territoire autonome du Nord-Est de la Syrie risque de passer un point de bascule vers une situation incontrôlable.

Du 20 au 30 janvier dernier, une attaque d'envergure menée par Daech, la pire depuis la fin du califat en 2019, a eu lieu sur la prison d'Hasakah dans le territoire autonome du Nord-Est de la Syrie (NES). Tentant de libérer près de 4000 djihadistes détenus, Daech a opéré depuis l'extérieur et au sein même de l'établissement. Les affrontements ont causé la mort de nombreux civils et le déplacement de plusieurs milliers d'habitants. Ce n'est que le 30 janvier que les Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS, partenaires de la coalition internationale) ont pu regagner le contrôle total de la prison.

Tout, dans cette attaque, indique une résurgence extrêmement inquiétante de milices terroristes entraînées, organisées et équipées.

Simultanément, les frappes de drones militaires turcs ont été intensifiées dans la zone. Elles se sont accompagnées d'un regain des attaques sur les lignes de front de la zone occupée depuis 2019 par la Turquie, après l'invasion d'Afrin en 2018, à Tell Abyad/Girê Spî et Serê Kaniyê.

L'État turc est depuis longtemps suspecté de fournir des armes et un soutien financier à Daech. La présence de membres actifs de Daech est avérée dans les zones qu'il occupe en Syrie. L'objectif est clair : déstabiliser la zone, affaiblir les Forces démocratiques syriennes et vider la région de ses populations kurdes.

En plus des frappes de drones, la Turquie mène une véritable guerre de l'eau en amont de l'Euphrate, en violation du droit international. Des millions de civils sont privés d'eau courante, en pleine sécheresse et en pleine pandémie. La sécurité alimentaire et la santé publique sont en péril. Le territoire syrien est en situation d'urgence humanitaire.

Ces offensives répétées fragilisent toute la région, ainsi que le projet de co-existence pacifique des peuples et d'émancipation des femmes qui s'y développe. Elles affaiblissent nos alliés les FDS et renforcent Daech. Dans ce contexte, sans un soutien international accru, la déstabilisation risque de passer un point de bascule vers une situation incontrôlable.

Le monde entier a célébré la libération de Kobanê en 2015, tournant décisif dans le combat contre Daech. Nous avons pleuré nos mort-es et nos blessé-es à la suite des attentats de Saint-Denis, du Bataclan, de Nice et de Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray. Nous avons serré les poings devant les horreurs commises à Raqqa et nous avons formulé un vœu : « Plus jamais ça ! ». Nous ne pouvons pas fermer les yeux sur ce qu'il se passe là-bas.

Nous, membres d'ONG, collectifs de soutien, élu-es, artistes, journalistes, personnalités publiques :

- Déclarons solennellement que nous sommes toutes et tous directement concerné-es par les risques de résurgence terroriste de Daech et la situation au Nord-Est de la Syrie ;

Affirmons notre soutien aux populations civiles déjà si dure-

ment éprouvées, aux Forces démocratiques syriennes et à l'administration du Nord-Est de la Syrie ;

Disons notre inquiétude la plus profonde quant à l'attitude de l'État turc vis-à-vis de Daech ;

Demandons que des sanctions soient prises contre l'invasion et l'occupation par la Turquie de territoires syriens ;

Demandons une zone d'exclusion aérienne afin que cessent les attaques de drones militaires turcs ;

Demandons au gouvernement français d'agir avec célérité et d'apporter tout son soutien logistique et financier aux populations.

## Signataires :

Mitterrand Gilbert, Président de la Fondation Danielle Mitterrand

Morel Darleux Corinne, Écrivaine, Administratrice de la Fondation Danielle Mitterrand

Doucet Grégory, Maire de Lyon

Piolle Eric, Maire de Grenoble

Panot Mathilde, Présidente du groupe parlementaire La France Insoumise

Féraud Rémi, Sénateur de Paris

Bernard Bruno, Président de la Métropole de Lyon

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Damasio Alain, Écrivain, La Zeste

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Rublon Tony, Président des Amitiés Kurdes de Bretagne

Koroglu Alexandre, cardiologue, président de l'association Rojator

Gaiji Khaled, Président Les Amis de la Terre

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Bance Pierre, Essayiste, docteur d'État en droit	Berger Anne Emmanuelle, Universitaire	Daniel Raphaël, Cinéaste	Giorgi Charlotte, Autrice
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Belliard David, Adjoint à la Maire de Paris	Boffet Laurence, Conseillère d'arrondissement déléguée Aux Solidarités internationales	Decoster Juliette, Citoyenne	Gontard Guillaume, sénateur de l'Isère et président du groupe écologiste Solidarité et Territoires
Huguet Pierre, Adjoint au Maire de Marseille	Bompard Manuel, Député européen de La France Insoumise	Delfour Jean-Jacques, Philosophe	Guyot Nils, Militant associatif d'éducation populaire
Troadec Pascal, Maire-adjoint de Grigny	Bony Catherine, professeure des écoles, conseillère régionale Auvergne Rhône Alpes	Den hond Chris, Journaliste Orient XXI	Hilton Bruno Charles, Citoyen
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Zdorovtsoff Sonia, Adjointe aux Relations, Coopération et Solidarités internationales du maire de Lyon	Boulanger Edith, Planète Paix, mensuel du Mouvement de la Paix, Rédactrice en chef	Dorémus Gaëtan, Auteur et illustrateur	Ibos Caroline, Professeure de sociologie Université Paris-8
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Allak Vedat, Artiste	Brochier José, Agronome	Dugrand Charlotte, Éditrice Éditions Libertalia	Joyeux Benjamin, Conseiller régional d'Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
Amard Gabriel, Co-président de l'Association nationale du réseau des élu-es insoumis-es et citoyen-nes	Buchet Eric, Président Experts-Solidaires	Duménieu Alain, enseignant retraité et communiste	Julien-Laferrière Hubert, Député
Amir Jean-Yves, Plasticien	Burkart Louisiane, Citoyenne du monde	Engin Sustam, CSCUNES	Kribi-Romdhane Hella, Conseillère régionale d'Île-de-France, porte-parole de Génération.s
Angelot Jessy, Syndicaliste cheminot	Cacciabue Philippe, Agronome	Fallet Manon, Researcher Fassin Eric, Sociologue, Université Paris-8	Laïdouni-Denis Myriam, Conseillère régionale Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
Ariès Paul, Directeur de L'OIG	Capizzano Fabrice, Écrivain	Fenasse Delphine, Maire-adjointe à Fontenay-sous-Bois (94)	Lambert Amaury, Professeur des universités
Arnal Monique, Enseignante Retraitée	Carasco Danielle, Conseillère municipale mairie De Villeurbanne	Ferraron Corrine, Présidente Igapo Project	Laquet Martin, Artiste
Ashrafi Maryam, Journaliste	Carcélès Rémi, Doctorant en science politique	Fiat Caroline, Députée La France Insoumise	Larive Michel, Député de l'Ariège
Bacher Constantin, Membre du bureau des Jeunes Génération-s de Lyon	Celik Adnan, Anthropologue Coquerel Eric, Député LFI Du 93	Fleury Daniel, Magazine Kedistan, journaliste	Le Mignot Renée, Présidente honoraire du Mrap
Barbat Julien, Coordonnateur départementales Génération.s 63	Cornet Fiona, Étudiante	Frey Marc, Sud Éducation 91, retraité	Leblois Raphael, Chercheur INRAe
Bataray Zerrin, Avocate,	Court Mireille, Journaliste indépendante	Gallas Yves-Jean, Mouvement	



Lecolle Michelle, Enseignant-chercheur	Obono Danièle, Députée La France Insoumise	Radin Thibaud, Doctorant en sociologie	Sevim Ciftci, Secrétaire
Lemée Gilles, « Ensemble ! » Militant de la cause kurde (Amitiés kurdes de Lyon Rhône-Alpes)	Oke Naz, Journaliste Kedistan webmagazine	Rafanell Orra Josep, Écrivain, psychothérapeute	Shek Daud, Représentant Parti de gauche kurde en Syrie
Lezongar Alain, Journaliste	Oliva Jean-Claude, Directeur Coordination Eau Île-de-France	Raffi Jeanine, Co-présidente Conseil de coordination des associations arméniennes de France	Siébert Christophe, Auteur
Lilin Charles, Citoyen	Otero Olga, Universitaire	Ramnuth Mélanie, Chargée de projets Experts-Solidaires	Suret-Canale Michel, Artiste-peintre
Lobos Jonathan, Auteur et metteur en scène	Paloulian Tanzilli, Co-président Conseil de coordination des associations arméniennes de France	Ravello Julien, Président du groupe Villeurbanne Insoumise Ensemble!	Surroca Laure, Membre du collectif national de Generation.s
Louis Camille, Philosophe et dramaturge	Pasiecznik Bénédicte, Agronome, Conseillère régionale Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Adjointe Lyon 7e	Ressiguiet Muriel, Députée LFI	Taurine Bénédicte, Députée La France Insoumise
Lowy Elise, Militante Ecologiste (Peps - Pour une écologie populaire et sociale)	Paternot Bruno, Conseiller délégué Métropole de Montpellier	Rizzolo Anne, Céramiste	Thiébaud Elise, Autrice
Madrelle Jacqueline, Présidente France Libertés Gironde	Patrick Laroche, Polygraphe La Gueule ouverte	Romero Roberto, Conseiller régional Île-de-France, Génération•S	Thiriart Laurence, Réalisatrice de documentaires
Mansiz Necip	Paugam Pascale, Comédienne	Saadi Sardar, Centre de solidarité et coopération avec les universités du Nord et de l'Est de la Syrie	Tondelier Marine, Conseillère régionale des Hauts-de-France
Marie Didier, Écrivain	Perez Grégoire, Citoyen	Sabatier Gilles, Militant altermondialiste	Trocadéro Emmanuelle, Directrice associative, conseillère municipale
Martin Yves, Syndicaliste	Perrin Annabelle, Journaliste	Sacchi Olivier, Biologiste	Trouille Stéphane, Reporter vidéo
Mathéoud Maryvonne, Co-présidente Association Iséroise des amis des Kurdes	Perrin-Gilbert Nathalie, Adjointe à la Culture du maire de Lyon	Salmon Daniel, Sénateur d'Ille-et-Vilaine	Vanneuille Marie-Claire, Citoyenne
Mathieu Michel, Metteur en scène	Petit Delphine, Porte-parole Collectif de solidarité avec le peuple kurde de Montpellier	Samouelian Annick, Présidente Solidarité et Liberté Provence	Vénier Philippe La Boisselière
Mède Hardy, Chercheur université Paris-1 Panthéon-Sorbonne	Philippe Katia, Syndicaliste	Sarah Lecolle, Citoyenne du monde	Vicaud Melissa, Citoyenne
Mehmet Ilkhan, Centre Kurde des droits de l'homme à Genève	Pignocchi Alessandro, Auteur de bande dessinée	Sauze Matthieu, Co-référént départemental (Gard) de Génération•s	Vicherat Denis, Les Éditions Utopia, vice-président
Mercier Mady, Citoyenne engagée	Poncet Monge Raymonde, Sénatrice EÉLV Rhône	Schreuer François, Conseiller Communal de La ville de Liège	Vincent d'Eaubonne, Auteur, dégroupilleur de matrimoine
Mintz Frank, Éditions Noir Et Rouge, professeur retraité de L'Éducation nationale	Pons Jean-Marc, Biologiste Prud'homme Loïc, Député La France Insoumise	Seguin Corinne, Retraitée	Whitney Anthony, Citoyen
Monange Benoit, Directeur de la Fondation de l'écologie politique	Quatennens Adrien, La France Insoumise Député Du Nord, Coordinateur De La France Insoumise	Seguin Patrick, Co-secrétaire départemental Parti de gauche 34	William Leday, enseignant en relations internationales à Sciences Po, membre du Collectif national de Generation.s
Monier Patrick, Retraité	Queiros David, Maire de Saint-Martin-d'Hères	Serge Ressiguiet, PCF Hérault Serne Pierre, Conseiller municipal écologiste de Montreuil (93)	Yann Lasnier, Administrateur Fondation Danielle Mitterrand
Muller Emmanuelle, Chercheuse citoyenne			Yannick Prunier, PCF, membre du comité départemental 79

## Des «pertes humaines» dans des raids turcs en Irak visant le PKK, annoncent les autorités kurdes

L'aviation turque a mené des bombardements aériens mardi en Irak contre des positions des rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), ont annoncé les autorités de la région autonome du Kurdistan irakien en rapportant des «pertes humaines». «Des avions de combat turcs ont visé plusieurs positions des combattants du PKK», mouvement rebelle kurde turc, notamment dans les régions de Makhmour et de Sinjar (nord), a indiqué le communiqué des services antiterroristes du Kurdistan, sans avancer un bilan précis de victimes.

Le PKK, groupe qualifié de «terroriste» par la Turquie et ses alliés occidentaux, dispose de

bases arrières et de camps d'entraînement dans la région du Sinjar, ainsi que dans les zones montagneuses du Kurdistan d'Irak, région frontalière de la Turquie. Ankara, qui a de facto installé plusieurs dizaines de bases militaires depuis 25 ans au Kurdistan irakien, a lancé au printemps 2021 une nouvelle campagne militaire contre le PKK dans le nord de l'Irak, avec des bombardements aériens récurrents et parfois des opérations terrestres.

«Selon les informations que nous avons reçues, l'aviation militaire turque a bombardé six positions du PKK dans les montagnes de Karjokh», surplombant un camp de déplacés kurdes dans la région de

Makhmour, a ajouté le communiqué.

Il évoque également des «frappes» contre «deux autres positions dans les Monts Sinjar et la zone adjacente en Syrie», et des frappes dans le secteur de Shila en Irak, tout près de la frontière syrienne. «Les bombardements ont causé des pertes humaines et matérielles», a encore affirmé le communiqué. De son côté, l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'Homme (OSDH) a fait état mardi d'une «frappe d'un drone turc» contre une position des forces kurdes syriennes près des champs pétroliers de Rmeilane, dans le nord-est de la Syrie en guerre, sans mentionner le PKK.

Le nord-est de la Syrie est tenue par les Forces démocratique syriennes (FDS), combattues à plusieurs reprises par les troupes turques, également présentes dans des zones du nord de la Syrie. En décembre, trois soldats turcs ont été tués dans une attaque dans le nord de l'Irak imputée par Ankara au PKK. En août, quatre soldats turcs ont été tués au cours d'opérations contre le PKK dans la région. Toujours en août, au moins trois personnes sont mortes dans un raid aérien mené par la Turquie dans le nord-ouest de l'Irak, contre une clinique où se trouvait un responsable du PKK blessé.



February 1, 2022  
By Karwan Faidhi Dri

## Istanbul police prevents Kurdish street music, angering Kurds

Turkish police prevented a group of young men from singing in Kurdish on Istanbul streets this week. Kurdish politicians and social media users reacted by singing the song that was banned and promoting a hashtag.

Four street musicians were detained by the police in Istanbul's famous Istiklal Avenue earlier this week after they were seen singing in Kurdish language. The men were later released but this did not stop reactions from Kurdish politicians and social media users who have launched the hashtag #kürtçemüzikusmayacak

(Kurdish music will not be silent). Meral Danis Bestas, lawmaker for the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), sang the same song in the parliament on Monday that was banned by police.

“A group was prevented from singing in Kurdish. This is the result of hostility against Kurds. You cannot ban Kurdish language, and our songs will be sung everywhere,” she said at the legislature. “Our language is our existence and future.” A group of HDP lawmakers, Kurdish activists and media outlets visited young singers in Istanbul on Tuesday, listening

to their Kurdish songs as a challenge to the ban.

Istanbul police said in a statement on Monday that the group was prevented from singing because they had blocked the tram, ambulance and fire truck roads, claiming that “a large number of complaints were filed from citizens and business owners from the area.” Police also said that certain spots were dedicated for street music groups in the past but this is no longer the case. It denied claims that the group was prevented due to Kurdish language.

Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamo-

glu, who is from the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), defended the police explanation, describing it as “decent” and “credible.” However, he said that all citizens are free to sing in their language.

This incident happens as Kurds are encouraging parents in Turkey to register their children to Kurdish elective lessons.

Kurdish language has been silenced in modern Turkey since its foundation in 1923, due to the oppressive assimilation policies of successive governments and Kurdish parties.

## Kurdistan's Weekly Brief February 1, 2022

### Iran

Iranian authorities jailed at least 23 people in Iran's Kurdish region last week, including a female activist named Zaman Zeawia and film director named Medad Nazhad in Saqqez, a labor activist, Rebwaz Abdullahi, and two female activists, Soma Shapari and Mahsa Mohamed, in Sanandaj (Sena), and two environmental activists named Ayoub Hadesi and Rahman Khadematikozar in Piranshahr. Iranian security forces also arrested several Kurds in Oshanavieh (Shino), Sarvabad, Javanrud, Bukan, and Baneh. Concomitantly, Iranian teachers, including some in the Kurdish region, went on strike to protest low wages and poor living conditions on Sunday. Iranian authorities detained dozens of organizers and members of local teachers' unions immediately after the protests, including two teachers in Marivan named Jabar Dosti and Shabaan Mohamadi. A hardline Iranian lawmaker named Ahmed Naderi then warned "issues" regarding the Iranian government's proposed budget for 2022 were liable to spur additional anti-government protests throughout the country.

Iranian border guards injured a Kurdish border porter (kolbar) named Melad Rostami near Nowsud. Another kolbar died in a car accident in the same area on January 31. Lastly, the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights claimed 52 kolbars were killed and 163 were injured in 2021.

### Iraq

Iraq's political parties remain unable to agree on a presidential candidate. While the Kurdistan Democratic Party's (KDP) delegation in Baghdad

reaffirmed its endorsement of Hoshiyar Zebari for the presidency, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) remains committed to current president Barham Salih. In the meantime, Iran and its proxies continue to pressure Muqtada al Sadr's coalition, the KDP, and the Sunni blocs led by Mohammed al Halbousi. Three Katyusha rockets targeted Halbousi's residence in Anbar Governorate on January 25 and injured two children. Though there have been no official claims of responsibility for the attack on Halbousi, Iranian-backed militias remain the prime suspects because they rejected his alliance with Sadr and reelection as Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Iraq. Iraqi and Kurdish leaders denounced the attack, and on Monday, Halbousi and President of Kurdistan Region Nechirvan Barzani visited Najaf and met with Sadr. At the same time, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force (IRGC-QF) commander Ismael Qaani visited Iraq, ostensibly to build rapport with the new Iraqi government.

The German Bundestag voted to end Germany's mission in Syria and extend the presence of German troops in Iraq for nine months. Germany's decision was warmly received by Kurdish officials, including Peshmerga commanders, as the German military provides weapons and training to the Peshmerga and Iraqi forces. On another note, Iraqi and Kurdish forces finalized the creation of several joint brigades that will attempt to counter the growing ISIS (Da'esh) presence in the "Disputed Territories" and now await the Iraqi Ministry of Defense's approval of the brigades' salaries.

A Turkish drone strike killed a

commander of the Yazidi Sinjar Resistance Units (YBS) named Seliman Shamo Yousif last week. Simultaneously, several Turkish airstrikes hit alleged Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) targets in Duhok Governorate's Amedi District.

### Syria

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced they achieved "full control" of the Sina'a prison in Hasakah Governorate on Sunday after Da'esh launched a complex attack on the facility to free its imprisoned operatives on January 20. The SDF also raided several locations near the prison, including Hasakah's Gewaran neighborhood, and recaptured several terrorists. On Monday, the SDF released a report detailing the incident that claimed Da'esh detonated a car bomb in front of the prison's main gate and then attacked the facility from three directions. Concurrently, Da'esh smuggled a large cache of weapons and ammunition to operatives in the prison and dug several escape tunnels that were connected to surrounding neighborhoods. The SDF said they neutralized 374 Da'esh terrorists, while 40 SDF personnel, 77 prison staff, and four civilians were killed. SDF officials also claimed they had evidence the attack was planned in Turkish-occupied areas and included at least some terrorists from Iraq. "The Turkish state is most responsible for the Da'esh terrorist attack on the Sina'a prison and the continued existence of the Da'esh terrorist organization," read the report. Finally, the SDF repeated calls for the establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute the thousands of Da'esh detainees who remain imprisoned in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES).

### Turkey

Turkish police conducted raids and arrested several Kurds last week, including six people in Mardin on Wednesday, four members of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Youth Council in Van, and a senior member of the Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (DBP) in Diyarbakir (Amed) named Seval Gulmez. The police also raided the DBP office in Amed's Baglar district and confiscated books and documents. Further, a Turkish court in Abdurrahim Sahin Hatay sentenced the HDP leader of Iskenderun district to two years, one month in prison for "propaganda for terrorist organization" based on a speech he delivered in 2014. At the same time, a new investigation has been launched against the HDP Co-chair Pervin Bulden for "improper conduct in court" in December of last year after she participated in the prosecution of a Turkish nationalist, murderer of a Kurdish woman in Izmir. During the hearing, Bulden called the court that the killer "trained to use weapons in Manbij [Syria] and he is an ISIS supporter" telling the court they "can't just remain in silence."

Turkey's Constitutional Court granted thirty days to the HDP defending their closure case. The HDP closure case was filed in March of 2021 by the State Prosecutor of the Constitutional Court. HDP's assembly member Dogan Erbas criticized the court and described the defense request as a "legal scandal" since the request ignores "the individual defense of the persons against whom a political ban is requested." The HDP has requested additional time for the defense, but the court has not responded yet.

## Entre la Russie et l'Ukraine, l'exercice d'équilibrisme de la Turquie

**Le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, est attendu à Kiev, jeudi, par son homologue ukrainien. Une rencontre pour renforcer un partenariat militaro-industriel mal vu par Moscou.**

**S**outenir l'Ukraine sans irriter la Russie, tel est l'exercice d'équilibre auquel est astreint le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, attendu à Kiev jeudi 3 février. Sa visite est un signal politique fort destiné à son homologue ukrainien, Volodymyr Zelensky, au moment où la tension est à son comble entre Kiev et Moscou, avec la présence d'un important dispositif militaire russe le long de la frontière avec l'Ukraine et en Biélorussie.

La partie s'annonce serrée pour M. Erdogan, qui se targue d'entretenir des relations privilégiées avec les deux parties, au point d'avoir proposé sa médiation pour régler le conflit. « En réunissant les deux dirigeants [l'Ukrainien Zelensky et le Russe Vladimir Poutine] dans notre pays s'ils le souhaitent, nous pouvons ouvrir la voie au rétablissement de la paix », a-t-il déclaré le 26 janvier, estimant qu'une invasion russe de l'Ukraine serait une « démarche irrationnelle de la part de la Russie ».

Son offre de médiation a d'emblée été écartée par le Kremlin, prompt à accuser la Turquie de nourrir « le sentiment militariste » en Ukraine. En cause, la livraison de drones turcs armés Bayraktar TB2 à l'armée ukrainienne, qui les a utilisés en octobre 2021 pour frapper un obusier russe actionné par les séparatistes du Donbass soutenus par le Kremlin.

Aux yeux des experts militaires ukrainiens, la possibilité de reproduire au Donbass l'association gagnante des drones turcs



Le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, écoute le président russe, Vladimir Poutine, à Sotchi, en Russie, le 29 septembre 2021. VLADIMIR SMIRNOV / AP

et de l'expertise militaire d'Ankara, comme l'a fait l'Azerbaïdjan au moment du conflit de l'automne 2020 pour la reconquête du Haut-Karabakh, est une tentation réelle. Une relation russo-turque légèrement refroidie

La frappe d'octobre était « une provocation », a insisté M. Poutine lors d'une conversation téléphonique décrite comme animée avec M. Erdogan le 3 décembre. Depuis cet épisode, les relations entre les deux présidents se sont légèrement refroidies. M. Poutine vient ainsi de décliner l'invitation de son homologue à se rendre en Turquie, renvoyant la visite à plus tard, « lorsque la situation épidémiologique et les agendas le permettront ». Malgré les mises en garde russes, le soutien d'Ankara au gouvernement pro-occidental de Kiev ne faiblit pas, au contraire. La Turquie n'est pas prête à renoncer à ses accords de défense avec Kiev et il est

encore plus improbable qu'elle reconnaisse l'annexion par Moscou de la péninsule de Crimée, la terre originelle des Tatars turcophones, placée jadis sous la protection de l'Empire ottoman. L'annexion n'a jamais été reconnue par Ankara, malgré l'insistance russe. Et, pour ne rien arranger, la Turquie continue de soutenir la volonté d'adhésion de l'Ukraine et de la Géorgie à l'OTAN.

Pour l'heure, les accords qui doivent être signés jeudi entre M. Erdogan et M. Zelensky – un traité de libre-échange et plusieurs accords militaro-industriels – ne peuvent que renforcer l'ire du Kremlin. Depuis 2019, la Turquie et l'Ukraine ont considérablement développé leur partenariat sécuritaire. Entre 2019 et 2021, les deux présidents se sont rencontrés à cinq reprises, c'est dire si le courant passe. Non contente d'acheter des drones turcs armés Bayraktar TB2, qui ont fait pencher la ba-

lance militaire en faveur des alliés de la Turquie en Libye et au Haut-Karabakh, l'Ukraine a également commencé à les produire sur son sol. La coopération avec le complexe militaro-industriel ukrainien, qui a gardé de beaux restes de l'époque soviétique, notamment en matière de fabrications de moteurs d'avions, est une véritable aubaine pour Ankara, soucieux d'amortir les sanctions imposées à son industrie de défense après l'acquisition du système antimissile russe S-400 en 2019 et la guerre menée à l'automne 2020 au Haut-Karabakh.

### Présence russe en mer Noire

Témoin de cette coopération grandissante, l'entreprise turque Baykar, qui produit le drone armé TB2, vient d'acquiescer un terrain non loin de la base aérienne ukrainienne de Vasylykiv, au sud-ouest de Kiev, où un centre d'entraînement au pilotage et à la maintenance des drones est en cours de construction.

Baykar envisage également d'investir auprès du fabricant ukrainien de moteurs Motor Sich et de son bureau d'études Ivchenko-Progress. A l'automne 2021, Motor Sich s'est engagé à fournir à l'entreprise turque de défense des turbo-propulseurs pour son nouveau drone de combat Akinci, plus puissant que le TB2, que Kiev envisage d'acquiescer. Hormis la fabrication conjointe de moteurs et celle de l'avion de transport militaire An-178, Kiev et Ankara ambitionnent aussi



de produire ensemble des corvettes dans les chantiers navals de Mykolaïv, un port ukrainien de la mer Noire.

« Pour les Ukrainiens, il est important d'avoir un partenaire de plus à leurs côtés, surtout un partenaire doté d'une telle position géographique », explique Bayram Balci, directeur de l'Institut français d'études anatoliennes (IFEA) à Istanbul. Pour les Turcs, il est urgent d'approfondir les liens avec l'Ukraine, surtout face aux agissements russes en mer Noire. Car depuis l'annexion de la Crimée en mars 2014, Moscou, qui a alors pris possession d'une grande partie des navires et des infrastructures portuaires de l'Ukraine, est devenu la puissance dominante en mer Noire.

Avant 2014, ce rôle était dévolu à la Turquie, forte de 44 navires de surface contre 26 pour la Russie. Depuis, Moscou a inversé la tendance, avec ses 49 navires de surface. De plus, la flotte russe stationnée en Crimée a été renforcée. Désormais, les navires de guerre et les sous-marins qui y circulent ont été

équipés de missiles de croisière Kalibr, capables d'atteindre des cibles à 2 400 km, tandis que davantage de navires russes espions sillonnent les eaux pour collecter des renseignements. Malgré l'entente cordiale avec son « ami » Poutine, le numéro un turc perçoit de plus en plus l'expansion militaire de la Russie dans la région comme une menace pour la sécurité géopolitique et énergétique de son pays.

D'autant que la posture russe en mer Noire apparaît de plus en plus agressive, et pas seulement envers l'Ukraine. En juin 2021, les forces russes ont effectué des tirs de semence sur le navire de guerre britannique HMS Defender, qui faisait route du port ukrainien d'Odessa vers la Géorgie. Et l'élite militaire russe ne décolère pas contre les exercices « Sea Breeze », organisés chaque année depuis 2019 par les Etats-Unis, qui ont convié 32 autres pays, dont l'Ukraine, à y prendre part à l'été 2021.

#### Ménager l'ensemble des acteurs

Malgré son tropisme anti-occidental, M. Erdogan n'a de cesse de plaider pour une présence accrue de l'OTAN en mer Noire. Sa préoccupation est encore plus grande depuis la découverte, à l'été 2020, d'un vaste gisement de gaz naturel au large des côtes turques. « Selon toute vraisemblance, Ankara se joindrait à ses partenaires de l'OTAN pour condamner une invasion russe [de l'Ukraine], sans les suivre toutefois sur l'imposition de sanctions », écrivait le 14 janvier Asli Aydintasbas, du Conseil européen pour les relations internationales (ECFR). En 2014, la Turquie avait réprouvé l'annexion de la Crimée, tout en restant en dehors des sanctions imposées par les Etats-Unis et l'Union européenne contre la Russie.

Soucieux de ménager l'ensemble des acteurs, M. Erdogan veut à la fois renforcer son engagement auprès de l'OTAN, pour redorer son blason terni par l'achat des S-400, et protéger sa coopération avec la Russie en Syrie et dans le domaine énergétique – près de 40 % du gaz consommé en

Turquie est fourni par la société russe Gazprom.

« La position turque est assez risquée. Le fait que la Russie contrôle la situation en Syrie est une véritable épée de Damoclès pour la Turquie », rappelle Bayram Balci. A cet égard, la région d'Idlib, le dernier bastion de la rébellion contre Bachar-Al-Assad, une province contiguë à la Turquie où près de 3 millions de déplacés ont trouvé refuge, est son talon d'Achille. Une attaque d'ampleur de la Russie sur Idlib ne manquerait pas de créer une nouvelle vague de réfugiés. « Ce nouvel afflux de Syriens vers la Turquie, qui en héberge déjà près de 4 millions, affecterait les autorités turques et aussi les pays de la Méditerranée », estime le chercheur.

Un conflit ouvert entre la Russie et l'Ukraine serait une tragédie, autant pour l'Europe que pour Ankara, qui se verrait contraint de mettre fin à son numéro d'équilibriste entre l'OTAN et la Russie et de renoncer à ses ambitions de puissance régionale.

ALARABIYA  
news

2 february, 2022  
By Suzan Fraser

## Turkish jets target Kurdish positions in Iraq, Syria; 4 die

**T**urkish warplanes struck suspected Kurdish insurgent positions in Iraq and Syria early on Wednesday in a new aerial offensive that Ankara said aimed to protect Turkey's borders from "terrorist threats."

The airstrikes killed at least four people, a Britain-based war monitoring group reported, and drew condemnation from US-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters who said the attack came days after the Kurdish-

led forces in Syria battled ISIS group militants.

A Turkish defense ministry statement said the strikes hit targets, including shelters, caves, ammunition depots and training camps, on Sinjar Mountain and in the Karacak region in northern Iraq, and the Derik region in northern Syria.

The operations dubbed "Winter Eagle" were aimed against Turkey's insurgent Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, in nor-

thern Iraq, which Ankara says has hideouts there, and the US-backed Syrian Kurdish forces known as People's Protection Units, or YPG in Syria.

The YPG is a close US ally against the ISIS group but is labeled a terrorist group by Ankara because of its ties to the PKK.

The strikes aimed to "eliminate terrorist threats against our people and security forces from the north of Iraq and Syria

and to ensure our border security," the ministry statement read.

"Last night, we bombed targets in three different locations and they could not even find a hole to escape to," said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Defense Minister Hulusi Akar claimed that several insurgents were "neutralized" in the operation, including a number of PKK names wanted by Turkey. Around 60 aircraft were invol-

ved in the offensive, including warplanes and armed and unarmed drones, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported. Close to 80 targets were struck, it said.

The war monitor in Syria — the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights — said Turkish drones fired two missiles at a power station near Syria's northeastern village of Malikiyah close to the Iraqi border, killing at least four people. It added that several people were wounded and electricity was cut in a number of nearby villages.

It said the strike hit the building where the guards stay, adding that the dead were both guards and civilians. The Observatory reported another Turkish drone strike at a power station a day earlier near the Semalka border crossing between Syria and Iraq's Kurdish region. It said one Kurdish fighter was wounded.

A Kurdish-led administration in northeast Syria condemned



A member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) carries an automatic rifle on a road in the Qandil Mountains, the PKK headquarters in northern Iraq, on June 22, 2018. (AFP)

the Turkish airstrikes and urged the international community to intervene to stop what it called "the terrorist Turkish aggression."

It said the Turkish strikes came days after the Kurdish-led and US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces defeated scores of ISIS militants who broke into a prison where some 3,000 extremists are held in the northeastern city of Hasakeh. The weeklong battle left dozens of people dead, including many ISIS fighters.

"This escalation and aggression is a clear indication that Turkey is not happy with [ISIS] failure," the authority said in a statement.

Turkey's defense ministry said "utmost sensitivity was shown" regarding the security of the civilians during the operations. It said Turkey would "continue the fight against terrorism for the security of our country and our nation with determination until the last terrorist is neutralized."

Turkey has carried out similar cross-border airstrikes in the past. The PKK has led an insurgency in southeast Turkey since 1984 which has killed tens of thousands of people. The group is considered a terror organization by Turkey and its allies, including the US and the European Union.

In a related development, shelling on Wednesday afternoon in the northern Syrian town of al-Bab, controlled by Turkey-backed opposition fighters, killed at least seven people, according to opposition activists who blamed Syrian Kurdish fighters for the attack. The Observatory said seven died and 29 were wounded, while the Qasioun news agency, an activist collective, said eight people were killed and more than 25 were wounded. Shelling and explosions in areas held by Turkey-backed Syrian opposition fighters over the past month have killed scores. Turkey and Syrian groups it backs have blamed Kurdish fighters for the attacks.



February 2, 2022

## Ruling AKP rejects HDP proposal to investigate deaths caused by armored vehicles

The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and National Movement Party (MHP) coalition on Feb. 1 blocked a proposal by the opposition pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) that called for an investigation into the deaths of civilians by government-operated armored vehicles.

AKP Antalya Deputy Kemal Çelik reacted against the HDP over the motion, saying: "Accident, accident, these are accidents. Have you never had an accident?"

He also accused the opposition party of benefiting politically from the incidents. In the last two decades of the

AKP rule, and especially since the breakdown of peace talks between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the subsequent operations of the Turkish military in Turkey's eastern Kurdish regions, dozens of civilians have died after being hit or run over by armored vehicles. Most recently, a young child and a young man both died after being hit; the young child was found "at fault" in the accident.

Most of these incidents occur in Turkey's majority-Kurdish cities near the Syrian border, such as Mardin, Diyarbakır, and Şırnak. HDP Şanlıurfa Deputy Ömer Öcalan cited before Parliament that between 2008 and 2022, a total of 141 people, 22 of them

children, lost their lives in 93 incidents with armored vehicles. Öcalan cited in his proposal the urgency of investigating these incidents.

AKP MP Çelik, who spoke on behalf of the party, told Parliament that armored vehicles in the country's eastern regions were part of the "fight against terrorism."

"Thankfully, we have brought peace and trust to the region by fighting terrorism with our domestic and national industry and armored vehicles in order to rid the region of terrorism. We have brought peace and security to the region. The armored defense ve-

hicles you are worried about brought success and the end of terrorism to this region," Çelik said. He added that the accidents indicate how "difficult" these anti-terrorist operations are.

**HDP Group Deputy Chairman Saruhan Oluç responded to Çelik.**

"It's not about an operation. Armored vehicles on the streets hit children and young people, and children and young people die. We are talking about the uncontrolled use of armored vehicles in cities," he said. The proposal was rejected with votes from the ruling AKP and MHP coalition.

The New York Times

February 2, 2022

By Carlotta Gall & Safak Timur

# 12 Migrants Freeze to Death, Stripped by Greek Guards, Turkey Says

## A Turkish minister accused Greek border guards of taking the group's clothes and shoes and then forcing them back across the border, a claim that Greece denied.

**T**welve migrants died on Wednesday in Turkey, most of them found with little clothing in a freezing field near the border with Greece, according to several Turkish officials.

A Turkish government minister said they froze to death and accused Greek border guards of stripping the migrants and forcing them back across the frontier before they died.

The Greek migration minister, Notis Mitarachi, said the deaths were a tragedy but denied the Turkish accusations, calling them “false propaganda.”

Turkey's interior minister, Süleyman Soylu, said in a Twitter post written in English: “Twelve of the 22 migrants pushed back by Greek Border Units, stripped off from their clothes and shoes, have frozen to death.”

He added that the European Union was “remediless, weak and void of humane feelings,” calling the Greek border guards thugs.

Greece has always denied pushing migrants back after they have crossed from Turkey, even after the United Nations documented such cases.

“These migrants never made it to the border,” Mr. Mitarachi, who was in Lille, France, for an informal E.U. summit on migration, said in a statement. “Any suggestion they did, or indeed were pushed back into Turkey, is utter nonsense.”



Migrants near Turkey's Ipsala border crossing in 2020. Turkey is a major route for those trying to reach the E.U. from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Credit... Murad Sezer/Reuters

Turkey is a major route for migrants from Asia, Africa and the Middle East trying to reach European countries and since 2015, when more than a million migrants crossed into Europe, they have been traveling via Greece. Some come by sea using dinghies and reach Greek islands just miles from Turkey's shores. Others try to sneak across the land border, which is demarcated by a river.

For more than a year, Greece has been taking tougher measures to keep migrants out. It built a fence and policed the land border, forcing migrants who came from Turkey back across the river. Greek authorities have also towed migrants arriving by sea back into Turkish waters.

Relations between Turkey and Greece are frequently strained, but refugee officials from the United Nations and other international organizations have also criticized Greece for the pushbacks, which are illegal under international law and which they say place migrants at risk. Four Turkish officials confirmed that the 12 migrants had died and that they appeared to have frozen to death. Mr. Soylu, the Turkish interior minister, posted blurred pictures of eight men lying beside a muddy road, some without shirts and others in shorts. He said their bodies were found near the Turkish border town of Ipsala.

In his tweet, the minister described the 12 migrants who

died as part of a larger group of 22. The fate of the other 10 was not immediately clear.

This area, along with most of the country, was hit by a harsh snowstorm and freezing temperatures last week, though the cold snap had eased in recent days.

The mayor of Ipsala, Abdullah Naci Unsal, said these migrants had probably died overnight between Tuesday and Wednesday. The governor's office for the Turkish province of Edirne, which borders Greece, said in a statement that 11 of the migrants were found frozen to death and another died later after being taken to a hospital.

Emergency units and security forces were still scanning the





Migrants near Turkey's Ipsala border crossing in 2020. Turkey is a major route for those trying to reach the E.U. from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Credit... Murad Sezer/Reuters

area for more migrants, the statement said.

The Ipsala mayor said push-backs from Greece — often at night — had increased since 2020, when President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared that he was opening the border gates to refugees.

“It was raining last night,” he said in a telephone interview on Wednesday. Temperatures in the area could fall to freezing point, he added, noting that it would feel even colder if a person were wet.

“They are generally deported at night,” he said. “They gather

them there, take everything they have, phones and so on, throw their clothes into the water and then push them back,” he said of the Greek border guards.

The border area is agricultural, crisscrossed with canals and the Evros River, and migrants frequently get soaked while try-



A group of migrants along the Evros River in 2020. Credit... Sedat Suna/ EPA, via Shutterstock

ing to cross. Migrants die almost every week while attempting to cross the border or being pushed back, the mayor said. Others drown in the river and are swept out to sea.

International refugee officials have drawn attention to cases of migrants, among them Syrians and Afghans, who have been detained in Greece, robbed of their belongings, and sometimes stripped to their underwear before being forced back across the river that divides the two countries. Some have described in interviews being beaten and detained by border guards and police officers, or by groups of men in plain clothes.

Turkey is host to more than four million refugees, the majority of them Syrians, but also including several hundred thousand Afghans. In 2020, Mr. Erdogan announced he was opening the borders for migrants to enter Europe, saying that his country could no longer handle the huge numbers of people fleeing regional wars.

He accused European leaders of failing to keep their promise to help Turkey bear the load of hosting 3.6 million Syrian refugees. The European Union agreed to a deal with Turkey in 2016 to provide 6 billion euros, about \$6.7 billion, over several years to control the flows of migrants and settle them in Turkey.

Greece has accused Turkey of using the migrants for political leverage in its dealings with the European Union and took measures to strengthen its border controls. The numbers of migrants arriving in Greece have declined in the last two years, but the number arriving in Turkey has continued to rise.

Niki Kitsantonis contributed reporting from Athens.





3 février 2022

## Turquie: l'inflation frôle les 50% en janvier, un record depuis 2002

La hausse des prix à la consommation en Turquie a franchi un nouveau cap en janvier, frôlant les 50% sur un an, un chiffre au plus haut depuis avril 2002 dû à l'effondrement de la livre turque en 2021.

En janvier, l'inflation a atteint dans le pays 48,69% sur un an, selon des chiffres officiels publiés mardi.

En décembre, la hausse des prix à la consommation avait atteint 36,08% en glissement annuel.

L'inflation est devenue un sujet brûlant en Turquie à moins de dix-huit mois de la prochaine élection présidentielle, l'opposition et certains économistes accusant l'Office national des statistiques (Tüik) de sous-estimer de plus de moitié son ampleur.

Un groupe d'économistes turcs indépendants affirme notamment que l'inflation a dépassé les 110% en janvier.

Cette défiance envers les statistiques officielles a été renforcée par une décision récente du président Recep Tayyip Erdogan, qui a limogé la semaine dernière le directeur du Tüik, un cinquième remplacement depuis 2019.

Le chef de l'État, accusé d'avoir encouragé la hausse des prix en poussant la banque centrale à abaisser presque systématiquement ses taux d'intérêt ces derniers mois, a promis en janvier de "ramener l'inflation à un chiffre le plus vite possible".



Dans le quartier d'Eminönü à Istanbul, le 21 décembre 2021  
AFP / ARCHIVES - OZAN KOSE

Pour justifier sa politique de "taux bas", M. Erdogan a avancé à plusieurs reprises les préceptes de l'islam, qui interdit l'usure.

À rebours des théories économiques classiques, le président turc estime que les taux d'intérêts élevés favorisent l'inflation.

Mais sa politique monétaire et le manque d'indépendance de la banque centrale – dont M. Erdogan a limogé trois gouverneurs depuis 2019 – n'ont fait qu'accélérer la chute de la monnaie nationale (-44% face au dollar en 2021), entraînant une hausse spectaculaire des prix.

– "avec l'aide de Dieu" –

Les Turcs vont devoir "porter le fardeau" de l'inflation encore "quelque temps", a-t-il prévenu lundi, affirmant toutefois qu'"avec l'aide de Dieu nous sommes entrés dans une période où chaque mois

sera meilleur que le précédent".

Le ministre turc de l'Économie Nureddin Nebati a également estimé cette semaine que l'inflation atteindrait un pic en avril, "sous la barre des 50%" selon lui.

Mais il avait déjà annoncé précédemment ce pic pour janvier, assurant que l'inflation commencerait ensuite à reculer pour revenir à un chiffre en juin 2023, date prévue pour la prochaine élection présidentielle.

La Turquie connaît une inflation à deux chiffres presque sans discontinuer depuis début 2017, et n'avait jamais connu une telle hausse des prix à la consommation depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir du Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP) du président Erdogan fin 2002.

Pour certains produits de base comme les œufs, la

viande et l'huile, l'inflation est plus forte encore et rend le coût de la vie difficilement soutenable pour une grande partie des Turcs. Le prix des factures d'énergies a également explosé, le pays étant très dépendant des importations.

Dans ce contexte politiquement explosif, la Banque centrale de Turquie a maintenu inchangé fin janvier son principal taux directeur à 14%, une décision destinée à calmer l'inflation et les marchés après quatre mois de baisse consécutive et une fin d'année 2021 cauchemardesque pour la monnaie nationale et les consommateurs.

Le président Erdogan avait par ailleurs relevé le salaire minimum au 1er janvier de 50% (de 2.825,90 à 4.253,40 livres, soit environ 275 euros). Mais cette augmentation a déjà été pour partie effacée par la conjoncture.

Pour tenter d'endiguer la dégringolade de la livre turque, M. Erdogan a annoncé fin décembre la création d'un mécanisme d'épargne permettant d'ajuster la valeur de certains dépôts bancaires en livres au cours du dollar.

Cette mesure d'urgence, destinée à encourager les Turcs à placer ou convertir leur épargne en livres, avait été suivie d'un rebond soudain mais temporaire de la monnaie nationale, que de nombreux économistes attribuent à des interventions répétées de la banque centrale turque sur les marchés.

## En Turquie, les chiens errants s'invitent dans l'arène politique

**C**e 25 décembre 2021, Recep Tayyip Erdogan ne s'est pas réveillé du bon pied. L'économie vacille. Ses supporters déchantent. L'opposition gagne du terrain dans les sondages d'opinion. Mais en ce jour de Noël, c'est contre les chiens qu'il décide de déverser sa colère. « Turcs blancs ! Assumez vos responsabilités avec vos animaux ! (...) Ces chiens sont des chiens de riches », s'emporte-t-il en les associant illico à l'élite kémaliste et occidentaliste (par opposition aux « Turcs noirs », expression réservée aux populations plus traditionnelles). Et d'ajouter dans la foulée : « Il me semble important de débarrasser les rues des chiens errants ! »

Aussitôt, une déferlante de réactions inonde les réseaux sociaux. « Solidarité avec les chiens errants », déclament une multitude d'internautes outrés, tandis que le mot-dièse « Animaux de rue » (#SokakHayvanlari) circule en boucle sur la toile. C'est que le président islamo-nationaliste vient de toucher une corde sensible. En Turquie, les chats et les chiens errants font quasiment partie du patrimoine vivant tant ils sont nombreux à arpenter nonchalamment les centres-villes du pays - et d'Istanbul, en particulier. On les croise aux pieds des musées, dans la cour des mosquées, à l'entrée des cafés, devant les étals des bouchers, dans l'attente de quelques restes de viande en fin de journée. Dans le quartier branché de Moda, sur le versant asiatique d'Istanbul, une statue immortalise depuis quelques années un ex-chien star du coin, Tarçin (« Cannelle »), happé par un chauffard. Sur les bords de la mer Égée, où

leurs aboiements erratiques annoncent les tremblements de terre, ils sont particulièrement appréciés. Rien, dans l'islam, ne stipule que les chiens sont impurs, insistent même certains chercheurs. À ce jour, l'AKP, le parti au pouvoir n'a d'ailleurs jamais montré d'animosité à l'égard des chiens. Au contraire. Lors du confinement drastique de la première vague du Covid-19, au printemps 2020, le ministère de l'Intérieur mit un point d'honneur à leur faire distribuer à manger pour qu'ils ne meurent pas de faim. Même la presse progouvernementale se laisse régulièrement attendrir par ces bêtes poilues. Le mois dernier, le journal pro-Erdogan Yeni Safak s'est penché sur le sort d'un chiot de rue percuté par une voiture, qu'un inconnu sauva en l'emmenant chez le vétérinaire.

### L'ire du clan présidentiel

Que s'est-il donc passé ce 25 décembre dans la tête du président ? À l'origine de cette affaire canine qui déchaîne les passions : un incident, survenu à Gaziantep trois jours avant son allocution. Dans cette ville du sud-est du pays, deux pitbulls abandonnés par leurs propriétaires, selon la presse locale, ont attaqué une fillette de 4 ans en la blessant gravement. Mais le fait divers, qui serait passé inaperçu en d'autres temps, n'a pas échappé au reis turc, qui s'empressa de politiser l'affaire pour dénigrer l'opposition. « L'aubaine était trop belle pour Erdogan. Quel meilleur moyen de faire oublier la crise économique et sa perte de vitesse dans les sondages, à moins d'un an et demi du prochain scrutin, que de changer de sujet en s'en prenant aux chiens - et par là même, à

ses opposants », souffle un sociologue qui préfère taire son nom. En fait, rappelle-t-il, cette bataille politico-canine couvait depuis l'automne.

Dès le mois d'octobre dernier, plus précisément, la popularité croissante d'un adorable chien de rue d'Istanbul, connu sous le nom de Boji, commença à susciter l'ire du clan présidentiel. Pelage beige et regard câlin, l'animal - issu d'un croisement entre un berger et un kangal - parcourt la ville à longueur de journée, sautant dans un tramway, empruntant un bus, se faufilant dans le métro. Des photos partagées sur Instagram le montrent également à bord d'un des nombreux « vapor », ces bateaux qui font la navette entre les rives européenne et asiatique. Repéré par Ekrem Imamoğlu, le maire d'Istanbul et rival politique d'Erdogan, le chien voyageur devient vite la nouvelle mascotte de la ville. La municipalité lui ouvre un compte Twitter en son nom, aujourd'hui suivi par plus de 130 000 abonnés, et décide de l'équiper d'une puce GPS pour suivre ses déplacements. Ce pistage en temps réel permet d'évaluer à une trentaine de kilomètres ses balades quotidiennes et de comptabiliser une moyenne de 29 arrêts de transport empruntés par jour. Mieux, Boji s'avère être d'une exceptionnelle civilité. « Il respecte toutes les règles des transports, il attend son tour pour monter, laisse sortir les passagers qui descendent et s'installe tranquillement à l'intérieur, même s'il lui arrive de courir derrière le métro lorsqu'il le rate », s'amuse un média local.

L'histoire était trop belle pour durer. Au mois de novembre,

des photos compromettantes de l'animal se mettent à circuler sur l'internet. L'animal aurait déféqué sur un fauteuil de tramway ! Aussitôt, l'image du présumé besoin est relayée par une multitude de comptes progouvernementaux. Sauf qu'il s'agissait d'un coup monté des pro-Erdogan pour discréditer le maire d'Istanbul : après enquête, les images des caméras de vidéosurveillance ont vite permis d'identifier la présence d'un inconnu déposant sciemment la crotte sur le siège. Considérant Boji en danger, ses protecteurs ont, depuis, décidé de l'expédier à Izmir, où il vit une discrète retraite chez un particulier.

### Grossière désinformation

« Quand on voit ce que les erdoganistes sont prêts à faire contre un chien innocent, imaginez ce qu'ils sont capables de faire contre des humains », twitte un internaute. À ce jour, aucune excuse n'a été présentée par les propagateurs de cette « fake news » et les différents comptes Twitter ayant contribué à cette grossière désinformation n'ont pas été interpellés. Au contraire. Le récent discours d'Erdogan ne leur donne que plus de crédit en ce début d'année 2022. D'autant plus que le ministère de l'Environnement vient de sommer les 81 municipalités du pays de se débarrasser de tous les chiens errants en les envoyant dans des chenils. « On veut nous intimider. Mais pas question de céder ! », s'emporte Ahmet, un gardien d'immeuble du quartier Beyoğlu d'Istanbul, et « parrain » d'une dizaine d'animaux de rue qu'il soigne et nourrit au quotidien. Les mordus de chiens comme lui n'ont pas dit leur dernier mot.

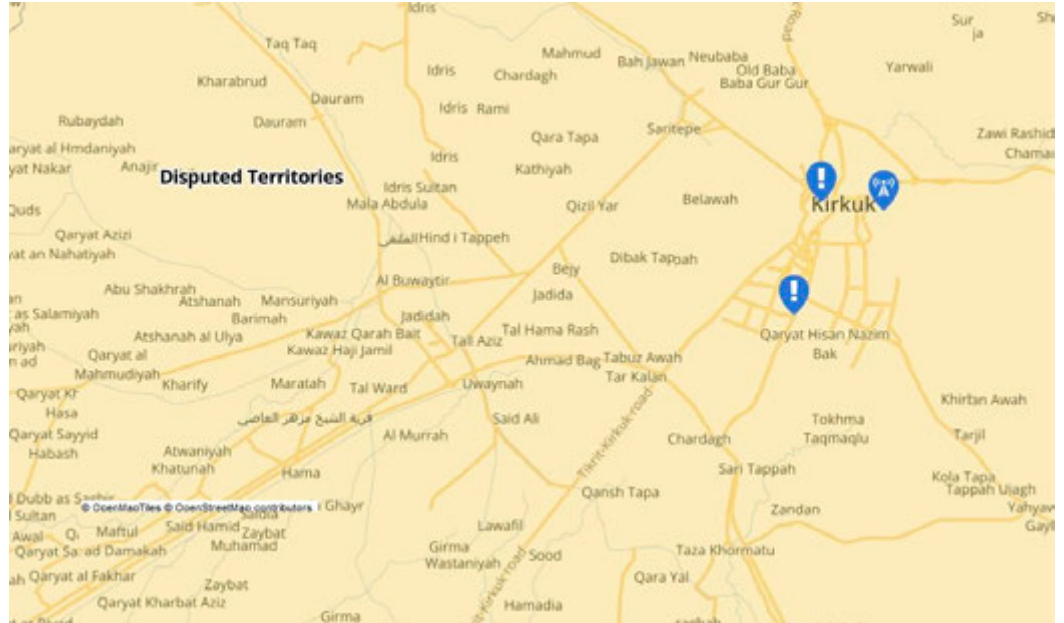
# Kirkuk Minute February 3, 2022

## Kirkuk

On Sunday, January 30th, ISIS (Da'esh) terrorists launched a massive attack on the Iraqi federal police near Rashad district of Kirkuk, killing two officers and wounding two. Meanwhile, senior Iraqi and Kurdish security officials met near the Kurdistan region's Chamchamal district, discussing joint operations in four provinces in the disputed territories. Last week Peshmerga officials said the formation of the new combined brigades is awaiting salary arrangements from Baghdad to deploy in the disputed territories.

French Ambassador to Iraq, Eric Chevalier, visited Kirkuk on February 1st and held a meeting with acting governor Rakan al Jabouri. In a press conference, Chevalier said France aims to help Kirkuk in reconstruction and help investments. Chevalier also visited the Kurdistan Region and met with top Kurdish officials. Currently, Iraq's Ministry of Electricity, Kirkuk's North Oil Company (NOC), and a French company are in talks for building a solar power plant, providing 250 megawatts of electricity. Meanwhile, the State Organization for Marketing of Oil (SOMO) released January statistics of Kirkuk's oil export and sales. According to the report, Kirkuk grossed 238,440,371 million US dollars, an increase compared to December exports due to climbing oil prices. However, Kirkuk exported 150,000 oil barrels less in January than in December of 2021.

In the city of Kirkuk, unknown shooters stormed the home of an anti-terrorism Kurdish officer named Deler Gazi in the Rizgari



neighborhood. Separately, school guards held a protest, demanding hires after a "decade of working as a contractor."

Kirkuk's acting governor, Rakan Saed al Jabouri, formed a "consulting committee:" to dispute the senior positions in Kirkuk by 33% ratio on the components, angering the Kurds, since they form a historical and present majority in the province. Since October 16th, 2017, Kurds have lost dozens of posts in the administration and security forces due to renewed Arabization policy by Baghdad. Last week, al Jabouri removed the head of Kirkuk's Human Rights Commission by an Arab, raging the Turkmen population. The post was run by a Kurd who was removed in 2017.

### Shingal (Sinjar)

On the night of Tuesday, February 1st, dozens of Turkish warplanes struck Kurdish areas in Syria and Iraq, including thirteen places in Shingal. As a result, several compounds and

security posts of the Sinjar Resistance Units (YBS) were destroyed amid unknown casualties among the force. The following day, a group named "Ahrar Sinjar" claimed a rocket attack on the Turkish military base in Bashiqa. The group said, "We have exhausted all stages of restraint amid the central government's failure to protect our people and our city from the repeated Turkish attacks," threatening of further attack on Turkish "occupation" unless mediations "Put an end to the continuous Turkish aggression." On Thursday, several teachers protested and launched a strike due to property damages on the schools by the Turkish attacks, demanding the Iraqi government stop Turkey. After suffering a genocide by Da'esh in 2014, the Yazidi Kurds face constant airstrikes by Turkey under the pretext of the presence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

### Makhmour

On Tuesday, about forty people

were killed by Turkish airstrikes, targeting the Makhmour Refugee Camp holding Kurds from Turkey. The camp administration told dozens of civilians. Despite being denounced by the Iraqi government, Turkey continues targeting the United Nations-recognized refugee camp.

On Thursday, Da'esh terrorists attacked the Peshmerga forces near Makhmour district, wounding two, but the attack was foiled.

### Khanaqin

Locals protested the increase of generators fees in Khanaqin in light of the deterioration of electricity provided by the government. The area receives only three hours of what is known as "national power," making the privately owned-public generator the sole source for electricity. The fee for a public generator was 2,000 Iraqi dinars per AMP last December, but the price hiked to 10,000 dinars, a 400% increase.





February 3, 2022  
By Carlotta Gall & Safak Timur

## Erdogan says Turkey will not respect Council of Europe

**T**urkey will not respect the Council of Europe if it does not respect Turkish courts, President Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday, when asked about a decision to refer the case against philanthropist Osman Kavala back to a top European court.

Kavala, one of Turkey's highest-profile detainees, has been held for more than four years without a conviction.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled more than two years ago that Kavala should be released immediately and said his detention served to silence him, but Turkey has not carried out the ruling.

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The Council said on Thursday that its committee had referred the case to the ECHR to determine whether Turkey has failed to meet its obligation to implement the court's



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan addresses members of parliament from his ruling AK Party (AKP) during a meeting at the Turkish parliament in Ankara, Turkey, November 27, 2018. REUTERS/Umit Bektas

judgment in line with the European Convention on Human Rights. read more

The referral to the ECHR is the next step in "infringement proceedings" that could result in Turkey's suspension from the Council of Europe, of which it is a founding member.

"The Committee found that, by failing to ensure Mr Kavala's immediate release, Turkey is refusing to abide by the Court's final judgment in his case," it said in a statement.

At a news conference, Erdogan said Turkey will not recognise those who do not recognise its courts.

"What the ECHR has said, what the Council of Europe says, this doesn't concern us much because we expect our courts to be respected," he said.

"To those who don't show this respect: excuse us, but we will have no respect for them either," Erdogan added.

The foreign ministry said on Wednesday Turkey had carried out the ECHR ruling and that Kavala was detained for a different judicial proceeding.

Kavala was acquitted in 2020 of charges related to 2013 nationwide protests. Hours later, another court ordered his arrest based on a charge of attempting to overthrow the constitutional order related to the 2016 coup attempt, which the ECHR had also said lacked basis.

That court later ruled to release him on that charge but ordered his detention on an espionage charge in the same case, a move critics said was aimed at circumventing the ECHR ruling.



3 février 2022  
Par Corentin Pennarguear

## Drones turcs contre chars russes : pourquoi Erdogan s'invite à Kiev

**O**n n'en compte qu'une vingtaine en Ukraine, mais leur seule présence donne des sueurs froides au Kremlin. Fin octobre, un Bayraktar TB2, drone de combat acheté à la Turquie, a permis à Kiev de démolir un convoi de séparatistes pro-russes dans le Donbass. Une frappe du ciel dont la puissance et la précision ont marqué les esprits, mais dont le gouvernement ukrainien hésite à se servir. "L'Ukraine s'est montrée très prudente après cette opération, en soulignant qu'il s'agissait d'une attaque unique

sur son propre territoire pour éliminer un véhicule, et non des soldats, pose Karabekir Akkoyunlu, professeur de relations internationales à la SOAS University of London. Kiev sait que Moscou peut voir ces drones comme une provocation, voire une excuse pour passer à l'attaque."

Depuis 2018, l'Ukraine achète à la Turquie des drones de combat, qui ont déjà fait leurs preuves sur des terrains de guerre, en Libye, dans le Haut-Karabakh ou en Syrie. "Dans le Nord syrien, les Russes ont pu observer de près

les dégâts que font les drones turcs contre les groupes armés kurdes, raconte un diplomate européen. C'est un sujet très sensible au Kremlin."

### Le diplomate Erdogan à Kiev

Capables de "détruire une colonne de tanks russes" selon un colonel ukrainien, ces machines ne seront toutefois pas suffisantes pour repousser une invasion armée. Alors Ankara déploie aussi ses atouts diplomatiques pour éviter une guerre à son associé

ukrainien. Recep Tayyip Erdogan se rend ainsi en pacificateur à Kiev, ce jeudi 3 février, et espère bientôt faire de même à Moscou. Car un conflit armé entre la Russie et l'Ukraine serait un cauchemar pour le président turc. Alliée militaire de Kiev, la Turquie a, aussi, accru ses liens commerciaux avec la Russie ces dernières années, en raison de ses brouilles avec l'Occident. "En cas de guerre, Ankara serait forcée de choisir un camp, ce qui serait très compliqué, vue sa situation, estime Karabekir Akkoyunlu. La Tur-

que s'alignerait sans doute sur l'OTAN, dont elle est membre, mais les conséquences économiques d'une rupture avec la Russie seraient catastrophiques."

Le grand écart ukrainien d'Erdogan souligne la délicate relation qu'il entretient avec la Russie depuis 2015. À l'époque, le dirigeant turc survit à un coup d'État et accuse l'Occident de l'avoir trop peu soutenu, voire d'avoir fomenté la révolte militaire. Le reis cherche alors à diversifier ses alliances et se tourne vers Moscou, malgré une rivalité historique marquée par les multiples guerres entre les empires ottoman et soviétique. "La Russie est devenue un 'frenemi' [un ami dont on se méfie profondément] géant pour la Turquie, souligne Bayram Balci, directeur de l'Institut Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes (IFEA), à Istanbul. Les Turcs ont le senti-



Le président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan tente de jouer le rôle de médiateur dans la crise ukrainienne.

ment d'être encerclés par les forces russes, très présentes en Syrie et en Mer Noire depuis l'annexion de la Crimée... Mais les deux pays partagent aussi des relations économiques primordiales."

**Le prix du pain, donnée essentielle pour Ankara**

En pleine crise économique et monétaire, et à un an d'élections délicates, Erdogan redoute plus que tout une rupture des relations avec Moscou. Plusieurs projets turcs se retrouveraient en péril, dont la construction de la centrale nucléaire d'Akkuyu, dans le sud du pays, l'approvisionnement de gaz russe, les visites annuelles de

2,1 millions de touristes, l'importation de la majorité des fruits et légumes consommés en Turquie... Alors que le prix du pain a doublé ces dernières semaines à Ankara, les arrivées de blé depuis la Russie se révèlent, elles aussi, cruciales.

Avec peu de cartes en main pour faire changer la situation, le président turc n'a donc pas le choix : il doit jouer les intermédiaires entre Kiev et Moscou. Et le reis, en excellent tacticien, pourrait même profiter de la situation : "Si Erdogan réussit dans son rôle de médiateur et montre qu'il est un leader de rang mondial, cela peut aider sa crédibilité sur le plan intérieur", avance Bayram Balci. À la vue des sondages, qui le donnent tous perdant en 2023, le rusé Erdogan ne risque pas de renoncer, même si la mission semble impossible.

## Kurdistan au féminin 3 février 2022

# "Alors que l'Etat islamique se réorganise, il faut se demander pourquoi la Turquie est le seul pays de la région à ne pas s'alarmer"

**A**près l'attaque de DAECH contre la prison d'Hassaké tenue par les forces arabo-kurdes, le journaliste turc Fehim Taştekin rappelle que la Turquie est le seul pays de la région à ne pas s'alarmer alors que l'Etat islamique se réorganise et ajoute que DAECH a de nombreuses cellules jihadistes implantées à travers la Turquie et que cette dernière a joué un rôle clé dans la réorganisation de DAECH.

Le journaliste Fehim Taştekin a commenté la réorganisation de l'Etat islamique, notant que la Turquie sera en difficulté lorsque davantage de questions seront posées sur la façon dont l'Etat islamique a pu se réorganiser.

Après l'attaque de Haseke par



l'Etat islamique dans le nord-est de la Syrie, des discussions ont eu lieu sur la manière dont l'Etat islamique a pu organiser cette attaque. Selon Fehim Taştekin, la Turquie a joué un rôle clé.

« Ces questions ne seront-elles pas discutées lorsque l'Etat islamique se regroupera ? Par exemple, l'Etat islamique a des

cellules principalement à Ankara mais aussi dans de nombreuses autres villes comme Konya, Bursa et Istanbul. Les militants sont venus dont les familles ont fui vers la Turquie, bien sûr, si l'Etat islamique se regroupe en Syrie et si ces questions sont discutées, la Turquie aura des problèmes », dit-il, ajoutant que les procès des membres de l'Etat isla-

mique ne se déroulent pas conformément à la loi. loi en Turquie non plus.

« De plus, la Turquie diffuse également de la propagande selon laquelle la Turquie est le pays qui lutte le plus contre l'EI. Le ministre de l'Intérieur fait toujours des déclarations sur le nombre d'EI qui ont été arrêtés jusqu'à présent, mais rien n'est dit sur ce qu'il advient d'eux après leur arrestation. Ils annoncent que, par exemple, 7 000 à 8 000 membres de l'Etat islamique ont été arrêtés, mais qu'ils sont ensuite absous de tout blâme ou qu'ils ne sont pas jugés. Le système judiciaire turc a gravement échoué à cet égard », a déclaré Taştekin.

**L'attaque a été sous-rapportée dans les médias turcs**

Fehim Taştekin a également noté que la dernière attaque de l'Etat islamique a été très peu rapportée dans les médias turcs. Il pense qu'il y a une raison à cela :

« La Turquie a de très graves problèmes économiques, la Turquie a toujours utilisé la question syrienne pour couvrir cela. Ils ont toujours dissimulé les vrais problèmes de la Turquie en parlant de la lutte contre le terrorisme et de ces politiques, mais bien sûr la Turquie ne discutera pas de Daech car la question reviendra sur eux. Le laxisme des politiques de la Turquie dans la lutte contre l'Etat islamique et les informations sur la façon dont ils perçoivent les membres de l'Etat

islamique seront révélés, de sorte que l'Etat islamique ne fait pas l'objet de discussions dans les médias turcs.

Taştekin a poursuivi :

« Cette politique offre une possibilité d'immunité partielle à l'Etat islamique, pour qu'il puisse se regrouper, il y a la guerre en Irak, il y a la guerre en Syrie, ils ne peuvent de toute façon pas vivre en Iran, la Jordanie est vigilante, je parle des pays qui ont des frontières avec la Syrie, bien que l'Arabie saoudite ait des liens idéologiques avec l'Etat islamique, tous ces pays sont en état d'alerte maximale, mais il n'y a aucune alarme en Turquie

concernant le regroupement de l'Etat islamique. »

La Turquie est un obstacle à une solution en Syrie

Taştekin a également commenté la politique de la Turquie en Syrie.

« La Turquie essaie certainement de créer un couloir à la frontière entre Afrin et le Tigre, et bien qu'elle ait vu lors de la dernière opération, « Opération Source de paix » que ce n'est pas possible, elle insiste toujours sur cette politique. Cela est lié aux politiques intérieures de la Turquie, mais cela crée également un obstacle à la solution en Syrie. »

Fehim Taştekin pense que la Turquie veut créer un obstacle aux réalisations des Kurdes et de l'Administration autonome du nord et de l'est de la Syrie (AANES).

« D'une part, il y a des réalisations kurdes dans la région. La Turquie met un blocus sur ce statut. La Turquie crée un obstacle à toute solution trouvée entre la Russie, les Kurdes et le régime syrien. La participation des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS) et de l'AANES à Genève étant également bloquée par la Turquie, ce processus ne progresse pas de toute façon, mais la Turquie le bloque également. »

LEDEVOIR

3 février 2022

## Raids turcs meurtriers contre des positions kurdes en Irak et en Syrie

La Turquie a mené des frappes aériennes meurtrières contre des positions de rebelles kurdes turcs en Irak et des forces kurdes syriennes en Syrie, visées par un assaut djihadiste sanglant fin janvier.

Pays limitrophe de la Syrie et de l'Irak, la Turquie déploie depuis 2020 des troupes dans le nord de la Syrie, en guerre, et contrôle des zones avec ses supplétifs syriens.

Selon le ministère turc de la Défense, les raids ont visé mardi soir « des abris, des bunkers, des grottes, des tunnels, des dépôts de munitions et des présumés quartiers généraux et camps d'entraînement », utilisés par le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) en Irak et par les Unités de protection du peuple (YPG, forces kurdes syriennes) en Syrie.

Le PKK, groupe rebelle kurde turc, qualifié de « terroriste » par la Turquie et ses alliés occidentaux, mène une insurrection dans ce pays depuis 1984. An-



Bakr Alkasem Agence France-Presse Mercredi, un bombardement a fait 8 morts, dont 5 civils, et 29 blessés dans la ville d'al-Bab, en Syrie. Sur la photo, un homme et une enfant marchent sur les décombres d'un bâtiment touché par les tirs.

kara considère les YPG comme une émanation « terroriste » du PKK en Syrie.

D'après l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'Homme (OSDH), les raids turcs ont frappé en Syrie une centrale électrique près de la ville d'Al-Malikiya, dans la province de Hassaké, sous contrôle de l'administration locale kurde. « Au moins

quatre personnes ont été tuées », a déclaré l'ONG.

Ces frappes sont survenues quelques heures après des funérailles rassemblant des centaines de personnes dans cette même ville, organisées pour les combattants kurdes tués lors d'une récente attaque du groupe djihadiste Etat islamique (EI) contre une prison

de Hassaké gérée par les Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), dont le pilier est les YPG.

Des « déplacés blessés »

Mercredi soir, les forces turques ont intensifié leurs bombardements dans le nord-est de la Syrie, visant notamment « une vingtaine de villages et sites [...] dans la région de Hassaké et le nord de la province de Raqa », selon l'Observatoire. Les tirs ont pris pour cible des zones résidentielles, causant le déplacement d'un grand nombre d'habitants, a ajouté la même source.

L'OSDH avait auparavant fait état également de plus de 40 roquettes et obus tirés depuis mardi soir par les forces turques sur des zones du nord de la province d'Alep sous contrôle kurde.

Mercredi, au moins 8 personnes, dont 5 civils, ont été tuées et 29 blessées, dont certaines grièvement, dans un bombardement dans la ville d'al-Bab dans la province d'Alep, sous contrôle des forces



turques et de ses supplétifs syriens, avait aussi indiqué l'OSDH sans préciser d'où provenaient les tirs. En Irak, dans la région autonome kurde du Kurdistan (nord), « des avions de combat turcs ont visé plusieurs positions du PKK », notamment dans les régions de Makhmour et de Sinjar, selon un communiqué des services antiterroristes du Kurdistan, évoquant « des pertes humaines ». « L'aviation militaire turque a bombardé six positions du PKK dans les montagnes de Karjokh », surplombant un camp de déplacés kurdes à Makhmour, ont-ils précisé.

Un groupe armé lié au PKK qui gère le camp a fait état de «

deux combattants tués et de dizaines de blessés parmi les résidents du camp ».

#### « Violation de l'espace aérien »

Dans un communiqué, les forces de sécurité irakiennes ont dénoncé une « violation de l'espace aérien irakien », se disant prêtes « à coopérer pour stabiliser la situation à la frontière ».

La Turquie a de facto installé des dizaines de bases militaires depuis 25 ans au Kurdistan irakien. Elle a lancé en 2021 une nouvelle campagne militaire contre le PKK dans le nord de l'Irak, avec des bombardements aériens récurrents.

Le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, accuse le PKK d'utiliser la zone frontalière montagneuse comme tremplin pour son insurrection. Ces derniers mois, plusieurs soldats turcs ont notamment été tués dans des attaques dans le nord de l'Irak imputées au PKK.

La Turquie essaie de continuer ce que l'EI a commencé.

— Les forces kurdes syriennes En Syrie, pays morcelé en raison d'une guerre dévastatrice, les forces turques ont ciblé à plusieurs reprises les YPG.

« La Turquie essaie de continuer ce que l'EI a commencé », ont

accusé les YPG sur Twitter, en référence à l'assaut de l'EI qui cherchait à libérer des djihadistes de la prison attaquée. « Tout le monde doit agir contre cette attaque maintenant. »

Les FDS ont annoncé dimanche la fin des opérations de ratissage dans la prison après plusieurs jours de combats, qui ont fait 373 morts dont 268 djihadistes selon l'OSDH.

Soutenues par les États-Unis, les FDS sont le fer de lance de la lutte contre l'EI, chassé de ses fiefs en Syrie et en Irak, mais qui continue de mener des attaques avec des cellules dormantes.

LE FIGARO

3 février 2022

## Biden annonce que le chef du groupe État islamique a été « éliminé du champ de bataille »

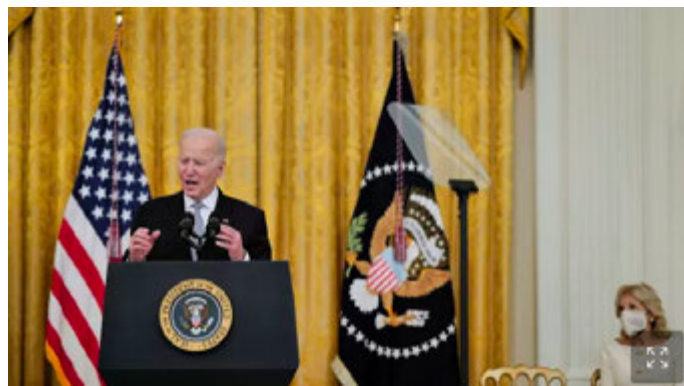
Le président des États-Unis Joe Biden a annoncé jeudi le succès d'une opération en Syrie, dans la nuit du mercredi 2 février.

Le dirigeant du groupe jihadiste État islamique (EI) Abou Ibrahim al-Hachimi al-Qourachi, a été tué lors d'une opération des forces spéciales américaines jeudi 3 février avant l'aube en Syrie, plus de deux ans après l'élimination de son prédécesseur.

L'armée américaine a «éliminé du champ de bataille» le dirigeant du groupe ultraradical lors d'une opération conduite dans le nord-ouest de la Syrie, a annoncé le président américain Joe Biden à Washington. Tous les soldats américains sont sains et saufs, a précisé le président, en annonçant qu'il s'adresserait au peuple américain plus tard dans la matinée.

«La cible terroriste a fait exploser une bombe qui l'a tué»

Selon un haut responsable américain, le chef de l'EI est mort dans une explosion qu'il a



Le président américain, Joe Biden, s'exprimera dans la journée sur la mort du dirigeant de l'État Islamique. CHERISS MAY / REUTERS

lui-même causée lors du raid américain. «Au début de l'opération, la cible terroriste a fait exploser une bombe qui l'a tué ainsi que des membres de sa propre famille dont des femmes et des enfants», a-t-il indiqué. L'opération hélicoptérée s'est produite à Atmé, une région de la province d'Idlib et a fait treize morts dont quatre femmes et trois enfants, selon l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'Homme (OSDH).

En octobre 2019, Abou Bakr al-Baghdadi, prédécesseur de Qourachi a été tué dans un

raid dans la région d'Idlib contrôlée en grande partie par les djihadistes et les rebelles. D'après l'OSDH, les militaires ont atterri en hélicoptère week after Islamic State fighters attacked a prison in northeastern Syria, where they have held out despite a heavy assault by a Kurdish-led militia backed by the United States, the terrorist organization published its version of what had gone down.

In its official magazine, it mocked how many times in its history its foes had declared the Islamic State to be defea-

ted. Its surprise attack on the prison, it crowed, had made its enemies "shout in frustration: 'They have returned again!'"

That description was not entirely wrong.

The battle for the prison, in the city of Hasaka, killed hundreds of people, drew in U.S. troops and offered a stark reminder that three years after the collapse of the Islamic State's so-called caliphate, the group's ability to sow chaotic violence persists, experts said. On Saturday, about 60 ISIS fighters still controlled part of the prison.

In Iraq, ISIS recently killed 10 soldiers and an officer at an army post and beheaded a police officer on camera. In Syria, it has assassinated scores of local leaders, and it extorts businesses to finance its operations. In Afghanistan, the withdrawal of American forces in August has left it to battle the Taliban, with often disastrous consequences for the civilians caught in the middle. optère près de camps de déplacés de

la localité d'Atmé et des affrontements ont ensuite éclaté. Selon des correspondants de l'AFP sur place, l'opération a visé un bâtiment de deux étages dans une zone entourée d'arbres. Une partie du bâtiment a été détruite et le parterre des pièces était couvert de sang.

«Les terroristes internationaux les plus dangereux»

Des habitants ont indiqué à l'AFP avoir entendu le bruit des hélicoptères, puis des «explosions». Selon l'OSDH, les hélicoptères américains ont décollé d'une base militaire dans la ville syrienne de Kobani à majorité kurde, près de la frontière turque. Des membres des forces spéciales des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), dominées par

les Kurdes, et formées par les États-Unis, ont participé à l'opération, d'après l'ONG. Avant l'annonce américaine, Farhad Shami, le porte-parole des FDS, a déclaré sur Twitter que l'opération «visait les terroristes internationaux les plus dangereux».

Dans un enregistrement audio attribué aux forces américaines et ayant circulé parmi la population, une personne parlant en arabe demande aux femmes et aux enfants d'évacuer les maisons dans la zone visée. Selon des experts, des camps de déplacés surpeuplés de la région d'Atmé, située dans le nord de la province d'Idlib, servent de base aux chefs djihadistes qui s'y cachent. Une grande partie de la province d'Idlib ainsi que des

secteurs des provinces voisines de Hama, d'Alep et de Lattaquié sont dominés par Hayat Tahrir al-Cham (HTS), l'ex-branche syrienne d'al-Qaïda. Des groupes rebelles et d'autres factions djihadistes comme Houras al-Din y sont également présents.

Ces factions ont déjà été la cible principalement de raids aériens du régime syrien, de son allié russe, mais aussi de la coalition internationale antidjihadistes dirigée par les États-Unis et des forces spéciales américaines. Néanmoins les opérations hélicoptères restent très rares en Syrie, où des troupes américaines sont déployées dans le cadre de la coalition antidjihadistes. L'opération de jeudi est intervenue quelques jours après la

fin d'un assaut de l'EI contre une prison tenue par les FDS, dans la région de Hassaké (nord-est). Cet assaut fut la plus importante offensive du groupe djihadiste depuis sa défaite territoriale en Syrie en 2019 face aux FDS aidées par la coalition internationale. L'attaque de la prison et les combats ayant suivi, ont fait 373 morts, dont 268 djihadistes, 98 membres des forces kurdes et sept civils selon l'OSDH. L'EI, rival d'al-Qaïda, a été chassé de ses fiefs en Syrie et en Irak mais continue de mener des attaques dans ces deux pays voisins à travers des cellules dormantes. La guerre complexe en Syrie, pays morcelé où interviennent différents protagonistes, a fait environ 500.000 morts depuis 2011.

The New York Times

February 3, 2022  
By Ben Hubbard

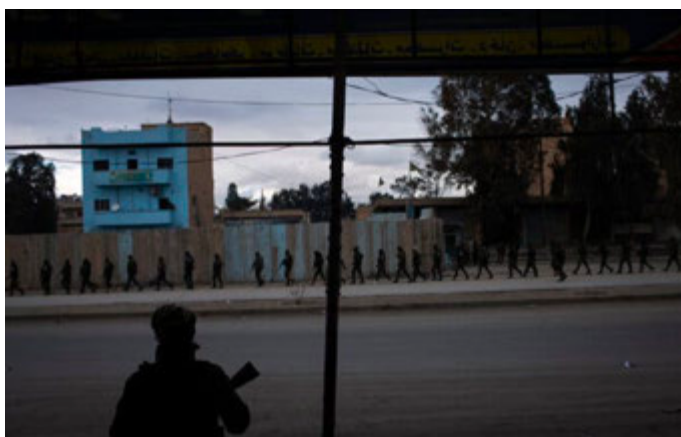
## The Islamic State has shown that it can still pull off military operations

One week after Islamic State fighters attacked a prison in northeastern Syria, where they have held out despite a heavy assault by a Kurdish-led militia backed by the United States, the terrorist organization published its version of what had gone down.

In its official magazine, it mocked how many times in its history its foes had declared the Islamic State to be defeated. Its surprise attack on the prison, it crowed, had made its enemies “shout in frustration: ‘They have returned again!’”

That description was not entirely wrong.

The battle for the prison, in the city of Hasaka, killed hundreds of people, drew in U.S. troops and offered a stark reminder that three years after the col-



Kurdish security forces searching for Islamic State fighters near the Ghweiran prison in Hasaka, northeastern Syria, in January. Credit... Diego Ibarra Sanchez for The New York Times

lapse of the Islamic State's so-called caliphate, the group's ability to sow chaotic violence persists, experts said. On Saturday, about 60 ISIS fighters still controlled part of the prison.

In Iraq, ISIS recently killed 10

soldiers and an officer at an army post and beheaded a police officer on camera. In Syria, it has assassinated scores of local leaders, and it extorts businesses to finance its operations. In Afghanistan, the withdrawal of American forces in August has left it to battle the

Taliban, with often disastrous consequences for the civilians caught in the middle.

The Islamic State, which once controlled territory the size of Britain that spanned the Syria-Iraq border, is not as powerful as it once was, but experts say it could be biding its time until conditions in the unstable countries where it thrives provide it with new chances to expand.

“There is no U.S. endgame in either Syria or Iraq, and the prison is just one example of this failure to work toward a long-term solution,” said Craig Whiteside, an associate professor at the U.S. Naval War College who studies the group. “It really is just a matter of time for ISIS before another opportunity presents itself. All they have to do is to hang on until then.”



The New York Times

February 3, 2022

By Muhammad Haj Kadour & Ben Hubbard

# Neighbors Recall Night of Fear in Syria Raid That Killed ISIS Leader

## Those Who Remain Will Die': Neighbors Recall Night of Fear in Syria Raid

In a village in Syria, residents took cover, watched and hid as U.S. forces assaulted the house next door, killing the leader of ISIS.

The neighbors had never heard anything like it.

The sudden roar of attack helicopters woke up the families living in a pastoral patch of northwestern Syria after midnight. They huddled in basements, storerooms and bedrooms.

"What's happening, Dad?" a neighbor, Abu Omar, recalled his son asking.

A voice speaking Arabic blared from a loudspeaker as American forces ordered the occupants of one house to give themselves up, witnesses told a New York Times reporter at the scene. "Everyone will be safe if you surrender," the voice said, Abu Omar recalled. "Those who remain will die."

The United States hailed the rare airborne raid by commandos in a rebel-held patch of Syria early Thursday as a major success against terrorism, saying it had ended the life of the shadowy leader of the Islamic State, known as Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Qurayshi. Inside the Home Where Raid Was Conducted

Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Qurayshi, the leader of the Islamic State, was living in a three-story cinder block house when American forces attacked on Thursday.

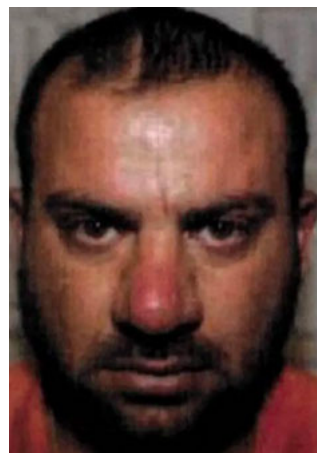
But for the families who lived near the site of his final stand, on the outskirts of the town of Atmeh, near Syria's border with



The house in Atmeh, Syria, where the leader of ISIS, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Qurayshi, lived on the third floor, until Thursday. Credit... Aaref Watad / Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Turkey, the raid made for a night of surprise and terror.

A man who gave his name as Abu Muhammad, one of five neighbors interviewed by The Times on Thursday, said that his family had been so scared by what they heard outside that they did not even peek out of the windows.



A photo supplied by the U.S. government showing Mr. al-Qurayshi, who was named the head of the Islamic State in 2019. A photo supplied by the U.S. government showing Mr. al-Qurayshi, who was named the head of the Islamic State in 2019. Credit... via State Department

Then they heard heavy banging on their door and opened it to find American commandos and an Arabic-speaking interpreter.

They were told they would not be harmed, and were directed to flee the house and hide behind another building until the confrontation was over, Abu Muhammad said. They did as they were told

When the raid was over two hours later, 13 bodies were recovered from the rubble, rescue workers said, including six children. Most were killed, U.S. officials said, when Mr. al-Qurayshi refused to surrender and instead detonated explosives that killed him and members of his family.

The operation highlighted the ability of ISIS to seek refuge in pockets of chaos left by Syria's 10-year civil war: The leader of the world's most fearsome terrorist organization was hiding out on the third floor of a simple, cinder-block house surrounded by olive groves many miles from his group's traditional redoubt.

At its height, the Islamic State controlled territory the size of Britain that spanned the Syria-Iraq border. The United States and other nations partnered with local forces in both countries to fight the jihadists, and pushed them from their last patch of territory in eastern Syria in early 2019.

Editors' Picks

'How Much of My Story Am I Supposed to Share?'

A Fall From the Society Pages to Prison Unsettles Greenwich Bad Credit? No Savings? Unconventional (Maybe Risky) Ways to Buy a Home

Continue reading the main story Mr. al-Qurayshi became the group's leader later that year after his predecessor, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, blew himself up during a similar raid by U.S. Special Forces, also in Idlib Province in northwestern Syria.

Still, when he tried to drop off the radar of his many enemies, Mr. al-Qurayshi also hid in Idlib, a poor area crowded with Syrians who have fled violence in other parts of the country, and one of the last territories controlled by rebels opposed to President Bashar al-Assad.

About 11 months ago, a Syrian truck driver rented the house targeted in the raid, said Muhammad Sheikh, whose family owns it.

The truck driver paid \$130 per month and lived there on the second floor with his wife, their three children, his sister and her daughter, Mr. Sheikh said. They were quiet and kept to themselves, and the truck driver politely insisted on delivering the rent to the landlord each month, perhaps to keep him from visiting the house.

Late last year, the United States got a tip that Mr. al-Qurayshi was living on the top floor, Biden administration officials said. He never left the building, but sometimes bathed on the rooftop. To communicate with the far-flung terrorist organization he headed, he relied on the polite truck driver who lived downstairs.

The night of the raid, the area was dark because of chronic electricity shortages, and everyone was asleep until the whir of approaching choppers woke them up around 1 a.m.

Abu Omar said the Americans did not attack the house right away, but repeatedly called on its occupants to come out peacefully.

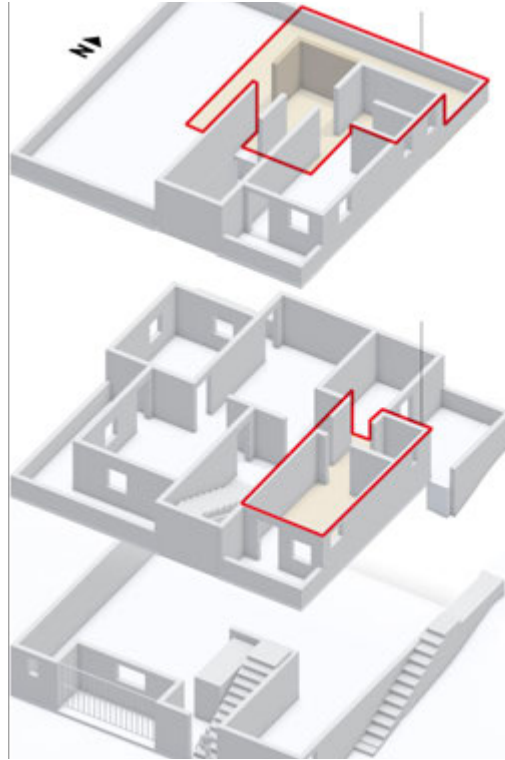
A civilian family lived on the first floor, and Abu Omar said the voice on the loudspeaker pleaded with a woman and her children to leave the house.

“Come out, woman, and let the children have a chance to live,” the voice said, according to Abu Omar. Then the voice grew more threatening, saying the Americans were going to fire on the house if she did not come out.

In a video interview on Thursday with Baladi News, a local outlet, the woman, who did not give her name, said that after the U.S. forces fired what she assumed to be a missile at the house, she, her husband, her son and at least two other children fled the house.

Her husband and son were captured and thrown to the ground by the Americans, she said.

The Americans told her to put down children she was holding and remove her head scarf, but she got scared and ran back inside with them, she said. At her husband’s urging, she finally came out again. The U.S. forces separated her from her children, searched her, and interrogated her and her husband



Sources: Building structure from pictures and videos taken before and after the raid. By Marco Hernandez and Pablo Robles

about their relationship to their neighbors, she said.

“When we said we didn’t know them, they didn’t believe us,” the woman said.

“How is it possible that you are neighbors and you don’t know

Shortly afterward, Mr. al-Qurayshi detonated explosives on the third floor, the officials said, killing himself and blowing the bodies of others out the windows.

Then U.S. commandos stormed



The scene of the U.S. raid. Credit... Rami Al Sayed / Agence France-Presse Getty Images

each other?” she said they asked.

U.S. officials said that a man, a woman and some children safely fled the building, apparently referring to this family.

the building and got into a fire-fight with Mr. al-Qurayshi’s courier and his wife on the second floor, the officials said. Both were killed, but four children were safely evacuated.

But the woman and other neigh-

bors said they saw and heard U.S. forces fire on the building with heavy machine guns and missiles before the commandos went in.

The woman, too, said the courier and his wife were killed, but that the U.S. forces brought out four of their children, including a 15-day-old boy.

Huddled in a basement nearby, Abu Omar and his children also heard the heavy gunfire and explosions that he thought were from missiles fired at the house, he said. Terrified, his children were trembling and some had wet themselves from fear.

“They are not going to hit us,” he said he told them. “They’re coming for another house.”

After 3 a.m., the neighbors said, the troops loaded up and they heard the whir of the helicopters recede into the distance. Finally, all was quiet and they emerged from their homes and hiding places.

One neighbor, who asked to be identified only by his first name, Ahmed, said that he entered the house targeted in the raid and found the bodies of a woman and a child, and that the woman appeared to have killed them both with an explosive vest.

Abu Muhammad, who had been told to hide by U.S. forces, led his family back to their home and saw the body of a dead child near the damaged house next door.

Rescue workers came to dig the bodies out of the blood-spattered rubble. The neighbors collected other remains they found and buried them nearby.

“We have never had such an operation before,” said Jamil al-Dadu, 30, who heard the raid from a nearby refugee camp and came in the morning to see what had happened. “We did not expect there to be an American one.”

# Le chef du groupe Etat islamique tué lors d'une opération militaire en Syrie

Avec Abou Ibrahim Al-Hachimi Al-Qourachi disparaît une « menace terroriste majeure », a déclaré le président américain Joe Biden. L'opération a été menée par les forces spéciales américaines avec l'appui des Forces démocratiques syriennes.

Plus de deux ans après l'élimination de son prédécesseur, le dirigeant du groupe djihadiste Etat islamique (EI), Abou Ibrahim Al-Hachimi Al-Qourachi, a été tué lors d'une opération des forces spéciales américaines, jeudi 3 février avant l'aube, dans le nord-ouest de la Syrie. L'opération hélicoptère s'est produite à Atmé, une région de la province d'Idlib, et a fait treize morts, selon l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'homme (OSDH). Tous les soldats américains sont sains et saufs, selon la Maison Blanche.

Dans une allocution solennelle, le président américain a déclaré qu'avec Abou Ibrahim Al-Hachimi Al-Qourachi, très peu connu du grand public, disparaissait une « menace terroriste majeure ».

Le chef de l'EI s'est suicidé plutôt que de se rendre, a ajouté le président, qui a affirmé avoir privilégié une opération commando pour éviter des victimes civiles. « Dans un ultime geste désespéré de couardise », Qourachi, à la tête de la nébuleuse djihadiste depuis deux ans, « a choisi de se faire exploser (...), emportant plusieurs membres de sa famille avec lui, comme l'avait fait son prédécesseur » Abou Bakr al-Baghdadi, tué dans un raid américain en octobre 2019, a dit Joe Biden.

L'ONG « Save The Children » fait état « d'au moins » six enfants tués au total, dont deux bébés. L'Unicef annonce aussi que six enfants ont été tués et



une fillette sévèrement blessée. L'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'Homme (OSDH) a rapporté le chiffre total de treize morts dans l'opération, civils et combattants confondus, dont quatre femmes et trois enfants. Les Etats-Unis assurent qu'aucun civil n'a été tué en raison d'actions américaines. Identifié grâce à ses empreintes digitales

Qourachi « s'est tué ainsi que sa famille proche sans combattre, alors même que nous essayions de l'appeler à se rendre », a précisé, de son côté, le général Kenneth McKenzie, chef du Commandement central de l'armée américaine. Le haut gradé a indiqué que le chef djihadiste avait été identifié par ses empreintes digitales et son ADN. Joe Biden a suivi l'opération depuis l'ultra-sécurisée « Situation Room », pendant les deux heures environ qu'elle a duré, dans la nuit de mercredi à jeudi.

Dans son allocution, le président américain a promis que son pays, malgré le retrait d'Af-

ghanistan en août dernier, restait engagé dans la lutte internationale contre le terrorisme. « Cette opération est la preuve que l'Amérique a les moyens et la capacité d'éliminer des menaces terroristes quel que soit l'endroit du monde où elles se cachent », a-t-il dit. « Nous sommes à vos trousses et nous vous trouverons », a lancé le démocrate de 79 ans, en évoquant les chefs de groupes djihadistes dans le monde.

Joe Biden a rappelé qu'Abou Ibrahim Al-Hachimi Al-Qourachi, un Irakien âgé de 45 ans, avait pris la tête de l'EI après la mort, en octobre 2019, d'Abou Bakr Al-Baghdadi, tué dans un raid dans la région d'Idlib contrôlée en grande partie par les djihadistes et les rebelles.

Auparavant, il avait présidé en 2014 au massacre de la minorité kurdophone des Yézidis. En tant que leader de l'EI, il contrôlait le réseau de « franchises » du groupe terroriste de l'Afrique à l'Afghanistan. Plus récemment, il a supervisé l'attaque contre la prison d'Hassaké, dans le nord-est de

la Syrie, le 20 janvier, reprise par les Forces démocratiques syriennes.

Evacuation des maisons alentours

D'après l'OSDH, les militaires ont atterri en hélicoptère près de camps de déplacés de la localité d'Atmé et des affrontements ont ensuite éclaté. Selon des correspondants de l'Agence France-Presse (AFP) sur place, l'opération a visé un bâtiment de trois étages dans une zone entourée d'arbres. Une partie du bâtiment a été détruite et le parterre des pièces était couvert de sang. Des habitants ont indiqué avoir entendu le bruit des hélicoptères, puis des « explosions ». Selon l'OSDH, les hélicoptères américains ont décollé d'une base militaire dans la ville syrienne de Kobané à majorité kurde, près de la frontière turque. Des membres des forces spéciales des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), dominées par les Kurdes et formées par les Etats-Unis, ont participé à l'opération, toujours d'après l'ONG. Joe Biden a salué jeudi leur contribution « essentielle ».

Avant l'annonce américaine, Farhad Shami, le porte-parole des FDS, avait déclaré sur Twitter que l'opération « visait les terroristes internationaux les plus dangereux ». Dans un enregistrement audio attribué aux forces américaines et ayant circulé parmi la population, une personne parlant en arabe demande aux femmes et



aux enfants d'évacuer les maisons dans la zone visée.

### 500 000 morts depuis 2011

Selon des experts, des camps de déplacés surpeuplés de la région d'Atmé, située dans le nord de la province d'Idlib, servent de base aux chefs djihadistes qui s'y cachent. Une grande partie de la province d'Idlib ainsi que des secteurs des provinces voisines de Hama, d'Alep et de Lattaquié sont dominés par Hayat Tahrir

Al-Cham (HTS), l'ex-branche syrienne d'Al-Qaïda. Des groupes rebelles et d'autres factions djihadistes comme Houras Al-Din y sont également présents.

Ces factions ont déjà été la cible principalement de raids aériens du régime syrien, de son allié russe, mais aussi de la coalition internationale antidjihadistes dirigée par les Etats-Unis et des forces spéciales américaines. Néanmoins, les opérations héliportées restent

très rares en Syrie, où des troupes américaines sont déployées dans le cadre de la coalition antidjihadistes.

L'opération de jeudi est intervenue quelques jours après la fin d'un assaut de l'EI contre une prison tenue par les FDS, dans la région de Hassaké (nord-est). Cet assaut fut la plus importante offensive du groupe djihadiste depuis sa défaite territoriale en Syrie en 2019 face aux FDS aidées par la coalition internationale. L'attaque de la prison et les

combats ayant suivi, ont fait 373 morts – 268 djihadistes, 98 membres des forces kurdes et sept civils selon l'OSDH.

L'EI, rival d'Al-Qaïda, a été chassé de ses fiefs en Syrie et en Irak mais continue de mener des attaques dans ces deux pays voisins à travers des cellules dormantes. La guerre complexe en Syrie, pays morcelé où interviennent différents protagonistes, a fait environ 500 000 morts depuis 2011.



3 février 2022

## Turquie: l'inflation frôle les 50% en janvier, un record depuis 2002

La hausse des prix à la consommation en Turquie a franchi un nouveau cap en janvier, frôlant les 50% sur un an, un chiffre au plus haut depuis avril 2002 dû à l'effondrement de la livre turque en 2021.

En janvier, l'inflation a atteint dans le pays 48,69% sur un an, selon des chiffres officiels publiés mardi.

En décembre, la hausse des prix à la consommation avait atteint 36,08% en glissement annuel.

L'inflation est devenue un sujet brûlant en Turquie à moins de dix-huit mois de la prochaine élection présidentielle, l'opposition et certains économistes accusant l'Office national des statistiques (Tüik) de sous-estimer de plus de moitié son ampleur.

Un groupe d'économistes turcs indépendants affirme notamment que l'inflation a dépassé les 110% en janvier.

Cette défiance envers les statistiques officielles a été renforcée par une décision récente du président Recep Tayyip Erdogan, qui a limogé la semaine dernière le directeur du Tüik, un cinquième remplacement depuis 2019.

Le chef de l'État, accusé d'avoir encouragé la hausse des prix en poussant la banque centrale à abaisser presque systématiquement ses taux d'intérêt ces derniers mois, a promis en janvier de "ramener l'inflation à un chiffre le plus vite possible".

Pour justifier sa politique de "taux bas", M. Erdogan a avancé à plusieurs reprises les préceptes de l'islam, qui interdit l'usure.

À rebours des théories économiques classiques, le président turc estime que les taux d'intérêts élevés favorisent l'inflation.

Mais sa politique monétaire et le manque d'indépendance de la banque centrale – dont M. Erdogan a limogé trois gouverneurs depuis 2019 – n'ont fait qu'accélérer la chute de la monnaie nationale (-44% face au dollar en 2021), entraînant une hausse spectaculaire des prix.

– "avec l'aide de Dieu" –

Les Turcs vont devoir "porter le fardeau" de l'inflation encore "quelque temps", a-t-il prévenu lundi, affirmant toutefois qu'"avec l'aide de Dieu nous sommes entrés dans une période où chaque mois sera meilleur que le précédent".

Le ministre turc de l'Économie Nureddin Nebati a également estimé cette semaine que l'inflation atteindrait un pic en avril, "sous la barre des 50%" selon lui.

Mais il avait déjà annoncé précédemment ce pic pour janvier, assurant que l'inflation commencerait ensuite à reculer pour revenir à un chiffre en juin 2023, date prévue pour la prochaine élection présidentielle.

La Turquie connaît une inflation à deux chiffres presque sans discontinuer depuis début 2017, et n'avait jamais connu une telle hausse des prix à la consommation depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir du Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP) du président Erdogan fin 2002.

Pour certains produits de base comme les œufs, la viande et l'huile, l'inflation est plus forte encore et rend le coût de la vie difficilement soutenable pour une grande partie des Turcs. Le prix des factures d'énergies a également explosé, le pays étant très dépendant des importations.

Dans ce contexte politiquement explosif, la Banque centrale de Turquie a maintenu inchangé fin janvier son princi-

pal taux directeur à 14%, une décision destinée à calmer l'inflation et les marchés après quatre mois de baisse consécutive et une fin d'année 2021 cauchemardesque pour la monnaie nationale et les consommateurs.

Le président Erdogan avait par ailleurs relevé le salaire minimum au 1er janvier de 50% (de 2.825,90 à 4.253,40 livres, soit environ 275 euros). Mais cette augmentation a déjà été pour partie effacée par la conjoncture.

Pour tenter d'endiguer la dégringolade de la livre turque, M. Erdogan a annoncé fin décembre la création d'un mécanisme d'épargne permettant d'ajuster la valeur de certains dépôts bancaires en livres au cours du dollar.

Cette mesure d'urgence, destinée à encourager les Turcs à placer ou convertir leur épargne en livres, avait été suivie d'un rebond soudain mais temporaire de la monnaie nationale, que de nombreux économistes attribuent à des interventions répétées de la banque centrale turque sur les marchés.

## Éplucher le millefeuille de la Turquie

**R**eccep Tayyip Erdoğan est-il l'irascible dictateur décrit par la presse occidentale ? Deux essais bien différents parus en France viennent nuancer le tableau. Le président turc n'en sort pas indemne, mais la Turquie moderne qu'il dirige y apparaît dans toute sa complexité, avec ses atouts et ses faiblesses. On n'a pas fini de parler de la Turquie. L'évolution de ce pays-charnière situé entre l'Orient et l'Occident passionne plus encore les experts que le grand public depuis que s'y est imposée, au début de ce siècle, la figure controversée de Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Deux livres proposent, dans des approches bien distinctes, des réflexions intéressantes sur cette Turquie moderne aux desseins parfois insaisissables.

On doit le premier, sorti en septembre 2021 aux éditions Eyrolles, à la plume de Didier Billion, directeur adjoint de l'Institut de relations internationales et stratégiques (IRIS). Son titre offre le mérite de la transparence : La Turquie, un partenaire incontournable. L'auteur, en effet, a voulu mettre sa prose au service d'un plaidoyer très fouillé pour que l'Union européenne approfondisse et multiplie « les initiatives avec la Turquie », estimant que « la mise en œuvre de véritables synergies serait très certainement un multiplicateur de puissance bénéfique ».

### La métamorphose d'un homme

On cherchera en revanche vainement une telle ambition dans l'autre essai, La Turquie d'Erdoğan, que publie en ce mois de janvier 2022 aux éditions du Rocher la journaliste Anne Andlauer, qui vit depuis près de douze ans en Turquie où elle a pris racine. Corres-



pondante pour de nombreux médias français, suisses et belges, notre consœur s'attache avec bonheur à décrypter « l'infini millefeuille turc », comme elle appelle la très complexe société turque.

Son ouvrage est soutenu par une multitude d'opinions ou d'anecdotes de citoyens recueillies au fil de ces dernières années à propos de l'évolution de leur pays sous la domination du Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP), le parti d'Erdoğan, et cela dans divers domaines comme par exemple les aspirations frustrées de la jeunesse, le verrouillage croissant de la liberté d'expression, l'accueil problématique des millions de réfugiés ou encore l'impossible ancrage du pays à une Union européenne à la fois si proche et si lointaine. Tous domaines sur lesquels plane l'ombre tutélaire d'un Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, passé en 2014 des responsabilités de premier ministre à celles de président de la République non sans avoir veillé à faire adopter un accroissement considérable des pouvoirs dévolus à sa charge actuelle. Au fil des pages se dessine la métamorphose d'un homme, ambitieux pour lui et pour son pays, dont le discours subira une évolution par étapes, avec la répression de la contestation de Gezi à Istanbul en 2013, les élections perdues de juin 2015 (promp-

tement annulées puis gagnées quelques mois plus tard) et, évidemment, le putsch raté de 2016 où il vit passer de près la fin de son règne, sinon de sa vie.

### De la main de velours au gant de fer

La métamorphose en question se traduit par des bouleversements dans la vie quotidienne des Turcs. Et Anne Andlauer de citer le journaliste Kemal Can (p. 67) :

L'AKP d'Erdoğan avait construit une certaine image : celle d'un parti qui renverse les tutelles, élargit la démocratie, tend la main aux Kurdes, apporte le développement économique, combat la corruption. Il avait cette capacité à créer une histoire qui mobilisait les électeurs et face à laquelle l'opposition ne parvenait pas à trouver un discours. C'était une vraie hégémonie (...) À l'inverse, l'Erdoğan d'aujourd'hui consacre tout son talent à perpétuer son pouvoir. Il a perdu sa capacité à créer une histoire et n'est pas parvenu à élargir sa base. C'est d'autant plus grave que sa popularité se dégrade dans les centres et chez l'électorat les plus dynamiques du pays : les grandes villes et les jeunes. Nous sommes face à un pouvoir en mode défensif.

Le dossier kurde illustre bien

l'évolution du règne d'Erdoğan depuis la suave main de velours des premières années jusqu'à l'implacable main de fer contemporaine. Didier Billion consacre un chapitre à ce qu'il désigne par « la centralité du fait kurde ». Pour y regretter que « pour s'assurer le soutien des nationalistes turcs », Erdoğan en fut venu à déclarer en mars 2015, année électorale, qu'il n'y avait « jamais eu dans ce pays un problème kurde » alors que quelques semaines plus tôt, « le principe de négociations directes avec le PKK » (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan) avait été validé. De son côté, Anne Andlauer rappelle les mots bien plus conciliants de celui qui, en 2005, était premier ministre : « S'il faut absolument y mettre un nom, le problème kurde est le problème de tous, c'est mon problème. »

### Une stratégie liberticide

Malgré des démarches bien différentes, on trouvera quelques similitudes analytiques entre l'essai de Didier Billion et celui d'Anne Andlauer. Tous deux, par exemple, s'accordent à contester la qualification de « dictature » souvent assenée en Occident au régime dirigé par l'ombrageux Erdoğan. « Ce n'est pas une dictature, explique le premier sur le site de l'IRIS, parce que, par exemple, lors des dernières élections municipales, les deux principales villes du pays que sont Ankara, la capitale politique, et Istanbul, la capitale économique du pays, sont passées aux mains de l'opposition. Donc, ce n'est pas un pays de dictature qui le permettrait. » Il n'empêche, reconnaît-il en même temps dans son livre, « la stratégie liberticide mise en œuvre par Recep Tayyip Erdoğan rend parfaitement compte de sa conception singulière de la démocratie (...) ».

Et non, malgré les apparences, Erdoğan ne décide pas tout en Turquie, confirme Anne Andlauer. Elle l'explicitait au journal *Le Soir* le 11 janvier 2022, brandissant le même exemple électoral :

L'élection municipale de 2019 à Istanbul, que son parti a perdue malgré tous les efforts du président pour rejouer le scrutin, en est la parfaite illustration. Le retrait de la Convention d'Istanbul sur la violence contre les femmes aussi. Tout cela crée le débat, y compris chez ses partisans. Même si une partie d'entre eux le suit aveuglément, d'autres remettent en cause ouvertement certains

choix, et certains se détachent de son parti.

#### L'énigme des djihadistes

Au rayon des regrets, on pointerait que les deux essais évitent de traiter en profondeur une ambiguïté tangible d'Erdoğan : son attitude vis-à-vis des djihadistes engagés dans le théâtre de guerre syrien pendant plusieurs années. En effet, le président turc a souvent été accusé d'avoir au moins fermé les yeux sur les va-et-vient de cette mouvance entre son pays et le voisin méridional en plein déchirement, au motif supputé que l'hostilité des djihadistes envers les Kurdes servait les intérêts de la Turquie.

De même, les deux auteurs s'abstiennent de s'appesantir sur l'échec économique patent du président turc qui, il est vrai, s'est surtout aggravé ces dernières années comme l'illustre la récente chute de valeur considérable subie par la monnaie locale face au dollar, avec pour probables conséquences une nouvelle altération de la popularité d'Erdoğan. Ce dernier, note néanmoins Anne Andlauer, se retrouve ainsi contraint de devoir renouer, tout penaud, avec les Européens, avec des régimes dans le Golfe ou même avec Israël, autant de puissances qu'il avait éreintées sans vergogne il n'y a pas si longtemps dans ses discours flamboyants.

La journaliste, avec ce sens de la nuance qui l'honore, réfute les raccourcis dont la presse occidentale se montre friande. « Comme la plupart des Turcs aujourd'hui, écrit-elle (p. 133), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ne rêve pas particulièrement de restaurer l'empire ni de reconquérir les territoires perdus. Il ne songe probablement pas davantage à rétablir le sultanat, le califat, l'alphabet arabe, la polygamie... Ce dont il rêve surtout, c'est d'imprimer sa marque et de rester au pouvoir autant qu'il le pourra (...) ». Il reste à voir ce que l'Histoire, qui peut être sévère, retiendra de lui.



5 february, 2022  
By Louisa Loveluck

## The world forgot this Syrian prison. The Islamic State did not.

A staggering ISIS attack revealed the enduring strength of the group

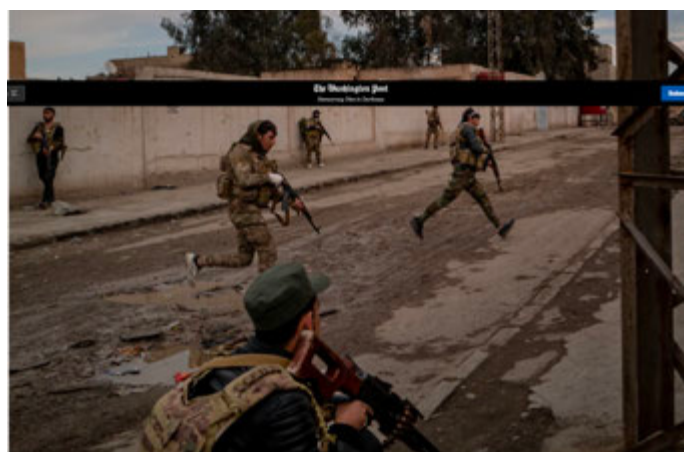
The truck rumbling past Ghwaryan prison didn't look like much to worry about at first. It drove along as expected, but then abruptly veered rightward. It hit the prison's exterior wall near the main gate, and a fireball lit up the night sky.

Several miles away in his operations room, Gen. Mazloum Kobane Abdi, commander of the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, received reports of the blast within moments, he later recalled. He had spent the past three years warning foreign allies, Washington notable among them, that this night might come.

Within 30 minutes, he was sure of it: The nightmare they had predicted was unfolding. The Islamic State's assault on

Ghwaryan prison in the north-eastern Syrian town of Hasakah on Jan. 20 was the group's most dramatic attack in years and triggered the longest and deadliest battle with ISIS since its so-called caliphate in Syria and Iraq was defeated nearly three years ago. The goal, officials believe, was to break free ISIS leaders, who were imprisoned there among more than 3,000 suspected militants.

By the time the SDF recaptured the prison after a 10-day battle, American and British forces had joined the fight, carrying out days of airstrikes and dispatching Special Forces on the ground. More than 500 people died, about three quarters of them ISIS members, or men or boys imprisoned among them, according to the SDF. Scores, if not



Fighters with the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces search house to house for ISIS militants and weapons in the Ghwaryan neighborhood of Hasakah, Syria, on Jan 31. (Photos by Nicole Tung for The Washington Post)

hundreds, of suspected militants remain unaccounted for.

"They wanted to renew ISIS," Mazloum said in an interview. Usually laser-focused, the gen-

eral looked weary. "They wanted to attack the prison, but after that, the plan was even bigger." The Islamic State has proved resilient in the past couple of



years despite its territorial losses. After being largely chased from northeastern Syria, it has returned, seeding sleeper cells across the countryside and waging an increasingly successful campaign of assassinations and other small-scale attacks. These in turn have intimidated local communities that might have resisted or informed on them, creating space for more ambitious operations.

The attack on the prison was more sophisticated and lethal than Western governments had anticipated. And at the same time that it was under assault, the SDF was reporting other simultaneous attacks in the region, including militant raids on checkpoints and a water tanker, the targeting of an SDF location with rocket-propelled grenades and machine gun fire, and a similar attack elsewhere on the home of an SDF commander.

In Iraq, the overall pace of Islamic State attacks has slowed in recent months. But the group has still been able to exploit security gaps, especially in central Diyala province, to carry out a pair of dramatic and deadly attacks.

In a briefing for reporters hours after U.S. Special Forces killed ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi during a raid in northwestern Syria on Thursday, a senior Biden administration official said Qurayshi had directly supervised the group's activities across Syria and Iraq and that it had been "seeking to reconstitute under his leadership."

While the U.S. raid had been planned months before the prison attack, the official said Qurayshi had influenced multiple threats against the Hasakah facility. In the past, the Islamic State has renewed itself through prison breaks, and Qurayshi had urged them to do so again.

### Just one gun

As the winter sun dipped below Hasakah's sprawl on Jan. 20,



TOP: A resident of the Khishman neighborhood in Hasakah, Syria, answers question during a house-to-house search for weapons or documents potentially belonging to ISIS militants on Feb. 1. BOTTOM: A fighter with the Syrian Democratic Forces takes part in a search in Khishman neighborhood for weapons or documents potentially belonging to ISIS militants.

Malak Maesh, 26, was stealing a nap between shifts. The thickset prison administrator, known as Bawar to his friends, had been keenly aware that the prison was vulnerable to assault. But dwelling on those worries would have made daily life feel untenable, he always said. The room he shared with other prison staff had just one gun, and that was for emergencies.



Women register for aid at a makeshift shelter for displaced residents in the Mossab bin Ummayr mosque in Hasakah, Syria, on Feb. 1. At least 700 people sought shelter there from the fighting in the Ghwaryan neighborhood after the ISIS attack on the prison there.

Like other detention facilities across northeastern Syrian that hold as many as 10,000 Islamic State suspects, the one in Hasakah was never meant to be a prison. It had once been a technical school and was retrofitted with metal doors. The inmates, many of them foreigners, were packed

so tightly into some of the old classrooms that their limbs touched when they lay down to sleep.

As soon as Bawar heard the blast of the truck bomb, he was on his feet, scrambling down the stairs and into the corridor below, he recounted. A doorway blown open by the explosion framed the chaos outside. Dozens of attackers

had swarmed the perimeter of the compound as flames illuminated it. Inmates in orange jumpsuits and gray prison-issue sweaters were running toward freedom. When he stepped into the courtyard, he was struck on the head with a metal pole and forced to retreat. Another

prison worker, Akef, grabbed the block's only gun and fired it to keep attackers at bay. When one of the militants hurled a grenade toward them, Akef tried to throw it back, but it exploded, killing him instantly.

Bawar stooped to pick up Akef's gun and fixed his eyes on a locked door behind him. "We needed a safe place, so I broke the door down," he said. "I barricaded myself in."

When the sun finally came up, Bawar peered through the room's shattered window to find that the prison yard was littered with bodies. Overnight, he had been joined in his hiding place by 11 prison guards, several of them badly wounded. There were no medical supplies. Three of them died.

### Earth was shaking

Within hours of the attack, forces from the U.S.-led military coalition joined the battle, Western military officials said, launching the longest sustained period of airstrikes in support of its SDF allies since the battle for the Islamic State's final redoubt in Baghouz, Syria, nearly three years ago. In more than 20 strikes over the course of a week, coalition jets unleashed Hellfire missiles and other large munitions. Apache attack helicopters strafed targets inside a cordon hastily established by the Kurdish-led SDF fighters, drawn from across Hasakah and the wider region.

ISIS fighters launch brazen prison attack to free their comrades

When an SDF fighter nicknamed Partizan arrived near the prison with his unit, the battle was so loud that the ground was shaking, soldiers recalled. The 30-year-old father of two girls from Ras al-Ayn joined a line of reinforcements at a nearby traffic circle.

He cocked his gun and waited. Before long, the battle spilled

into the surrounding streets. Residents were terrified. One mother tried to convince her young sons that the gunfire was celebratory. "I told them, don't be scared, it's just a wedding," said Abir Abdullah, 20. When the excuse wore thin, she gathered the boys in her arms, held their hands and stroked their hair through the night.

The fighting spread into the al-Zuhour and al-Taqqadum districts, north and west of the prison. SDF fighters and other local Kurdish security forces traded fire with bands of militants between the houses.

Partizan's unit was redeployed to comb the old Arab-style homes for ISIS fighters. They had low walls and wide open courtyards and the jihadists were slipping easily among them. Some of the militants wore prison clothes but others were in military fatigues. "You get confused because some of our members wear the same clothes," said Kurdeau, 27, who is part of Partizan's unit.

The SDF fighters moved quickly from house to house to minimize their exposure. They were being watched, but they weren't sure from where. At each home, Partizan would slip up the stairs to check the roof, while the rest of the unit waited in silence a floor below.

Sometime around midday, members of the unit later said, the sound of a sniper's bullet sliced the air. At the top of the stairs, Partizan fell mortally wounded.

### No way out

As the days passed, hundreds of ISIS fighters surrendered and hundreds more had been killed. The SDF reported capturing several prison blocks, but fighting was still fierce. The remaining militants, the SDF said, were holed up in the north wing. Mixed among them were at least 700 adolescent boys, brought to the so-called caliph-



TOP: Syrian Democratic Forces troops carry out a search in the Khishman neighborhood for ISIS fighters or their weapons and documents on Feb. 1. BOTTOM: Male residents of the Khishman neighborhood in Hasakah gather next to a school while the house-to-house searches were carried out.

ate by their parents and now imprisoned for it. The SDF said the boys were being used as human shields.

Some of the prison staffers who had been taken hostage during the first hours of fighting had been released. But Bawar was still trapped inside, even though the SDF's armored vehicles had penetrated the prison compound days earlier.

Bawar was at a loss. The militants had tried to smoke him out, and so the flag he hoped to wave in surrender had turned the same black color as the Islamic State's. He thought, at one point, he had caught the attention of some SDF soldiers driving past, but their vehicle kept going. "I couldn't tell if they knew I was one of them," Bawar recalled.

He stayed awake the whole night, wondering if they had seen him. They came back the following morning. And finally, he was rescued. "I never gave up hope," Bawar said. But he didn't recognize the soot-stained face he later saw in media photographs of himself. "It was like it wasn't me," he said.

### A terrible toll

By the time the fighting ended, nearly 400 prisoners and attackers were dead. According

to officials, most of the survivors have been transferred from the shattered prison to a British-built facility close by. The battle also cost the lives of over 120 SDF members and at least five of the prison staff. The SDF is still burying its dead.

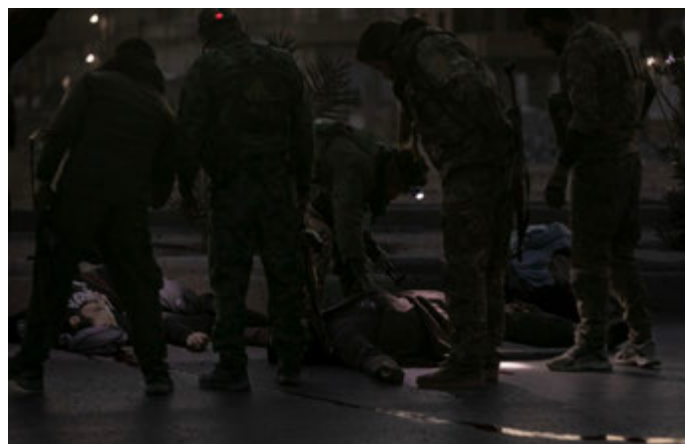
This week, thousands of Syrians gathered to watch as Partizan was laid to rest alongside other fallen soldiers in the northern city of Derik. The freshly dug graves sat at the far end of the cemetery. In front

their own town. "Our boys take our hearts with them," said the mother of a slain 18-year-old fighter, sitting by his headstone. "When we lost my son, we lost ourselves too." Back in Hasakah, the Kurdish security forces on afternoon patrol remained jumpy. They warned that Islamic State sleeper cells were still operating in the area.

Suddenly, gunfire erupted without warning. Two suspected militants had appeared from a side street, apparently wearing suicide belts over their robes. The security forces shot them dead in the middle of the thoroughfare. A tense silence descended.

Mazloum believes it all could have been worse. "They wanted to take Hasakah and expand," he said. His forces had recovered a truck near the prison full of suicide belts and other weapons. It was proof, he said, that the Islamic State had been aiming to escalate its armed campaign once their imprisoned comrades were freed.

"This attack could have turned them into an army," Mazloum



Fighters with the Syrian Democratic Forces inspect two bodies on a main road after gunfire erupted in the Ghwaryan neighborhood on Feb. 2.

of them were hundreds more headstones for fighters killed in earlier battles against the Islamic State or other enemies. Days later in the city of Qamishli, about 50 miles to the west, thousands of others collected below a heavy gray sky, this time to bury 13 sons of

said. "We warned the world of this many times." Slumping backward on his office sofa, the general looked exhausted.

"We have a phrase in Arabic: 'There is no life for he who calls,'" he said. It means no one was listening.



## From Afrin to Washington: Sinam Sherkany on the challenges facing Rojava

**S**inam Sherkany Mo-hamad serves in a number of roles in Washington DC. From being a top diplomat for the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) to the representative of the Syrian Democratic Council's (SDC) mission. Her past roles within Rojava (Syria's Kurdish Region) also merit mention, such as being the founding president of the People's Council of Rojava, serving on the SDC Presidential Council, being -nominated twice to run for Parliament in Syria, and serving in the Kurdish leadership for over a decade – which included representing the AANES throughout Europe.

As a mother, grandmother, and passionate women's rights advocate, she has had a front row seat for the rise of the Women's Defense Units YPJ and personally experienced the injustices of ISIS and similar mercenaries when they stole her family's home and factory in Afrin. As a result, she can provide the world insightful observations on the situation facing Kurds within Syria and the future of the Rojava Revolution there. The following interview was conducted with that belief in mind.

Q: The YPJ has become an inspiration for many women around the world; how would you describe them to an American who is not familiar with who they are?

A: In our region, we believe



in empowering women through ensuring women's autonomy over their own affairs. This means having their own structures and institutions, including in the military. The YPJ are our military units that were established with the idea that the women of Syria should be self-sufficient in their own defense. Many Kurds joined, but so did Arab women, Syriac women, etc. The YPJ are made up exclusively of women and have participated in every major battle against ISIS since they were established, including Kobani, Manbij, Raqqa, and so on. The book *Daughters of Kobani* provides an intimate look into how the YPJ were established, their participation in major campaigns, their role in society, etc.

Q: How are women in Rojava and the AANES more

free today than they were 10 years ago, before the Revolution took place?

A: Our Revolution that began in 2011 is a Revolution that took place within our society in Syria. It is a women's revolution that is led by women from all over Syria, including Kobane, Hasakeh, Aleppo, Damascus, and the coastal areas as well. The goal of the revolution has been and continues to be to free our society from the old traditional ideas that were used to enslave women and keep them weak and submissive. Within our society today, women have their own responsibilities and undertake every role that men have always taken. From the military structures such as YPJ and the Asayish internal security forces, to civil structures such as the SDC, civil councils, and so on, women

have equal representation to men. We also established women's councils that specifically deal with women's issues, such as domestic violence.

Q: Kobane has probably become the most famous Kurdish city in the West because of their victory against ISIS; can you describe the importance that the city has for people from Rojava and Kurds in general?

A: During the Battle of Kobane in 2014, our forces did not have any advanced weapons or anywhere near the number of resources we have now. In that battle, it was the willpower of the Kurdish people that allowed us to prevail. Our willpower against terrorism that was threatening our people. It was the first major battle that made the women of YPJ famous around the

world. It was this willpower that allowed us to defeat ISIS. Therefore, the city became famous as a symbol of resistance of our people against terrorism. Our values of women's equality, freedom, and democracy against terrorism. Kobane was also the beginning of our partnership with the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, a partnership that continues to this day, and that we hope to continue to achieve stability and reach a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

Q: Since you are from Afrin, which has been occupied for the past 4 years by the Turkish military and their proxy forces, can you speak about how you came to lose your home there and what has happened since?

A: I am originally from Afrin, and my family was living there until the occupation. We had a very big house in a village there, and a house in the city of Afrin itself. We owned a factory there too. When the Turkish forces and their proxies attacked Afrin, they occupied my house. They occupied the olive fields we own, and none of my relatives who stayed in Afrin are allowed to go collect the harvest. They took everything from us. We cannot go back to our home because they discriminate against the Kurdish people, and it is not a safe place to return to. They have been changing the demographics of the region, forcing the Kurdish people to leave, and bringing in foreign people from other parts of Syria. Those who stayed, especially children, are being subjected to Turkification attempts, forcing them to learn Turkish, raising Turkish flags in schools, etc. Kurdish women especially have been subjected to arrest, kidnapping, sexual as-

sault, and rape. People have been taken to be held for ransom. Almost all of Afrin's Yazidis have been forced to leave. Afrin's antiquities are being stolen by armed groups to be sold. Hundreds of millions of dollars of olives have been stolen by the Turkish-backed groups. I ask the international community to send an investigation committee to document what has happened in Afrin. Turkey must withdraw from the region so that Afrin's people can return.

Q: The Autonomous Administration in Rojava / North-east Syria prides itself on ethnic diversity; what are some of the ways they are ensuring or encouraging participation by non-Kurds (Arabs, Assyrians, Armenians etc)?

A: Our administration inherently depends upon the participation of all components in the region, both ethnic and religious. Everyone in the region is participating in the administration, whether Arab, Kurd, Assyrian, Muslim, Yazidi, Christian, etc. The administration is not a Kurdish one, it is for all the people of the region, including Kurds. We have made Arabic, Syriac, and Kurdish official languages of the region. Our administration has councils that exist at local levels in all communities, ensuring their participation. We are currently drafting our new Social Contract, and political parties, civil society organizations, and tribal figures from all regions of North and East Syria are participating. We are specifically updating the Social Contract considering the liberation of Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor since the original contract was drafted.

Q: As the SDC's (Syrian Democratic Council) woman in Washington DC, what

kind of outreach is your office doing to lobby and win support of the US Government?

A: Our office here in Washington DC is advocating for democracy for the Syrian people. We seek to build a new and democratic Syria in which all people have equal rights. A Syria that embraces the diversity its people have. To promote this future for our country, we consistently meet and engage with members of Congress to advocate for support for our region, whether it is military or economic. Furthermore, we engage with the State Department, the White House, and Department of Defense to coordinate between our people in the region and the US government in Washington. We advocate for our region based on the shared values we have with the US, including democracy, secularism, and equality. We are advocating for our participation in the Constitutional Committee talks that have been taking place in Geneva, as our administration has so far been excluded.

Q: The Administration finds itself stuck between the strategic goals of the US and Russia in Syria; is it possible to balance both nation's objectives and please them both?

A: Russia and the US play the main role in the Syrian issue, with Russia supporting the Syrian Regime and the US being present in our region. To solve the Syrian issue, we need to have dialogue between all the major players, with Russia and the US being the most important. Without this, there will be no political solution to the crisis. We need to have relations and discussions with both to find a solution to benefit the Syrian people,

which is our primary goal.

Q: Do you believe that Assad's Government will ever accept autonomy for Rojava and AANES and what alternatives are available if he does not? Could independence be an option if he refuses?

A: We are trying to negotiate with the Assad regime, but unfortunately the government in Damascus does not have a positive attitude. They want to control all of Syria again and they don't consider any of the changes that have taken place within the past 11 years of conflict. The people of Syria need democracy. They need real and lasting change. This is the only solution to end this crisis, and the Autonomous Administration must be a part of it and must be accepted by the government in Damascus. It is unacceptable for us to return to the pre-2011 status quo. Our system is an autonomous, decentralized system, and this is what we seek, as a part of Syria.

Dr. Shilan Fuad Hussain is visiting fellow at the Washington Kurdish Institute (WKI). Dr. Hussain is a cultural analyst specializing in Middle Eastern and Kurdish Studies and a Researcher at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. She is an interdisciplinary academic and focuses on social and political contexts in cultural production and intellectual activity from gender and anthropological perspectives. Her current work sits at the intersection of sociology and literary studies and its symbiotic relevance to modern society.

"Disclaimer: The views expressed here represent those of the interviewee and not necessarily those of the Washington Kurdish Institute"

## L'organisation Etat islamique, une hydre encore menaçante

Le succès de l'opération des forces spéciales américaines qui a abouti à la mort du chef de l'EI ne doit pas occulter que l'organisation a su muer pour mener aujourd'hui une guérilla décentralisée dans de nombreuses régions du monde.

L'opération des forces spéciales américaines qui a abouti à la mort du chef de l'organisation Etat islamique (EI), Abou Ibrahim Al-Hachimi Al-Qourachi, jeudi 3 février, dans le nord de la Syrie, est une bonne nouvelle. Elle confirme l'engagement des Etats-Unis à ne pas baisser la garde dans leur lutte contre le terrorisme djihadiste, malgré leur retrait du Moyen-Orient. Le désastreux départ des troupes américaines de Kaboul, en août 2021, avait pu laisser croire que Washington, tout à sa confrontation avec Pékin et Moscou, estimait que la page du djihadisme était tournée en tant que menace prioritaire.

Le coup dur porté à la haute hiérarchie de l'EI ne signe pas pour autant la fin de l'organisation terroriste. Abou Ibrahim Al-Hachimi Al-Qourachi, un Turkmène irakien de 43 ans, sera remplacé, comme il a remplacé Abou Bakr Al-Baghdadi, tué lui aussi dans le Nord syrien, en octobre 2019.

Depuis la chute du dernier bastion son « califat », début 2019, à Baghouz, en Syrie, l'EI a fait la preuve de sa capacité à se muer en guérilla décentralisée, tant dans son berceau syro-irakien qu'au niveau mondial. En Syrie, les combattants de l'EI viennent de mener leur opération la plus spectaculaire et la plus importante depuis 2019, en attaquant la prison de Ghwayran, à Hassaké, où les forces kurdes, alliées aux Occidentaux, détiennent plusieurs milliers de djihadistes de toutes



Lors des funérailles d'un combattant des Forces démocratiques syriennes tué dans l'assaut de la prison de Ghwayran par l'EI, à Hassaké (Syrie), le 4 février. - / AFP

nationalités. Bilan de cette attaque : 495 morts, dont 374 détenus et assaillants, 77 employés et gardiens de la prison, 40 soldats des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS) et 4 civils.

On ne sait pas si le chef de l'EI, Amir Mohammed Saïd Abdel Rahman Al-Mawla de son vrai nom, a joué un rôle dans la coordination de cette opération d'envergure. L'homme, qui n'est jamais apparu en public, contrairement à son prédécesseur, n'a jamais diffusé de photo, ni de message audio ou vidéo.

### Pousser à la guerre civile

Cela n'a pas empêché le « label » EI de prospérer et de gagner de nouveaux territoires d'Asie en Afrique. En Afghanistan, où sa filiale, l'Etat islamique au Khorassan, incarne

une ligne radicale face au pouvoir des talibans. En Afrique surtout, où des groupes armés radicaux se rallient au drapeau noir, source de notoriété et de recrutement. Pendant le « mandat » d'Abou Ibrahim Al-Hachimi Al-Qourachi, on a vu l'EI essayer au Sahel, en particulier au Burkina Faso et au Mali, mais aussi en République démocratique du Congo et au Mozambique. Partout où les conflits s'enkystent et où l'Etat est absent ou synonyme d'injustice et de violence, la menace existe

En Europe même, des individus passent régulièrement à l'action sans avoir besoin de se revendiquer d'une allégeance à l'EI ou à ses chefs, en attaquant avec des moyens parfois rudimentaires des cibles mal protégées mais symboliques. Ils n'ont pas eu besoin d'être

formés, ni même endoctrinés. Ils ont intégré les modes d'action et les objectifs de l'organisation, sans même en avoir jamais été membres : provoquer des représailles, faire exploser la société, pousser à la guerre civile, forcer les musulmans à choisir leur camp.

En France, l'assassinat de Samuel Paty, en octobre 2020, est le meilleur exemple de cette stratégie et des dégâts considérables qu'elle provoque dans le champ politique et social. La « guerre contre le terrorisme » ne peut pas être menée par les seules forces spéciales en Syrie ou au Sahel. Elle relève aussi d'un effort constant de notre société pour ne pas tomber dans le piège tendu par les adeptes d'Abou Ibrahim Al-Hachimi Al-Qourachi.



The New York Times

February 5, 2022  
By Ben Hubbard

# Leader's Death Is Another Blow for ISIS, but It's Hardly the End

The Islamic State is a shadow of its former self. But it's likely to keep adapting and enduring, even after the U.S. raid that killed its top commander.

**F**or a man who sought to disappear, the leader of the Islamic State seemed to have done everything right.

He hid out far from where his enemies expected. He never left the house, relying on trusted couriers to communicate with his far-flung underlings. He was the group's only leader to never issue a video or voice address, for fear it would make him easier to track. Most of his most fervent followers would not have recognized him on the street.

But American commandos came for him anyway, and on Thursday, the leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, blew himself up during a raid on his hide-out in northwestern Syria, U.S. officials said.

American leaders hailed Mr. al-Qurayshi's death as a fresh wound to a fearsome organization whose reach and power had already been greatly diminished. But terrorism analysts warned that killing yet another leader would not erase a group whose members have continued to seek refuge and plan attacks in chaotic parts of the globe.

"It is another painful blow to an organization that just a few years ago cast a broad shadow across the entire region," said Pratibha Thaker, the editorial director for the Middle East and Africa at the Economist Intelligence Unit. "But I think everyone is wondering deep down how much taking down the top leader really matters since the organization is very decentralized."



American and Kurdish forces confronted ISIS fighters recently in Syria, in some of the heaviest fighting by U.S. troops in the region in three years. Credit... Diego Ibarra Sanchez for The New York Times

The United States has invested great resources in killing leaders of terrorist organizations. Amer-

While such attacks generate dramatic headlines, the groups they sought to undermine have



The house in which the ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi had been hiding. Mr. al-Qurayshi blew himself up when U.S. forces stormed the building. Credit... Aaref Watad/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

ican forces took out Osama bin Laden, the founder of Al Qaeda, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who led Al Qaeda in Iraq, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Mr. al-Qurayshi's predecessor at the helm of the Islamic State.

often resurfaced in new and more powerful forms or simply replaced old heads with new ones, Hydra-style.

The killing of Mr. al-Qurayshi deprived the Islamic State of a key religious and military au-

thority at a time when the group had already been routed from its territory and lost a huge number of fighters. Now it faces a potential leadership vacuum.

But terrorism experts said the group had become more diffuse and decentralized, allowing it to carry on. Even if it no longer has the power to hold territory as it once did, diminishing its ability to market itself as a "state," it has proved that it can still carry out devastating coordinated military attacks. Inside the Home Where Raid Was Conducted

Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi, the leader of the Islamic State, was living in a three-story cinder block house when American forces attacked on Thursday.

In recent weeks, its fighters in Iraq killed 10 Iraqi soldiers and an officer in a nighttime attack on an army post and beheaded a police officer on camera. In Syria, the jihadists attacked a prison in an attempt to free thousands of their former comrades and occupied the compound for more than a week before a Kurdish-led militia supported by the United States drove them out.

Still, the group is a shadow of its former self.

At its height around 2015, ISIS controlled a territory the size of Britain in Syria and Iraq and displaced Al Qaeda as the world's richest and most dangerous terrorist organization. It controlled large cities, collected



taxes, provided public services and built a war machine.

Its propagandists attracted aspiring jihadists from around the world. Its operatives directed and inspired deadly attacks in the United States, Europe and elsewhere.

The loss of its last patch of territory in 2019, after four and a half years of war, was a major defeat. Now, it is a caliphate in name only. And persistent attacks by the United States and its partners in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere have disrupted its financing networks and led to the deaths of many of its cadres.

Mr. al-Qurayshi was anointed the group's leader, or caliph, in 2019 after his predecessor, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, similarly blew himself up during a raid by U.S. Special Forces on his hide-out in northwestern Syria.

From the start, Mr. al-Qurayshi lacked his predecessor's public profile, and even his followers knew little about his background. The United States filled in some gaps by releasing notes



Shiite volunteers in Iraq trained in 2014 to fight ISIS. At its peak, the terrorist group controlled an area the size of Britain. Credit... Lynsey Addario for The New York Times

overshadowed by what appeared to be his willingness to inform on his fellow jihadists.

After Mr. al-Qurayshi took control of ISIS, the United States put a bounty of up to \$10 million on his head and said he "helped drive and justify the abduction, slaughter and trafficking of members of Yazidi religious minority groups" in Iraq and oversaw "the group's global operations."



Men who had fled an ISIS-controlled area of Syria in 2019 waited to be questioned by forces allied against the militant group. Credit... Ivor Prickett for The New York Times

of interrogation sessions from when he was detained by U.S. forces in Iraq in 2008.

But the revelations that he said he had served in the Iraqi Army under Saddam Hussein and earned a master's degree in Islamic studies in 2007 were

As it searches for a replacement, ISIS no longer has a large pool to draw from because years of concerted counterterrorism operations by the United States and its partners have killed so much of the group's inner circle, the ISIS expert Hassan Hassan wrote Thursday

in *New Lines*, an online magazine.

"The leaders it can trust are a dying breed — quite literally," he wrote.

That leadership vacuum, the waning attractiveness of international jihadism and the increasing strength of enemy governments and competing militant groups could hinder the group's ability to bounce back, he wrote. "The death of its leader under these circumstances will further disorient the group and weaken its ability to focus on international terrorism."

The group already appears to be less dangerous in Iraq, according to a recent analysis of attack data by Michael Knights, the Jill and Jay Bernstein Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and his colleague, Alex Almeida.

They found that ISIS attacks increased in 2019 and 2020, but have declined since, in both quantity and quality.

"For now, at the outset of 2022, the Islamic State insurgency in Iraq is at a very low ebb, with recorded attack numbers that rival the lowest ever recorded," they wrote.

They said increased Iraqi security deployments in rural

areas, frequent counterterrorism raids and "decapitation strikes" against ISIS leaders had contributed to the decline.

But terrorism analysts hesitate to write off the group, noting that it was regarded as a spent force just a few years before it came roaring back and solidified its control over entire cities in Syria and Iraq in 2014.

The group has long found it easiest to operate in failed states, conflict zones and poorly governed places, and its fighters still have many such territories to choose from, including in Afghanistan and parts of Africa. In Syria, it remains most active in the east, which was badly battered in the country's 10-year civil war and is only loosely controlled by a Kurdish-led militia whose administration is not internationally recognized and is short on resources.

The draw of chaotic places likely explains why Mr. al-Qurayshi sought refuge in Idlib Province, in Syria's northwest, miles from his organization's past strongholds.

The area is one of the last territories still controlled by the rebels who set out to topple President Bashar al-Assad, and it is packed with millions of people who fled from elsewhere during the war, making it easier for strangers to blend in.

The Islamic State's future could depend less on who its leaders are than on the opportunities for expansion that present themselves, and the group's ability to take advantage of them.

"What we have seen in the jihadi movement on the whole over the last two decades is that it is highly pragmatic in the pursuit of its goals," said Shiraz Maher, the author of a book on the history of the global jihadist movement. "Their next move is to continue to hold out and bide their time and react to the realities as they pan out."



6 février 2022

## Présidentielle en Irak: les cartes rebattues après la suspension d'un des deux favoris

Hoshyar Zebari, ex-ministre kurde qui visait la présidence de l'Irak, a été écarté dimanche par la justice à cause d'accusations de corruption, à la veille d'un vote au Parlement visant à désigner le nouveau chef de l'Etat mais visiblement compromis par des boycotts en série.

La séance parlementaire, prévue lundi à midi (09H00 GMT), risque fort d'être ajournée pour défaut de quorum. Avec les boycotts annoncés, il pourrait n'y avoir dans l'hémicycle que moins de deux-tiers des 329 députés requis pour la tenue du vote.

Samedi, la première force du Parlement, le courant de l'influent religieux chiite Moqtada Sadr, a annoncé que ses 73 députés ne participeraient pas. Dimanche soir, la coalition de la souveraineté, soit 51 députés emmenés par le chef du Parlement Mohamed al-Halboussi, un allié sadriste, dévoilàit également son absence.

Plus tard en soirée, le troisième pilier de cette alliance informelle, l'influent Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK, 31 députés), a annoncé à son tour son absence, "dans l'objectif de poursuivre les consultations et le dialogue entre les blocs politiques".

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C'est d'ailleurs le PDK qui a vu son candidat à la présidentielle, l'ancien chef de la diplomatie irakienne Hoshyar Zebari, écarté "temporairement" dimanche de la course par la justice, après d'anciennes accusations de corruption qui ont refait surface.

Ces rebondissements illustrent les dissensions qui viennent une fois encore plomber le calendrier politique irakien, dans un pays habitué aux tractations en coulisses orchestrés par les grands partis.

Ils interviennent dans un contexte particulièrement polarisé, quatre mois après les législatives d'octobre remportées par le courant sadriste. Mais après quatre mois de tractations, les barons de la politique n'ont toujours pas réussi à former une coalition parlementaire majoritaire, capable de désigner un Premier ministre.

### "Abus de pouvoir" -

Dimanche, la suspension "temporaire" de la candidature de M. Zebari a été décidée pour permettre à la Cour suprême fédérale, plus haute instance judiciaire du pays, de se prononcer sur une plainte déposée par des députés, selon le verdict rendu par le tribunal et publié par l'agence de presse officielle INA.

Les plaignants estiment que M. Zebari ne remplit pas les conditions requises par la Constitution, citant notamment son limogeage en 2016 par le Parlement lorsqu'il était ministre des Finances "en raison d'accusations liées à des faits de corruption financière et administrative".

La plainte évoque aussi au moins deux autres affaires judiciaires l'impliquant, notamment quand il était chef de la diplomatie irakienne.

M. Zebari, plusieurs fois ministre à Bagdad après la chute de Saddam Hussein, entre 2003 et 2016, serait aussi dans le viseur de la justice pour "abus de pouvoir" en lien avec "des sommes importantes dépensées concernant un bâtiment qui n'appartient pas à l'Etat".

Parmi les quelque 25 candidats en lice, M. Zebari faisait partie jusqu'à dimanche des favoris au scrutin présidentiel, tout comme Barham Saleh, le président sortant, issu du parti rival de l'Union démocratique du Kurdistan (UDK).

### "Partage du gâteau" -

Depuis les premières élections multipartites de 2005, l'usage veut que le poste largement honorifique de président de la République revienne à un Kurde.

Dans les 15 jours suivant son élection, le président de la République doit désigner un Premier ministre, choisi par la plus large coalition au Parlement.

Une fois désigné, le Premier ministre, traditionnellement chiite, a un mois pour former un gouvernement.

Mais la suite du processus s'annonce houleuse.

Moqtada Sadr a ainsi affirmé avoir suffisamment de sièges au Parlement pour former un "gouvernement de majorité nationale", espérant rompre avec la tradition du consensus qui permet à tous les grands partis de se partager le pouvoir.

Mais c'est sans compter avec l'Alliance de la Conquête, vitrine politique des anciens paramilitaires pro-Iran du Hachd al-Chaabi, et ses alliés chiites du Cadre de coordination, qui regroupent des partis également pro-iraniens.

Leurs députés ont présenté un recours devant la Cour suprême fédérale pour faire reconnaître que leur coalition est majoritaire. Une demande retoquée par la plus haute instance constitutionnelle d'Irak, qui a assuré ne pas pouvoir trancher à l'heure actuelle, les blocs parlementaires pouvant changer.

"Personne ne sait être dans l'opposition, tout le monde sait comment se partager le gâteau", remarque auprès de l'AFP le politologue irakien Hamzeh Hadad, voyant se profiler une "coalition élargie".

Les négociations politiques autour du poste de Premier ministre ont été accompagnées de violences. Fin janvier trois roquettes sont tombées près de la maison du président du Parlement, Mohamed al-Halboussi. En novembre, le Premier ministre Moustafa al-Kazimi a échappé à une tentative d'assassinat.

# Des mineurs détenus dans une prison de Syrie attaquée par Daech

La prison de Ghwayran, attaquée en janvier par l'EI puis reprise par les Kurdes, détient plusieurs centaines de mineurs, dans des conditions très précaires, alerte l'ONU.

**D**es mineurs sont encore détenus dans une prison du nord-est de la Syrie attaquée en janvier par le groupe djihadiste Etat islamique (EI) puis reprise par les forces kurdes, ont indiqué ce dimanche 6 février les Nations unies, alertant sur la précarité de leur condition.

Des dizaines de combattants de l'EI avaient lancé un assaut le 20 janvier contre la prison de Ghwayran à Hassaké, une zone aux mains des Kurdes, pour libérer leurs frères d'armes.

Les Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), dominées par les Kurdes, ont repris le contrôle de la prison six jours plus tard au prix de centaines de morts, mettant fin à la plus importante opération du groupe djihadiste en Syrie depuis sa défaite territoriale en 2019.

« L'Unicef a rencontré certains des enfants toujours détenus au centre de détention de Ghwayran », a déclaré dans un communiqué l'agence des Nations unies pour l'enfance, première agence onusienne autorisée à visiter la prison depuis l'attaque.

Nombre de ces enfants, âgés entre 12 et 18 ans, avaient été transférés à la prison de Ghwayran, où sont détenus leurs parents djihadistes, depuis des camps de déplacés proches.



« Malgré certains services essentiels désormais garantis, la situation de ces enfants est incroyablement précaire », a ajouté l'Unicef, sans préciser le nombre de mineurs encore détenus. Farhad Shami, porte-parole des FDS, a déclaré à l'AFP que « des centaines » de mineurs étaient toujours détenus à Ghwayran, refusant de divulguer un nombre exact.

« Ils sont gardés en lieu sûr », a-t-il ajouté.

Demandes répétées de rapatriement

Avant l'assaut, des organisations de défense des droits humains, dont Save the Children et Human Rights Watch, estimaient que plus de 700 garçons se trouvaient dans la prison. L'Unicef évalue à « des dizaines de milliers » le nombre d'enfants de toutes nationalités bloqués dans le nord-est de la Syrie.

L'Unicef a déclaré faire le nécessaire pour fournir immédiatement des soins aux mineurs et a confirmé être « prête à aider à financer un nouveau lieu sûr dans le nord-est de la Syrie pour prendre en charge les enfants les plus vulnérables ».

En janvier 2021 déjà, l'ONU avait appelé au rapatriement des enfants de djihadistes étrangers se trouvant en Syrie. Une demande renouvelée en mars par des parlementaires français, appelant Emmanuel Macron à rapatrier les femmes et enfants de djihadistes détenus dans des camps syriens. On compterait actuellement environ 200 enfants français prisonniers dans ces camps. Des avocats, parlementaires, ONG ou encore la Commission nationale consultative des droits humains exhortent régulièrement les autorités françaises à les rapatrier. Il y a quelques jours, le neuropsy-

chiatre Boris Cyrulnik a à son tour demandé au gouvernement de ramener ces enfants.

Saisie par des parents et des grands-parents, la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme (CEDH) doit rendre un avis sur la question.

Dans les séquences vidéo de la visite, publiées sur les réseaux sociaux, on pouvait voir une dizaine de garçons, drapés dans une couverture pour certains, dans une cellule.

Les autorités kurdes ont reproché à plusieurs reprises à la communauté internationale de ne pas soutenir les efforts de rapatriement des enfants de djihadistes.

Avant l'assaut de janvier, la prison de Ghwayran renfermait au moins 3 500 détenus suspectés d'être affiliés à l'EI.



## Hoshyar Zebari's nomination for Iraqi presidency suspended

Iraq's Supreme Federal Court has suspended the nomination of prominent Kurdish politician and former minister Hoshyar Zebari for the post of president.

Mr Zebari, a nominee of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, is among 25 candidates approved by Parliament to stand for the largely ceremonial role.

According to a ruling seen by The National, Mr Zebari's suspension is temporary until the court reaches a decision on a case demanding his disqualification over corruption and mismanagement allegations.

Parliament is scheduled to meet on Monday to vote for the republic's next president — an important step towards the formation of a new government after October's general election.

But it is unclear whether the session will have a quorum after populist Shiite cleric



Former Iraqi finance minister Hoshyar Zebari, pictured in 2016, left, and President Barham Saleh are rival candidates for the next presidency. AFP

Moqtada Al Sadr, head of the biggest bloc in the 329-member Parliament with 73 seats, called on his politicians not to attend.

Iraq's Kurds disagree over the choice of candidate for the presidency, which is reserved for their community.

Tension is running high between the two major Kurdish parties, the KDP and the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which is backing President Barham Saleh for a second term.

A long-standing agreement among Kurds stipulates that the president's post goes to the

PUK, while the leadership of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region is held by a KDP politician.

However, that changed after the KDP swept the polls in Kurdistan, winning 31 seats compared to 17 for the PUK.

A Sadrist MP said on Saturday that the bloc's boycott decision was "a message to the Kurds, in particular to the KDP, for them to agree on a single candidate".

As Iraq's foreign minister for more than a decade, Mr Zebari was among the most internationally prominent Iraqi Kurds after the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

While serving as finance minister in 2016, he faced a no-confidence vote in Parliament over corruption allegations and accusations of misuse of funds that led to his dismissal. He denied any wrongdoing.



## Deadly animal disease of anthrax spreads in Duhok

A deadly animal disease has spread in Duhok province and killed dozens of cattle, local livestock owners told Rudaw on Friday.

Anthrax, a bacterial disease mostly seen in sheep and goats. It is threatening mammals in the Kurdistan Region's Duhok province.

Shvan Sabah, the owner of a livestock project, said he has lost at least two cows and calves a day over the past two months, with the

dead animals showing no severe symptoms before dying.

"Without noticing any symptoms in them, we see our healthy cows die. In a day, four to six of them die. When they die, their mouths, their eyes, and backside bleed. Up to last night, 75 cows have died," Sabah told Rudaw. "The material damage is huge. We have some cows whose prices are estimated to be 3,000,000 dinars. Our calves are valued over and below 1,000,000 dinars; each calf is valued at 1,600,000 dinars. Their prices range from 700-

800,000 dinars to 1,200-1300,000 dinars."

The sudden spread of the disease has put fear in the heart of local farmers and authorities, as they are worried that the disease may spread to other parts of the Region.

The head of the Zakho veterinary department visited the village of Shive, in Begova sub-district, where the first cases of the bacteria were detected.

There is no specific treatment for

anthrax, but antibiotics could help limit the spread.

"The disease is anthrax. This is a bacterial disease, not a viral one. However, this is a dangerous bacterial disease," Hussein Ali, head of the Zakho Veterinary Department told Rudaw.

Livestock farmers in other parts of Duhok province are afraid that the bacteria will reach their areas and have called on the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to support them in preventing the spread.





7 février 2022

## Ils parrainent les enfants kurdes pour leur éviter l'expulsion

**M**adame Necmiye Kaya, consentez-vous à présenter votre enfant Ahmet au parrainage civil?» demande Michaël David, premier adjoint au maire de Cenon, à la jeune femme turque d'origine kurde arrivée en France en 2011. L' élu a posé cette même question quatre fois durant la cérémonie de parrainage républicain des quatre enfants Kaya qui s'est déroulée samedi dans la salle des mariages de la mairie. Ahmet, Eylem, Evinsu et Ela sont nés en France et sont scolarisés dans les écoles Louis-Pergaud et René-Casagne.

Hayan Kaya, le père, vit à Cenon depuis 2005. Il est aujourd'hui embauché en CDI dans une entreprise de bâtiment détenue par l'un de ses deux frères. Ses demandes de régularisation n'ont jamais

abouti alors que ses frères ont obtenu le statut de réfugiés. En novembre 2020, le tribunal administratif de Bordeaux enjoint la préfecture de Gironde à délivrer aux deux époux une carte de séjour temporaire portant la mention «vie privée et familiale». La préfecture décide de faire appel auprès de la cour administrative d'appel qui rejette la décision du tribunal administratif le 31 mai 2021. Les époux doivent rendre leurs titres de séjour et reçoivent l'obligation de quitter le territoire français. Me Galinat, avocat de la famille, a décidé de se pourvoir en cassation devant le Conseil d'État.

Soutenue par de nombreuses associations, dont le Réseau éducation sans frontières et le Collectif égalité des droits, et par de nombreux habitants, la famille ne perd pas espoir.

Pour prouver de leur soutien et de l'intégration des Kaya dans la société française, le conseil municipal de Cenon et les habitants se sont ligüés pour organiser le parrainage républicain des quatre enfants.

Depuis samedi, chaque enfant est relié à un parrain et une marraine civils. Ce duo est composé d'un élu de la Ville et d'un habitant. Une motion a été votée à l'unanimité au conseil municipal en faveur de ce parrainage. «Tous les groupes politiques se sont unis. Aujourd'hui il n'y a pas de majorité, pas d'opposition. Aujourd'hui, c'est un moment d'union», commente Michaël David.

«J'ai senti que j'étais prête à assumer ce rôle. C'est avant tout symbolique, mais ça veut dire que nous serons là pour

secondar la famille s'il le faut», explique Florance Nacq, marraine de Ahmet et infirmière retraitée. Son binôme, Max Guichard est un élu communiste et conseiller municipal. «C'est bien qu'on montre notre unité pour des situations comme celle-là. C'est un acte politique de démocratie, de respect de chaque citoyen, avec ou sans papier. On doit être totalement solidaires, notamment dans ce cas précis car la famille Kaya est totalement intégrée depuis des années», soutient-il.

Hakan Kaya se dit rassuré avec la mise en place de ce parrainage mais reste angoissé par l'obligation de quitter le territoire français car cela signifierait qu'il le ferait sans ses enfants. Pour Me Galinat, il faut désormais que les décideurs «aient le courage de l'hospitalité».



February 6, 2022  
By Layal Shakir

## FGM persists in the Kurdistan Region despite ban

**F**emale genital mutilation (FGM) looms over the Kurdistan Region, including the capital of Erbil, despite an over a decade-old ban of the practice, warned an organization on Sunday.

“Last year, we visited many villages, cities, and towns and found that [FGM] circumcision was still ongoing in Kurdistan and many cases were recorded in villages the surrounding neighborhoods and center of Erbil,” Payam Ahmed, a representative from Wadi, a German non-governmental organization combating gender-based violence, told Rudaw's Dlnia Rahman during a conference held on the Inter-

national Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation in Erbil.

The NGO has documented the practice being carried out among 110 of 1,260 girls surveyed below the age of 18 in Erbil and Sulaimani's Ranya district in 2021. They report 85 of the cases in Erbil province, while the other 25 were in Ranya. FGM is a practice that involves the cutting or complete removal of female genitalia for non-medical purposes. The practice persists to varying degrees, despite the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) banning it under the Domestic Violence Law in 2011. Around 15,000 girls were cir-

cumcised in the Kurdistan Region in 2018 alone, according to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

Since 2004, Wadi has pioneered action against FGM in the Kurdistan Region, which is internationally recognized as a violation of the human rights of girls and women.

FGM has been nearly eradicated in Halabja but is seeing an increase in Duhok province, according to activists and members of civil society. Following several visits to different villages in Halabja, FGM cases “have neared zero in Halabja and we can say that Halabja is currently empty of the

mutilation,” said Hero Ahmed, an activist and the head of women's project in the New Organization in Halabja.

“The circumcision rate in Duhok was at one percent in 2007 but based on the things we are hearing, it is seeing an increase,” said Chimani Rashid, an activist and the head of Zhinda organization said on Sunday.

Women and girls subjected to FGM are often plagued by short and long-term health issues, including severe bleeding, infections, urinary problems, childbirth complications, painful menstruation, and difficulties having sexual intercourse.

The New York Times

February 7, 2022  
By Carlotta Gall

## Turkey's Doctors Are Leaving, the Latest Casualty of Spiraling Inflation

Doctors, worn down by grueling hours and violence, are emigrating in rising numbers, undermining one of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's signature achievements.

**A**nxiety rose after an assistant doctor died last fall when she plowed her car into the back of a truck after a long shift.

Then there were the growing cases of violence. An assistant doctor abandoned his career after a patient stabbed him in the stomach and hand. A pregnant nurse was hospitalized after being kicked in the belly.

The worsening economy and soaring inflation, which has reduced some doctors' salaries close to the level of the minimum wage, have brought many to a tipping point, driving them in growing numbers to search for better opportunities abroad.

Their departures are a sad indictment of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who burnished his own reputation by expanding universal health care over his 18 years in power. It was one of his signature achievements. For many of his supporters, that action alone remains their main reason to support him.

But the strains of those overhauls wrought by Mr. Erdogan, in addition to those brought by the pandemic — and now galloping inflation — have undermined the very professionals on whom the health system depends.

Doctors complain of a grinding workload, diminishing returns for their work, a drastic loss of respect for the profession under Mr. Erdogan, and an increase in physical violence from their own patients.

More than 1,400 Turkish doctors left their posts to work abroad



A view of Istanbul. The worsening economy and soaring inflation in Turkey have reduced some doctors' salaries close to the level of the minimum wage. Credit...Ivor Prickett for The New York Times

last year, and 4,000 over the past decade, according to the Turkish Medical Association, the largest association of medical professionals in the country. Many more are preparing applications and have requested certificates of good standing from the organization, officials said.

"This is a result of long-accumulating issues," said Bulent Kilic, a professor of public health at Dokuz Eylul University in the western city of Izmir. "In the last 20 years, there have been serious changes in the name of reform, and I think the heavy workload in the pandemic was the final straw."

For a long time, the changes that Mr. Erdogan introduced bore fruit. Turkey has long prided itself on the quality of its medical schools and its medical professionals, and in recent years, it has developed a thriving private health industry catering to thousands of international as well as Turkish patients. Fifteen new large city hospitals were built to expand the health service while access was broadened for the public.

The health minister recently praised the president's foresight, saying the system held up well during the worst days of the pandemic and facilities were never overwhelmed.

But the system is no doubt stressed, leaving doctors feeling overburdened and underpaid. The steady erosion of their income and status has been too much for many doctors to bear. "Three years ago, I would have said the salary was fair, but now it is not," said Dr. Furkan Cagri Koral, 26, a junior doctor who left Turkey only two years after graduating. "Doctors in Turkey are working at the level of slave labor considering the workload and the risks they are taking."

He went to Germany, where, after 11 months of language training, he found a job as an assistant doctor in the town of Chemnitz and is preparing to take an equivalency exam that will allow him to practice. Dr. Koral said he was already encouraging colleagues and his sister, a medical student, to follow suit.

"It is not only low salaries" driv-

ing health professionals away, said Dr. Sebnem Korur Fincanci, the chairwoman of the Turkish Medical Association. "It is the devaluation of the profession, over many years, since the beginning of the rule of the A.K.P.," she said, referring to Mr. Erdogan's Justice and Development Party.

The opening up of access to all hospitals on demand, without a referral system, overloaded them, while hospitals were encouraged to raise patient numbers and financial returns. At the same time, Dr. Fincanci said, Mr. Erdogan embraced a policy of privatization of health care and a performance pay system that has led to a focus on quantity rather than quality.

"There were too many appointments, too many operations, some not necessary," she said. Patients were happy at first, but the open-access system was not sustainable. Hospitals began raising their prices and shortening appointments. A centralized system allows only 10 minutes for appointments, and in some cases only five minutes, which creates tensions all around.

Violence against medical professionals has risen sharply in the past two years — mostly in emergency departments — often in an explosion of anger at the system. More than 13,000 health professionals lodged complaints that they had been subjected to violence at work in 2020, according to the Turkish Medical Association.

"People are not tolerant enough," Dr. Fincanci said. "Since they are unhappy in their

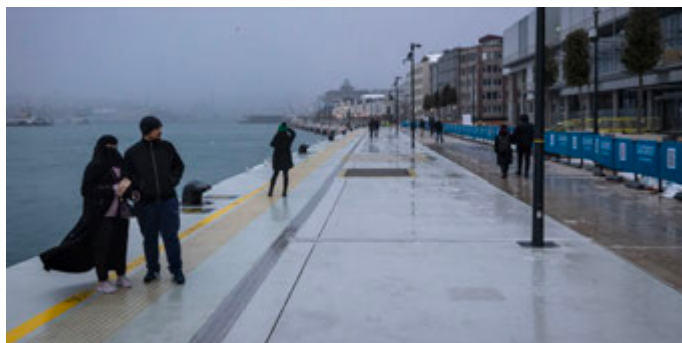
workplace and houses, and values are deteriorating, violence becomes a problem," she added.

Other issues, including gender discrimination, nepotism and cronyism in management and an increase in lawsuits against medical practitioners, have made doctors lose hope, she said.

"They do not think the situation will change," Dr. Fincanci said. "It is not only the health system, but the general environment."

There are ways to remedy the health system, Dr. Kilic, of Dokuz Eylul University, said, including raising budgetary expenditure on health and increasing the proportion of spending on preventive care. Turks also need to be weaned off their high level of visits to hospitals and use of tests, he added.

But retaining doctors and other medical personnel is equally vital, he said, because Turkey has a far lower level of trained professionals in proportion to



A view of Istanbul. The worsening economy and soaring inflation in Turkey have reduced some doctors' salaries close to the level of the minimum wage. Credit...Ivor Prickett for The New York Times

its population than most European countries.

Mr. Erdogan and Dr. Fahrettin Koca, Turkey's health minister, have both acknowledged the problem of Turkey's brain drain but have offered little practical respite. "Don't forget, our physicians are the best-trained physicians, and the richest countries have their eyes on them," Dr. Koca told Parliament in a speech in December.

Parliament recently raised the penalties for violence committed against health workers, and Dr. Koca appealed to the assembly in December to consider sal-

aries and other rights of health sector workers.

For Dr. Dogan Can Celik, 29, who works at a public hospital in Istanbul, it is not enough. He is planning to leave for Britain as soon as he completes his residency in about six months.

"I love my country, and especially Istanbul, but in the last four years, it really changed," he said. He said the working hours and poor remuneration were his main reasons for leaving. "When I see our professors and mentors, I think I don't want to be in their situation be-

cause after 40 years as a professor, they get really low salaries." Unlike previous waves of Turkish workers heading to Europe, those emigrating these days have little intention of returning and are leaving to give their children better opportunities, according to several people working in the business of relocating doctors.

Ekin Ay set up a business teaching medical German to Turkish doctors five years ago and has seen demand double in the past two years. One-fifth of her students are over 40, and some are over 50, she said. "They are not leaving for economic reasons but because of their families," she said.

Dr. Cemal Altuntas moved to Germany three years ago and plans to start working full time as a consultant for relocating doctors. He said there had been a huge increase in requests from doctors in the past six months.

"It's not a luxurious life that we want," he said. "We want the normal life that we deserve."

The New York Times

February 7, 2022

By Jane Arraf

## Syria's Kurds Wanted Autonomy. They Got an Endless War.

The Kurds of northeastern Syria dreamed of establishing an autonomous, multiethnic and gender-equal utopia. Instead, their breakaway region has been engulfed in conflict since its creation.

**S**uad Shukri arrived early one morning last week to visit her son's grave. An hour later, the small cemetery would be thronged by thousands of mourners burying 12 fighters from a Kurdish-led force who were killed battling the recent Islamic State attack on a prison in northeast Syria.

But for the moment, she had the place — its hundreds of graves adorned with plastic flowers —

almost to herself. Her son, Eli Sher, was also killed fighting ISIS, but that was six years ago near the Syrian city of Raqqa. He had joined a Kurdish militia when he was 13 and by the time he died at 16, he was already a veteran fighter.

"This is our life," Ms. Shukri said of this vulnerable corner of the Middle East.

Not long after the start of Syria's civil war 10 years ago, the Kurdish

minority that dominates the country's northeast set up an autonomous region as an experiment in multiethnic, gender-equal self-rule. But ever since, the Kurds have been engulfed in a seemingly endless war, subject to the whims of their more powerful neighbors, most notably the regime of President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus and Turkey to the north.

The latest threat is a familiar one — the Islamic State.

The terrorist group reared its head again recently, three years after the main military power in this region, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces or S.D.F., drove the militants from the last patch of their self-declared caliphate in Syria and Iraq with the help of a U.S.-led military coalition.

On Jan. 20, Islamic State suicide bombers and gunmen attacked a prison in the city of Hasaka in



an attempt to free some 4,000 suspected ISIS fighters held there. The city is part of the autonomous region, and the S.D.F., backed by U.S. military might, fought for almost two weeks before it regained control.

The attack was viewed as a sign of an ISIS resurgence in the area. But days after it was put down, the U.S. staged a daring commando raid on another part of northern Syria that ended in the death of the Islamic State leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi.

President Biden, in announcing the successful operation, singled out the S.D.F. for praise, calling the force “essential partners,” without saying whether they had played a role in the raid. Still, despite a close military partnership with the United States that has lasted for years, the Syrian Kurds face a precarious future.

The autonomous region, encompassing roughly the third of Syria east of the Euphrates River, was created in 2012, breaking away from Syrian government control after the start of an uprising



Families who had fled the area near a prison attacked by ISIS returning to their homes. Credit...Diego Ibarra Sanchez for The New York Times

against Mr. Assad’s authoritarian rule the previous year. In one of the most complicated battlefields in the world, U.S. forces share space in the region with Russian troops allied with the Assad government, allowed in by the S.D.F. as protection against a Turkish incursion.

In this uneasy coexistence, major cities in the region are split between Syrian government control



Thousands attended the burial of 12 fighters from the Kurdish-led forces who were killed while battling Islamic State militants who took over a prison. Credit...Diego Ibarra Sanchez for The New York Times

and local control. Residents who study or work in the government-controlled territory line up at a checkpoints, waiting to be allowed through. But many are too afraid of arrest to venture there.

The Kurds call the region Rojava, which means “the West.” It is an allusion to western Kurdistan and a longstanding but seemingly unattainable dream of an independent state that would stretch over the Kurdish areas of Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey.

The regional administration relies on a network of multiethnic, multi-religious councils. Each major committee is headed by both a woman and a man. Women play a prominent role as fighters, including on the front lines.

While some are not as strong in reality as on paper, those steps to ensure diversity and gender equality are a far cry from most countries in the Middle East.

Still in its short life, the Kurdish-led region has faced persistent security and economic threats from almost all sides, including from the Syrian government and Iraqi Kurdish neighbors to the east. But it is Turkey that looms the largest.

Outside the office building where Mr. Omar tries to craft policy for a region that has political autonomy but is not recognized by any government, the lights of the

Turkish city of Nusaibeen twinkle across a high wall a few hundred yards away.

Turkey, which has battled Kurdish militants at home for decades, invaded areas held by the Syrian Kurdish-led forces to push them back from the border. Turkey considers the S.D.F. a security threat because of its links to a Kurdish guerrilla movement that has been fighting an insurgency against the Turkish state for decades.

The operation was endorsed by President Donald J. Trump, who withdrew U.S. forces from some Kurdish-led areas after a phone call with the Turkish president. This allowed Turkey’s Syrian proxies to move in.

The Iraqi Kurds have close economic ties with Turkey, and last month the dominant Kurdish party in Iraq closed the Iraqi Kurdistan region’s border with the Kurdish-led region in Syria. That left shops on the Syrian side empty of sugar and other staples.

On a recent day, long lines of people shivering in the winter cold waited with jerrycans to buy kerosene outside fuel stations. At checkpoints, choking plumes of black smoke rise from burning tires set alight by security forces to keep warm.

Mazlum Kobani, the head of the region’s security forces, blamed Turkish pressure for the Iraqis’ closure of the border, which included stopping exports of oil sold by the Kurdish-led region in Syria to Iraqi Kurds — a main source of revenue.

“We are both Kurds,” Mr. Kobani said of his Iraqi Kurdish neighbors, “and we must help each other out. But they have interests with Turkey.” The security chief, who is on Turkey’s most-wanted list, spoke from a base he shares with U.S. forces. He chose the location to deter Turkey from launching a drone strike to kill him.

During the war with ISIS years ago, the S.D.F. struck up a critical partnership with the U.S.-led mil-



itary coalition that was battling the militants in Syria and Iraq. The militia was considered the most potent ground force when it came to fighting the extremist group.

The prison attack in January drew the U.S. military back into the fight, and escalated into the most intense urban clashes with ISIS in the three years since the end of the caliphate.

Mr. Kobani told The New York Times that after the prison attack, the 700 U.S. troops in his region are no longer enough.

«If you ask me, I would say we need more American troops,” he said.

All told, the S.D.F., which currently has between 80,000 to 100,000 fighters, says it has lost about 13,000 members in the war to drive ISIS out of the region since



In Qamishli, Syria, long rows of graves serve as a reminder of the toll from fighting ISIS. Credit...Diego Ibarra Sanchez for The New York Times

2014. In the recent prison battle, 43 S.D.F. fighters were killed.

These days, armored fighting vehicles with American flags waving drive along the highways, trying to keep out of the way of Russian

forces with the help of deconfliction measures that entail providing advance notice of each other's movements.

The Syrian Kurds are under little illusion though that they can count

on the U.S. to protect them in the long run. The only thing for certain in this corner of Syria seems to be that its future depends almost entirely on forces beyond its control.

At the cemetery in Qamishli on Wednesday, one thing did seem certain — that in this militarized society, a new generation would take up the fight.

Jeyan Hassary, 16, had come with her friends to mourn the 12 dead fighters. She already knew what she wanted to do with her life.

“My dream is to carry the guns of my grandfather and uncle to avenge their blood,” she said.



February 8, 2022

## House of Commons to debate UK recognition of Yazidi genocide

The House of Commons will debate on Tuesday whether the United Kingdom government should recognize atrocities committed by the Islamic State (ISIS) against the Yazidi community in Iraq as genocide.

The debate is scheduled to take place at Westminster Hall and will be led by MP Brendan O'Hara, who has previously spoken against the suffering endured by the Yazidis at the hands of ISIS.

The UK government has condemned ISIS atrocities committed against the Yazidis, but has stopped short of recognizing the crimes as genocide. The UK has a long-standing policy that the decision lies with higher criminal courts, rather than with the government.

In 2016, MPs in the House of Commons unanimously voted to label the treatment of the Yazidis by ISIS as genocide and to refer the issue to the United Nations Security Council. However, the UK Foreign Office directed ministers to abstain, on the basis that it is not up to the government to make such judgements.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has jurisdiction over cases related to genocide and crimes against humanity. However, Iraq and Syria are not subject to the ruling of the ICC, making it difficult for convicted ISIS members to be tried for genocide. Some European states have suggested the establishment of an international tribunal dedicated to

ISIS-related cases but progress is yet to be made.

This time, there is precedence of international recognition of the Yazidi genocide. The United Nations and the European parliament, as well as other nations including the United States, Belgium, Canada, and the Netherlands have already recognized ISIS crimes against the Yazidis as genocide. Evidence has established that the ISIS crimes committed against the group “truly” constitute genocide, Karim Khan, head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh/ISIL (UNITAD) told the UN in May. The UK has also provided funding to support the work conducted by UNITAD.

ISIS swept across Iraq and Syria in the summer of 2014. Minority groups especially suffered under the terror group's rule, including Yazidis, Shabaks, and Christians.

More than 6,000 Yazidis were kidnapped when ISIS attacked their heartland of Shingal in Nineveh province, according to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Office for Rescuing Kidnapped Yazidis. Over 2,000 remain missing.

According to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Office for Rescuing Kidnapped Yazidis, over 120,000 Yazidis have left Iraq since ISIS waged their devastating campaign on the community, and tens of thousands of those who remain in the region live in camps.

## Kurdistan's Weekly Brief February 8, 2022

### Iran

Several Iranian teachers remain jailed for protesting poor wages and living conditions. The exiled Cooperation Center for Iranian Kurdistan's Political Parties (CCIKP) released a statement supporting the teachers' "legitimate demands" and lambasting the regime for "ignoring their demands over the past 40 years." Furthermore, a teachers' trade union reported financial problems drove a teacher to commit suicide in Minab on February 3.

Iranian security forces arrested a Kurdish labor activist named Khabat Shakib in Sanandaj and a student named Khabat Waissi in Marivan's Golchair village. Iranian authorities also transferred five Kurds to prison after they were interrogated by Iranian intelligence officers (Ettela'at) for several weeks in Oshnavieh. Local human rights organizations said the five Kurds were accused of "membership of Kurdish parties." Concurrently, Paveh's Islamic Revolutionary Court sentenced an 18-year-old female, Roya Mehedini, to one year in prison for "membership of a Kurdish party." Lastly, the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights reported the Iranian regime arrested 50 Kurdish activists in January 2022.

Iranian police killed a Kurdish man named Mohammed Ahmadi in Kermanshah after a car chase on Friday. Several local human rights groups accused the police of murdering Ahmadi, who was traveling with his family, for refusing to pay a bribe at a checkpoint. Also, in Kermanshah, a former Kurdish prisoner named Muhseen Mahmudi committed suicide after experiencing mental and financial issues. Mahmudi was previously imprisoned for par-

ticipation in the 2019 protests and lost his sight after being shot by Iranian security forces. Finally, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) personnel severely wounded a Kurdish man named Maziar Azizi near Salas-e Babajani. Iranian authorities had accused Azizi of smuggling.

### Iraq

Iraq's political parties remain deadlocked on the selection of the country's next president and postponed Monday's scheduled legislative session. While the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Muqtada al Sadr's coalition remain committed to Hoshiyar Zebari's candidacy, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and pro-Iranian Shia blocs still endorse Barham Salih. Granted, the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq has suspended Zebari's candidacy until four lawmakers' official complaints regarding Zebari's failure to possess "a good reputation and integrity" are resolved. Zebari responded by saying he respects the court's ruling and trusts the judiciary will confirm the state institutions' finding that his candidacy has fulfilled all necessary conditions. Though the presidency is mostly symbolic in Iraq, prior political agreements have guaranteed the next president will name the country's next prime minister.

The Peshmerga concluded a joint operation with Iraqi forces in the Sargaran District of the "Disputed Territories." The Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs claimed the operation was a success and said both sides worked together to search and clear the area of ISIS (Da'esh).

Turkish warplanes struck the Makhmour refugee camp and

several locations in the Yazidi town of Shingal on February 1, killing two camp guards and wounding numerous civilians. A group named Ahrar Sinjar then claimed responsibility for a rocket attack on a Turkish military base in Bashiqa and said, "We have exhausted all stages of restraint amid the central government's failure to protect our people and our city from the repeated Turkish attacks." Ahrar Sinjar also warned of further attacks on the Turkish occupation unless negotiations "put an end to Turkey's continuous aggression."

### Syria

Turkish jets struck a power plant in Derek town on February 1, killing four Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) guards and injuring five employees. Meanwhile, the SDF again accused Turkey of "directly helping" Da'esh terrorists plan the recent assault on Sina'a prison in al Hasakah and rebuked its "use of mercenaries to create chaos" in northeastern Syria. That said, the SDF completed clearing operations in Sina'a prison last Wednesday and arrested two Da'esh suicide bombers in Manbij. Simultaneously, UNICEF Representative in Syria Bo Viktor Nylund visited the prison and inquired about the situation of the Da'esh children known as the "Cubs of the Caliphate." Separately, US President Joe Biden said the US-led coalition would continue working with the SDF and the Peshmerga during remarks given after the counterterrorism operation that killed Da'esh's leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi, in Idlib on Thursday.

### Turkey

Pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) criticized the

Turkish government for bombing Kurds in Iraq and Syria last week. The HDP said Turkey's attacks "demonstrate, yet again, the failure of the Turkish government to treat the Kurdish issue at home or abroad as anything other than a military issue to be met with sheer force." The HDP voted against the Turkish military invasion in both Iraq and Syria.

Turkish police attacked protesters in front of Istanbul after dozens of people demonstrated against the increasing number of death cases in prisons. According to rights groups, seventeen prisoners have died since December of 2021. The protest, part of the "Solidarity with Prisoners" initiative, attempted to deliver a speech in front of a forensic medicine institute, but the police prevented it and arrested several activists. The HDP supported the protest, which many relatives of victims attended.

The "Kobani Trials" against 108 Kurdish and HDP politicians resumed on Monday amid strong HDP rejection of the process, calling it "bogus charges" and political cases. Furthermore, the Turkish police arrested several Kurds and HDP members, including three in Idil on Wednesday and three HDP members in Mardin's Kiziltepe. Meanwhile, the HDP lawmaker Abdullah Koç demonstrated against the Konya court's decisions and accused the court of "covering up of facts" in the hate crime case of a Kurdish family that was killed last summer. The court refuses to mention the racism factor in the massacre when a Turkish nationalist killed seven family members in Konya. "There are serious obstacles to expanding the investigation and uncovering the real perpetrators," said Koç.



8 février 2022  
By Zeynep Gambetti

## Nouvelle attaque du régime Erdoğan contre une université rebelle

**A**près un an de résistance, les enseignants de l'Université de Boğaziçi à Istanbul font maintenant face à une menace redoutable. Le 18 janvier 2022, le Conseil de l'enseignement supérieur a démis de leurs fonctions trois Doyens de Faculté sans invoquer de justification légitime. Sur les quatre Facultés de Boğaziçi, l'une est déjà contrôlée par le Vice-Recteur, un collaborateur du Recteur nommé à la tête de l'institution par le Président Erdoğan pour assujettir le dernier foyer de recherche scientifique indépendante en Turquie. La révocation des trois autres Doyens donnera désormais à l'administration le contrôle total du Sénat et du Conseil exécutif de l'université.

Les Doyens faisaient l'objet d'une enquête disciplinaire : l'administration de l'université les accusait de n'avoir pas correctement mené les plus de 500 enquêtes disciplinaires lancées au cours des derniers mois contre les étudiants. La liberté d'expression et le droit de manifester pacifiquement des étudiants sont actuellement criminalisés par l'administration : qu'ils scandent des slogans, brandissent des affiches, tentent de tenir une veillée à la porte du rectorat ou jouent de la musique lors des manifestations, les étudiants sont accusés d'insulter les administrateurs ou de se livrer à des "actions mettant en danger l'environnement d'enseignement et d'apprentissage à l'université." Dans le régime Erdoğan, le crime ne se définit plus par rapport aux actes commis, mais par rapport à l'attitude vis-à-vis du pouvoir. La destitution simultanée de trois Doyens porte un coup dur à l'autonomie institutionnelle de Boğaziçi, déjà attaquée depuis le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2021 (lire Etienne Balibar L'offensive du régime

Erdoğan contre l'Université de Boğaziçi). Les Doyens exercent un pouvoir considérable sur les unités administratives au sein de la Faculté. Ils peuvent superviser et surveiller les décisions du département ainsi que les activités académiques individuelles. Ils sont également autorisés à outrepasser les décisions prises par les divers comités des Facultés, y compris ceux institués à des fins disciplinaires. Jusqu'à présent, les Doyens étaient élus par les membres de la Faculté et devaient s'abstenir d'intervenir dans les opérations administratives ou dans la recherche et l'enseignement individuels. Cependant, cela ne sera plus garanti s'ils sont remplacés par des universitaires fidèles au recteur et extérieurs à Boğaziçi. La destitution de Doyens capables de bloquer les manœuvres illicites de l'administration laissera les professeurs, les étudiants et le personnel en lutte sans défenses contre le Recteur illégalement nommé.

Autre préoccupation sérieuse : les Doyens siègent au Sénat et au Conseil exécutif, les plus hauts organes de gouvernance de l'université. Naci İnci, le Recteur nommé contre le gré des professeurs, avait du mal à légitimer ses manœuvres car il ne disposait d'aucune majorité dans aucun de ces organes. La révocation simultanée de trois Doyens lui donnera carte blanche dans toutes les décisions, y compris celles concernant l'embauche d'universitaires de niveau médiocre et le licenciement ou l'éviction de membres critiques du corps professoral. Boğaziçi est sûr de perdre sa stature de centre d'excellence et deviendra, comme d'autres universités dans le pays, une institution où la peur et l'autocensure sévissent. En bref, le 18 janvier 2022

marque l'apogée de la nouvelle stratégie du gouvernement turc, contre la lutte pour la liberté académique et l'autonomie institutionnelle menée par les professeurs et les étudiants. Le Recteur n'a pas perdu de temps : dès le 2 février il a réuni le Sénat de l'université pour profiter de sa « majorité » illégalement acquise. Court-circuitant les processus habituels, qui prévoient de longues délibérations concernant les programmes d'enseignements, le Recteur et ses collaborateurs ont voté à la place des Doyens destinés pour approuver le programme d'une nouvelle Faculté de droit, également ouverte par décret il y a un an sans consultation du corps professoral. Une Faculté de droit instaurée sans respecter le droit – voilà en résumé la façon de procéder du gouvernement depuis 2015.

Le traitement infligé à l'Université de Boğaziçi ne diffère pas de celui qui a conduit à l'élimination de toute une série d'institutions et d'établissements respectés en Turquie ou au remplacement de leurs cadres par des individus fidèles au gouvernement. Mais au lieu d'assurer la conformité en faisant semblant de respecter la légalité, comme auparavant, le gouvernement et l'administration à Boğaziçi peuvent à présent ignorer les exigences d'une procédure régulière et infliger des sanctions de facto. Parce que le système judiciaire est muselé, l'impunité est assurée, et parce que les médias sont également muselés, tout scandale qui parvient à faire surface est dissimulé.

Les enseignants de Boğaziçi, qui continuent à défier aussi bien le recteur que le gouvernement, ne limitent pas leur combat à la seule défense de Boğaziçi, mais luttent également pour libérer toutes les univer-

sités publiques en Turquie du joug d'un régime de plus en plus despotique. Ils réclament une administration transparente et démocratique, fidèle aux principes académiques et démocratiques, opposée à l'arbitraire et au pouvoir personnel. Leur mot d'ordre « Nous n'acceptons pas ! Nous ne renonçons pas ! » retentit dans les milieux activistes depuis plus d'un an et grâce à la résistance de Boğaziçi, nombreux sont les partis d'opposition qui aujourd'hui demande une réforme du système d'enseignement supérieur dans le pays.

Partout dans le monde des universitaires font l'objet d'offensives antidémocratiques lancées par des gouvernements autoritaires ou poursuivant un agenda néolibéral, et le combat des enseignants de Boğaziçi s'inscrit ainsi dans une lutte internationale pour l'autonomie et la démocratie dans les universités. Ils ont tenu tête pendant plus de 13 mois à Erdoğan, un des autocrates les plus redoutables, et leur ténacité et leur dévouement aux idéaux académiques méritent le soutien des collègues en France et ailleurs.

Zeynep Gambetti a obtenu son doctorat à l'Université de Paris VII sous la tutelle de Miguel Abensour. Elle est aujourd'hui chercheuse indépendante, après avoir été professeure de théorie politique à l'Université de Boğaziçi de 2000 jusqu'en 2019. Sa recherche porte sur les théories de l'espace public, de l'action collective et de la violence structurelle. Parmi ses publications sont à mentionner de nombreux articles sur les mouvements politiques ainsi que des ouvrages collectifs tel *Vulnerability in Resistance : Politics, Feminism, Theory*, co-édité avec Judith Butler et Leticia Sabsay.



## Attaques des Kurdes: Le PCF appelle la France et l'UE à désavouer Erdogan

La Turquie a intensifié ses attaques meurtrières visant les Kurdes au Rojava, au Kurdistan d'Irak, en plus de cibler les Yézidis de Shengal en violation du droit international. Le Parti communiste français exhorte la France et l'Union Européenne à « désavouer la politique de R.T. Erdogan et à soutenir le processus de paix promu par les Kurdes. »

Voici le communiqué du PCF daté de 5 février:

Makhmour (Irak) / Afrin (Syrie) : La France et l'UE doivent désavouer RT Erdogan

La Turquie de R.T. Erdogan poursuit avec acharnement



son œuvre criminelle contre le peuple kurde.

Alors que les bombardements sont quotidiens, un brutal déchaînement de violence s'est produit le 1er février en Irak, dans la région de Shengal et le camp de réfugiés de Makhmour, ainsi que dans le nord-est de la Syrie où vivent des kurdes d'Afrin chassés par les

supplétifs islamistes de l'armée turque.

Ces attaques interviennent alors que l'État islamique a lancé une opération contre la prison d'Hassaké afin de libérer des djihadistes emprisonnés. 121 civils et combattants kurdes y ont trouvé la mort.

Ces offensives conjointes illus-

trèrent la pérennisation des connivences entre la Turquie et ces hordes d'assassins. Le chef de Daesh, qui vient de trouver la mort, se terrait dans la province d'Idlib sous contrôle turc.

Elles témoignent surtout de l'incapacité de R.T. Erdogan à régler la question kurde en dépit de l'acharnement répressif contre le Parti démocratique des peuples (HDP).

Le Parti communiste français (PCF) condamne ces nouvelles agressions, appelle la France et l'Union européenne à désavouer la politique de R.T. Erdogan et à soutenir le processus de paix promu par les Kurdes.



February 9, 2022  
By David Phillips

## The killing of Qurayshi: Are Turkey and ISIS still bonded?

Thanks to the skill and bravery of our Armed Forces, we have taken off the battlefield Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi - the leader of ISIS," U.S President Joe Biden proclaimed proudly from the White House on February 2.

The targeted killing of Qurayshi at his hideout on the Turkey-Syria border was a major milestone in counterterrorism operations. But ISIS is resilient. It will morph into a new structure and find new leadership. An enduring deradicalization strategy is ultimately needed to drain the swamp of support for militant Islamism.

The U.S Special Forces raid on the Qurayshi compound took place days after a joint operation between U.S and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to suppress a ISIS jail break

in Hasaka in northeast Syria that was aimed at freeing 5,000 hardcore ISIS fighters. The SDF, with Kurdish fighters at its core, managed to successfully thwart the prison break after days, but after an action report suggested that Turkey provided weapons to ISIS and sanctuary to its leaders.

The SDF is America's ally and partner within the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. It was the tip of the spear, fighting ISIS in Raqqa, the terror group's capital in eastern Syria. It also led the assault on Baghouz, where ISIS made its last stand in March 2019.

The Hasaka prison break was orchestrated by al-Qurayshi, the head of ISIS, but the prison break and his elimination leave resurrect questions about Turkey's role in con-

fronting the militant group.

Qurayshi was hiding just 15 kilometers from where Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Qurayshi's predecessor as head of ISIS, was killed by US Special Forces in 2019. Under Baghdadi's compound was a network of tunnels extending across the border to Turkey while Turkish controlled territories in Syria such as Afrin, Ras al-Ain and Tel Abyad are believed to have become havens for ISIS.

Events in Hasaka demonstrated the partnership between the US and Kurdish fighters. The assault on the prison, a former vocational school with a myriad of buildings and basements, relied on US intelligence to identify ISIS holdouts in the sprawling complex. The US conducted air strikes and deployed Bradley fighting vehicles to support

the SDF, which fought hand-to-hand against the terror group to retake the prison.

The attack on Qurayshi was planned for several months. However, the decision to go ahead was linked to events in Hasaka. Intelligence from the prison break established a direct link between Qurayshi and efforts by ISIS to take over the prison. The US is still studying materials seized at the Qurayshi compound, which may further implicate Turkey in ISIS operations depending on what is revealed.

Beginning in 2013, the Turkish government was instrumental in the rise of ISIS. That year President Barack Obama declined to enforce his own "red line" when he declined to launch any military strikes on



Syria after its regime used chemical weapons to attack Ghouta, a Damascus suburb, in August 2013.

Infuriated by Obama's inaction, Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan took it on himself to back the rebels and dragged his feet in responding to the flow of jihadi fighters through the "Jihadi highway" that ran from from Sanliurfa in Turkey to Raqqa. More than 40,000 foreign fighters from about 80 countries transited through Turkey to Syria.

These allegations were not lost on U.S officials. Then Vice President Joe Biden confirmed Turkey's role in public remarks at Harvard University in October 2014, sparking outrage in Turkey that he later apologized for.

Erdoğan denies any cooperation with ISIS. However, the evidence implicates Turkey, and further undermined Erdoğan's credibility.

ISIS fighters had in their possession Turkish weapons with Turkish markings were recovered by SDF fighters following Hasakeh operation, according to some reports. The weapons, seized from opposition groups backed by Turkey, were issued by NATO.

Both the Baghdadi and Qurayshi compounds were near the Turkish border in Aleppo. This area is crawling with Turkish agents and intelligence operatives. It is unlikely that two of the world's most wanted terrorists could hide in plain sight without MIT knowing their whereabouts.

Idlib is itself a sanctuary to several Turkish-backed jihadi groups with ties to al-Qaeda. The Turkish-backed Syrian National Army itself is a mainly jihadi coalition with many "formerly" ISIS and al-Qaeda members in its ranks. Turkey protects them from attacks by the

Assad regime and Russian warplanes.

Media coverage of Qurayshi's death ignored Turkey's connection. While Biden did not mention "Turkey" in his remarks about the operation that killed Qurayshi, he thanked Syria, the SDF, the Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga, and the Iraqi security forces for their roles.

The presence of ISIS in northwest Syria, which is controlled by Turkey, has been crucial to sustaining the terror group's capacity to carry out deadly attacks across Syria and Iraq. Turkey, with the second largest army in NATO, instead targets Kurds in the most remote corners of Iraqi Kurdistan's rugged mountains, within refugee camps, and among the Yazidi survivors of the ISIS genocide.

Qurayshi's role in the Hasaka prison break suggests Turkey's prior knowledge of the attack. Providing

NATO-issued weapons to jihadis is a serious betrayal.

It is also against US law, warranting an investigation into ongoing ties between Turkey and ISIS. The U.S. must hold Turkey accountable for its involvement in protecting and harboring ISIS in areas it controls.

When the U.S. killed Usama bin Laden in Pakistan's Abbottabad a decade ago, the U.S focused on the Pakistani government's knowledge about bin Laden's presence in their country. The same interrogation should now be applied to Turkey's involvement with ISIS and other jihadis in Syria.

The U.S Congress should have hearings on Turkey's ties to ISIS. If there's collusion, Turkey should be barred from receiving US weapons and its NATO membership should be suspended.



February 10, 2022

## Kirkuk Minute February 10, 2022

### Kirkuk

A lawmaker from the Arab Coalition, Mohaiman al Hamdani said, the current acting governor of Kirkuk, Rakan al Jabouri, will remain in his post, and his winning of parliamentary seat will be granted to Wasfi al Asie. Initially, al Jabouri attempted to send his brother. However, the Sunni leader, Khamis al Khanjar, mediated talks between the rival tribes of al Jabour and al Obaid and united the Arab position on this issue. Observers see the current agreement as a sign that Kirkuk's governorship will be determined in the next provincial elections. On October 16th, 2017, the federal government imposed al-Jabouri on the Kurdish majority Kirkuk.

Since Friday, February 4th, Iraqi security forces, including elements of the Army, have deployed in the city of Kirkuk, setting up several new checkpoints. Before the deployment of troops, a high-level security meeting in Kirkuk was held, warning of ISIS (Da'esh) retaliation for the recent death of its leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurashi. Further, an Iranian-backed militia leader in Kirkuk said they

obtained "intelligence information" about Da'esh terrorists planning attacks on Kirkuk's airport and the central prison. Meanwhile, the Iraqi interior ministry announced the arrest of two Da'esh terrorists in Kirkuk city and the Hawija district. Simultaneously, Kirkuk police announced the arrest of yet another drug dealer at his home in Baroutkhana. Dozens of drug dealers have been arrested or killed by the security forces as Kirkuk became the main route for drug trafficking since October 16th, 2017.

The constant lack of basic service in Kirkuk led a local comedian to file a lawsuit against the acting governor, al Jabouri. Zaniar Juma told the press that since al Jabouri took office, "electricity, water, and waste pick up have vanished." The lawsuit coincides with daily protests in Kirkuk over the shortage of services. Separately, the Integrity Commission said it detained the investor and the project manager of "weigh stations" of truckers for charging twice as the allowed amount.

The Iraqi Planning Ministry ranked Kirkuk as having the third most illegal buildings on government land,

consisting mainly of homes and stores. The ministry said 60,000 units had been built illegally in Kirkuk, ranking third in the country after Baghdad with 92,000 and Nasiriyah with 67,000.

### Khanaqin

Locals held a demonstration in front of the mayor's office, demanding the removal of the director of the Diyala Distribution of Petroleum Products. The protests were triggered after a continued shortage of kerosene and gas. On the security front, Iraqi warplanes struck three areas near Khanaqin after "detection of Da'esh movement."

### Tuz Khurmatu

Locals in Tuz Khurmatu are frustrated by an empty pledge by the Saladin administration to repair the main highway connecting Kirkuk and Baghdad, which runs through the town. On social media, activists complained about the decision to repair the road in 2020, but the deteriorated highway remains the same two years later.

### Makhmour

On Monday, February 7th, the Peshmerga concluded a joint operation with Iraqi forces in the Sargaran District of the "Disputed Territories." The Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs claimed the operation was a success and said both sides worked together to search and clear the area of ISIS (Da'esh). On January 30th, the two sides held a meeting on a high level in Chamchamal district, vowing more cooperation in the disputed territories. Moreover, Iraqi jets bombarded Da'esh positions near the Qara Chokh mountain in Makhmour on Tuesday. The mountain has been considered the headquarters of Da'esh since October 16th, 2017.

### Shingal (Sinjar)

The situation in Shingal remains unstable after massive Turkish airstrikes two weeks ago, targeting the Sinjar Resistance Units (YBS). According to unconfirmed reports by pro-YBS activists, the Turkish airstrikes on Shingal were coordinated with Iraqi forces, incredibly since the latter pressured the YBS to release two people who were accused of "spying for Turkey."



February 10, 2022

## Adrift after enslavement, Yazidi teen says she can't go home

**R**oza Barakat's tormentors have been defeated, but the horrors she endured still hold her captive.

She was 11 years old when she was captured and enslaved by the Islamic State group, along with thousands of other Yazidi women and girls taken when the militants overran northern Iraq in their brutal 2014 campaign.

Torn from her family in the town of Sinjar, the enclave of the ancient religious Yazidi minority, she was taken to Syria, sold multiple times and repeatedly raped. She bore a child, a boy she has since lost. Now, at 18, she speaks little of her native Kurdish dialect, Kurmanji.

With the defeat of IS in 2019, Barakat slipped into the shadows, opting to hide in the turmoil that followed the worst of the battles. As IS fighters were arrested, their wives and children were packed into detention camps. Barakat was free, but she couldn't go home.

"I don't know how I'll face my community," she told The Associated Press, speaking in Arabic, as she nervously played with the ends of her long dark braid, the red polish on her dainty fingers fading.

For years, her IS captors told her she would never be accepted if she returned. "I believed them," she said. Barakat's tale, corroborated by Yazidi and Syrian Kurdish officials, is a window into the complicated realities faced by



Roza Barakat poses for a portrait in a safe house in Hassakeh, Syria, Feb. 6, 2022.

many Yazidi women who came of age under the brutal rule of IS. Traumatized and lost, many struggle to come to terms with the past, while the Yazidi community is at odds over how to accept them.

"What do you expect from a child who was raped at 12, gave birth at 13?" said Faruk Tuzu, co-chair of Yazidi organizations in northeastern Syria. "After so much shock and abuse they don't believe in anything anymore, they don't belong anywhere."

The AP does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they grant permission.

Barakat spoke to the AP from a safe house run by Tuzu's group just a few days after

the leader of the Islamic State group, believed to have played a key role in the enslavement of Yazidi women, was killed in a U.S. raid in northwestern Syria. She shrugged off the news, saying it doesn't make a difference.

IS first sold Barakat to an Iraqi from Tal Afar, a man older than her father. She shudders as she recounts how he "made me call his wife 'mother.'" After a few months she was sold to another man.

Eventually, her IS captors gave her a choice: Convert to Islam and marry an IS fighter, or be sold again. She converted, she says, to avoid being sold. She married a Lebanese they chose for her, a man who ferried food and equipment for IS fighters.

"He was better than most," she said. At 13, she gave birth to a son, Hoodh. At the peak of the militants' self-proclaimed "caliphate," they lived in the city of Raqqa, the IS capital.

Once, she begged her husband to find out what happened to her older sisters who had been taken just like her. She had lost hope that her parents were still alive.

Some weeks later, he told her he found one of her sisters, holding up a photo of a woman in Raqqa's slave market where Yazidi girls were sold.

"How different she looks," Barakat remembers thinking.

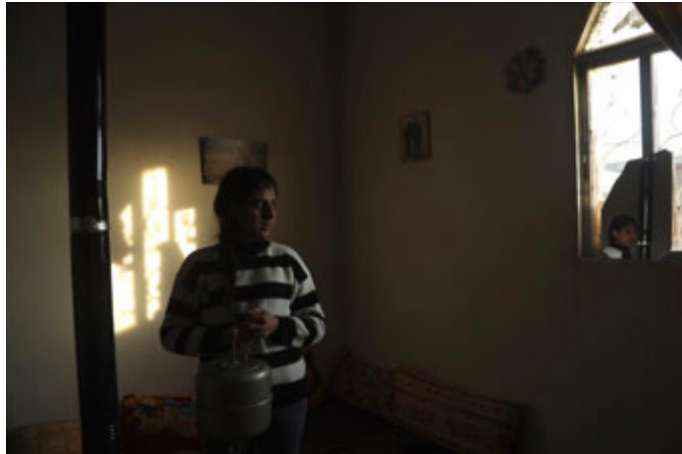
By early 2019 as IS rule was crumbling, Barakat fled with her husband first to the east-

ern Syrian city of Deir el-Zour, and then to the town of Baghouz, which became IS's last stand. As U.S.-backed Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces surrounded Baghouz, a safe passage was offered to women and children.

At this point, Barakat could have stepped forward and identified herself as a Yazidi and sought safety. But instead, she clutched Hoodh in her arms and walked out of the town with other IS wives.

Today, over 2,800 Yazidi women and children are still missing, said Tuzu. Some have cut ties and are building new lives outside the community, believing that if they return, they'd be killed. Others fear being separated from their children, fathered by IS members.

Iraq's Yazidi community has forced women returning to



Roza Barakat poses for a portrait in a safe house in Hassakeh, Syria, Feb. 6, 2022.

been at the center of an ongoing debate within the Yazidi community. In 2019, the Yazidi Spiritual Council, the highest authority among Yazidis, called on members to accept all Yazidi survivors of IS atrocities. Days later, the council clarified the decision excluded children born of IS rape.

"This is our mistake, and we

wives, widows and children of IS members.

Many of the missing Yazidis scattered across Syria and Turkey, others live clandestine lives in the Syrian city of Aleppo and in Deir El-Zour. Tuzu expects the majority may have gone to the rebel province of Idlib, where al-Qaida is dominant but where IS also maintains a presence.

After walking out of Baghouz with other IS women in March 2019, Barakat slipped away to a nearby village rather than end up in a camp. With the help of IS sympathizers, she took a smuggling route and ended up in Idlib, in northwestern Syria, in a home for IS widows. Her husband was killed in Baghouz.

Here, Barakat's story diverges from what she told officials. Initially, she told them she had left her son behind in Idlib to find work elsewhere. She told the AP that Hoodh died after an airstrike in Idlib.

When pressed to clarify, she said: "It's hard. I don't want to talk about it."

With the help of a smuggler,

she made her way to Deir el-Zour and eventually found work at a clothing market, saving up for a new life in Turkey.

She still dreamed of making it to Turkey when Kurdish internal security forces caught her last month, waiting in a house in the town of al-Tweinah to be taken by smugglers across the Syria-Turkey border.

She was held and interrogated for days.

"I did everything to hide that I was Yazidi," she said. She told the investigators she was from Deir el-Zour, and was hoping to get medical treatment in Turkey, but they didn't buy it.

One held up an old photo found on her mobile phone — a young Yazidi woman in an IS slave market — and asked her to explain.

"The words just came out: 'That is my sister,'" Barakat said.

Once the truth was out, Barakat was taken to a safe house in the village of Barzan, in Syria's Hassakeh province, where the Yazidi community welcomed her.

"I was in shock to hear their kind words, and to be welcomed the way I was," she said.

She isn't ready to go back to Sinjar just yet. Her entire family was either killed or is still unaccounted for.

What is there to go back to, she wonders. "I need time, for myself." ■



Eight years later, Roza is living in the shadows, afraid to go home and fearing her community won't accept her. Photo: AP/Baderkhan Ahmad

Sinjar to give up their children as a condition to return. Many were told their children would be adopted by Syrian Kurdish families but dozens have ended up in an orphanage in northeastern Syria. The fate of the children has

recognize that — we didn't allow the children to stay with their mothers," said Tuzu.

He confirmed that some Yazidi women are still at al-Hol camp, which holds tens of thousands of women and children, mostly





February 10, 2022

## Turkish court rules to keep Osman Kavala behind bars despite CoE's infringement move

An Istanbul court on Feb. 10 ruled to keep renowned philanthropist Osman Kavala behind bars by majority vote in a monthly detention review. The ruling came despite the Council of Europe (CoE)'s move to launch infringement procedure against Turkey.

The next hearing of the case will take place on Feb. 21.

In its justification, the Istanbul 13th Heavy Penal Court said that the judicial control measures will "stay insufficient considering that there has been no change in the legal situation since the last-dated evaluation and taking into account the nature of the crime charged to the accused Mehmet Osman Kavala as well



as the stage of the trial."

One judge had a dissenting opinion saying that Kavala's defense had been already taken and the evidence had been already collected.

Last week, President Recep Tay-

yip Erdoğan said that Turkey will not respect the Council of Europe if it does not respect Turkish courts.

The Committee of Ministers, the executive organ of the Council of Europe (CoE), on Feb. 2 voted on the transfer of the Osman

Kavala case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). With this ruling, the infringement procedure against Turkey has officially started.

Kavala was arrested in 2017 on charges that he helped to plan the 2013 Gezi Park protests in Turkey. He was cleared of these charges in February 2020 but immediately arrested on charges that he orchestrated the July 2016 coup attempt. Kavala has been held in pre-trial detention for over four years without a conviction.

In 2019, the ECHR said Kavala's ongoing imprisonment was political and called on Turkey to free him.



February 11, 2022  
By Loyal Shakir

## Kurdish leaders attempt to reach agreement on Iraqi presidency

The leaders of the two main Kurdish parties met on Thursday afternoon to discuss the Iraqi presidency post as tensions rise in extended political negotiations in Baghdad despite repeated calls for Kurdish unity. No official statements were released following the awaited meeting, but officials from within the blocs told Rudaw that the reunion will lead to "positive" results.

The co-chair of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Bafel Talabani and head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Masoud Barzani met in Pirmam three days after Iraq



PUK's Bafel Talabani (left) met with KDP's Masoud Barzani (right) at an earlier meeting on November 15, 2021. Photo: Bafel Talabani/Facebook

failed to elect a president as scheduled. No statements, footage, or photos regarding

the meeting were released by the PUK or Barzani's office.

An anonymous source from within the PUK told Rudaw that the two suggestions presented to Talabani by KDP's Barzani were that the Iraqi presidency post be given to the KDP and ministerial positions to the PUK. The second option was for both parties to withdraw their rival candidates from the race, and nominate a new presidential candidate that the KDP and PUK agree on.

Talabani was also scheduled to meet with KDP Vice-President Nechirvan Barzani Abdulqadir noted. However, this encounter did not happen as Talabani was presented with two options by KDP's leader, which



he left to discuss with party officials.

PUK officials seem to also be optimistic about the meeting. "I got my answer from Kak Masoud yesterday [Wednesday]. His answers were very positive ... Bafel Talabani has gone to reach an agreement and not for negotiations," PUK politician Faraidun Abdulqadir told Rudaw's Sangar Abdulrahman on Thursday.

According to a long-standing customary agreement, the presidency lies with the Kurds and the position has been held by the PUK since 2005.

Neither the KDP nor PUK had contested the candidates of each other until 2018 when the KDP put forth its own candidate for the position. This year, strongly backed by the largest parliamentary bloc the Sadrist Movement, the KDP has fielded Hoshiyar Zebari for the

presidency post, challenging the PUK's incumbent Barham Salih.

Earlier this week, Iraq's top court temporarily suspended Zebari's nomination on the grounds that he did not meet the conditions of "good reputation and integrity" required by the constitution. His case will be finalized on Sunday.

For months following the election, the Kurds preached to present a united front in Baghdad with the KDP engaging in intense talks with other Kurdish parties. However, the Kurdish front has largely failed to materialize after the KDP made agreements with the Sadrists and the Sunni Taqadam Coalition, which the PUK considers to be a disadvantage for Kurds. "The KDP has taken steps independently and made agreements with some political parties without any regards to the will of Kurdish parties and

Kurdish unity," Talabani said in a statement in late January.

Support for the KDP among the Sadrists and the Sunnis could increase Zebari's chances of winning the presidential race as they have collectively secured a large majority of the legislature's 329 seats.

The selection of the next Iraqi president plays a crucial role in the Kurdistan Region's politics as well, because according to a strategic agreement between the two main Kurdish parties, the PUK gets the Iraqi presidency post while the KDP gets the presidency of the Region.

With disputes splitting Kurds, the Shiites are also fractured.

The Coordination Framework, an alliance of defeated Shiite factions that was formed after the elections, is calling for a national unity government; the

opposite of Muqtada al-Sadr's call for a national majority government.

Consisting of the notable Fatih Alliance and Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law, which Sadr opposes, the alliance has threatened to form an opposition if they don't participate in the new government.

The Coordination Framework is also backed by the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) and given its paramilitary power, the formation of such opposition could paralyze the Iraqi government as it may not be purely political.

Despite pressure from Iran, Sadr maintains his refusal to reach an agreement with the Coordination Framework. He reiterated his call for a national majority government on Tuesday following his meeting with Iranian Quds Force Ismael Qaani.



February 11, 2022

## Kobanî trial: Statements reveal 'plaintiffs' don't know defendants

**F**ifteen "plaintiffs" whose property was damaged during the Kobanî protests have withdrawn their complaints.

The ninth hearing of the Kobanî trial continued at Sincan Prison Campus yesterday (February 10).

Some 108 members of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), including its former co-chairs, executives and MPs, are accused of inciting the deadly 2014 protests after ISIS attacked on Kobanî, a Kurdish town in Syria.

At the hearing, the court board began to take statements of plaintiffs before the

defendants' and their attorneys' statements were completed despite objections that such a practice was against the procedures, Mesopotamia Agency (MA) reported. However, the plaintiffs did not bring charges against the defendants.

"I don't know the defendants but..."

One of the plaintiffs, Mustafa Akbulut, who is also in prison for being a member of the "Fetullahist Terrorist Organization" (FETÖ), said, "We were attacked with Molotov cocktails. As a police officer, I'm staying in prison. I was sentenced because of FETÖ, but no one should see me as a terrorist. I have applied to

the Constitutional Court about my innocence."

When the presiding judge asked him whether he would bring charges against the defendants and whether he would participate in the trial. "I don't know the defendants, but if they are against the state, I want to participate," said the officer.

After plaintiff statements, Selahattin Demirtaş, former HDP co-chair and a defendant in the case, requested to ask a question to Akbulut. "The plaintiff has stated that he has been arrested for five years, that he has been under stress and explained his reason for participating in the

trial. Does the plaintiff think the action against him in Silopi was carried out by our instructions?"

Akbulut then changed his statement, saying he would not bring charges against those in the courtroom but against those who rolled his car over.

Erhan Dönmez, another imprisoned "plaintiff," said his car was damaged during the protests. "But the state covered our losses, so I'm not bringing charges against them. I previously gave a statement about this issue at the Bakırköy 2nd Heavy Penal Court."

Bayram Güven, who is also serving a prison term and whose shop in Tarsus, Mersin, was burned down during the protests, said, "I had filed a lawsuit regarding the events that happened on October 4-5. The evidence is in the case file. I'm a plaintiff, but I'm conflicted about the justice of the state. My shop burned down and the state gave just 10,000 lira to me. I don't know where to apply. I don't know the people who burned my shop."

"I am pressing charges against all HDP executives because HDP plans these events", he said.

Mahsuni Karaman, a defense attorney, asked Güven what crime he was convicted of. After he did not answer, the attorney said, "Why don't you say that you are convicted of sexual offenses?"

Speaking after that, defendant Ayla Akat Ata said, "I'm standing trial as an instigator, but my tweets were posted on October 6-7. However, the events in Tarsus happened on October 4-5. Why are you pressing charges against us? You didn't even see our face." No "plaintiffs" were left

After statements of other plaintiffs, Güven took the floor again, saying that he felt regret after Ata's statement. "I don't want innocent people to receive sentences with the statement I gave."

Twelve other plaintiffs, all of whom are imprisoned, also said that they would not press charges against the HDP members. Some of them said the damage to their properties during the protests was covered by the state.

Therefore, no plaintiffs were left in the case.  
From the Kobanî indictment

The Ankara Chief Public



Prosecutor's Office prepared an indictment regarding the Kobanî protests that took place on October 6-8, 2014.

108 people, including the arrested former Co-Chair of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Selahattin Demirtaş, were among the "suspects".

The indictment seeks the punishment of all suspects on the charges of "disrupting the unity and territorial integrity of the state", "killing for 37 times", "attempted killing for 31 times", "burning the flag" and "violating the Law on Protecting Atatürk."

Prepared by the Terror Crimes Investigation Bureau of the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, the indictment was sent to the Ankara 22nd Heavy Penal Court. The court accepted the indictment on January 7, 2021.

The names of all defendants: Figen Yüksekdağ, Sebahat Tuncel, Selahattin Demirtaş, Selma Irmak, Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Gülfer Akkaya, Gülser Yıldırım, Gülten Kışanak, Ahmet Türk, Ali Ürküt, Alp Altınörs, Altan Tan, Ayhan Bilgen, Nazmi Gür, Ayla Akat Ata, Aysel Tuğluk, İbrahim Binici, Ayşe Yağcı, Nezir Çakan, Pervin Oduncu, Meryem Adıbelli, Mesut Bağcı, Bircan Yorulmaz, Bülent Barmaksız, Can Memiş, Cihan Erdal, Berfin Özgü

Köse, Günay Kubilay, Dilek Yağlı, Emine Ayna, Emine Beyza Üstün, Mehmet Hatip Dicle, Ertuğrul Kürkçü, Yurduşev Özsökmenler, Arife Köse, Ayfer Kordu, Aynur Aşan, Ayşe Tonuç, Azime Yılmaz, Bayram Yılmaz, Bergüzar Dumlu, Cemil Bayık, Ceylan Bağrıyanık, Cihan Ekin, Demir Çelik, Duran Kalkan, Elif Yıldırım, Emine Tekas, Emine Temel, Emrullah Cin, Engin Karaaslan, Enver Güngör, Ercan Arslan, Fatma Şenpınar, Fehman Hüseyin, Ferhat Aksu, Filiz Arslan, Filiz Duman, Gönül Tepe, Gülseren Törün, Gülten Alataş, Gülüşan Eksen, Gülşar Tural, Güzel İmecik, Hacire Ateş, Hatice Altınışık, Hülya Oran, İsmail Özden, İsmail Şengül, Kamuran Yüksek, Layika Gültekin, Leyla Söğüt Aydeniz, Mahmut Dora, Mazhar Öztürk, Mazlum Tekdağ, Abdulselam Demirkıran, Mehmet Taş, Mehmet Tören, Menafi Bayazit, Mızgın Arı, Murat Karayılan, Mustafa Karasu, Muzaffer Ayata, Nazlı Taşpınar, Neşe Baltaş, Nihal Ay, Nuriye Kesbir, Remzi Kartal, Rıza Altun, Ruken Karagöz, Sabiha Onar, Sabri Ok, Salih Akdoğan, Salih Müslüm Muhammed, Salman Kurtulan, Sara Aktaş, Sibel Akdeniz, Şenay Oruç, Ünal Ahmet Çelen, Yahya Figan, Yasemin Becerekli, Yusuf Koyuncu, Yüksel Baran, Zeki Çelik, Zeynep Karaman, Zeynep Ölbeci, Zübeyir Aydar.  
About Kobanî protests

In September 2014, ISIS, which controlled a large territory in Syria at the time, launched an offensive to Kobanî, a Kurdish town in northern Syria, near the country's border with Turkey.

In late September, a group of people went to Suruç, a town neighboring Kobanî in the predominantly Kurdish city of Urfa, and attempted to cross the border. Police prevented them, using tear gas and rubber bullets.

Pictures allegedly showing ISIS militia crossing into Syria were published on the same days.

Also, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made statements at the time, indicating that they equated the PKK with ISIS. While the wounded coming from Kobanî were kept waiting on the border, the wounded from ISIS were treated at hospitals, according to news reports. Several news reports were reported in the press, saying "Kobanî fell." These news reports were denied every time.

After the HDP made a call to take to the streets against a possible massacre in Kobanî, thousands of people protested in Kurdish-majority provinces as well as Ankara and İstanbul. While left parties also supported these protests, deaths also occurred with the onset of police violence. Street conflicts ensued. 42 people lost their lives from October 6 to 12, 2014.

According to a report by the Human Rights Association (İHD), 46 people died, 682 people were wounded and 323 people were arrested in the protests held between September 7 and 12, 2014. As reported by the AA, 31 people lost their lives, 221 citizens and 139 police officers were wounded.

## « Dans le nord de la Syrie, loin du procès des attentats du 13 Novembre, se joue une partie de notre avenir »

L'un des survivants du Bataclan Arthur Dénouveaux et l'avocat Jean-Marc Delas rappellent, dans une tribune au « Monde », que le procès des attentats de fin 2015 ne doit pas faire oublier que l'organisation Etat islamique ressurgit au Levant, menant actuellement des attaques d'envergure.

Quelque 4 000 kilomètres entre les deux événements : personne ne les relie mais ils sont inséparables. D'un côté, à Paris, sous le regard de dizaines de journalistes, se déroule le procès des auteurs des attentats du 13 novembre 2015 qui ont ensanglanté Paris et Saint-Denis, plongeant la France dans l'horreur et entraînant une cascade de lois supposées garantir la sécurité de tous face au terrorisme. A la barre se sont succédé enquêteurs, experts, témoins et parties civiles, tandis que du box montaient des revendications de la part de certains des terroristes.

Un ancien président de la République, un ancien ministre de l'intérieur, les responsables des services de renseignement, sont venus livrer leur analyse, exprimer leur émotion et répondre de leur action. Par devoir bien sûr, mais aussi portés par un idéal qui réunit tous les hommes libres : fiers de voir qu'un procès de cette ampleur ait pu être organisé, attentifs à ce que les droits de chacun soient respectés et conscients de ce que la justice sera ainsi rendue.

Mais que retire-t-on de tous ces propos et de tous ces commentaires ? Une compréhension de la douleur des vic-

times et de leurs proches, de l'horreur du terrorisme, des limites de notre renseignement en 2015, des failles assez considérables dans le contrôle de qui entre, et pourquoi, dans l'espace Schengen, et quelques idées sur la mécanique d'endoctrinement totalitaire islamiste. Et la banalité du mal, la seule banalité du mal, déjà décrite par Hannah Arendt à propos des nazis (et d'autres) comme unique explication. Une vue parcellaire du passé.

De l'autre côté, dans le nord de la Syrie, dans une fantomatique no law land [« zone de non droit »] tenue par les forces kurdes, loin des préoccupations des médias français, se joue une partie de notre présent et de notre avenir.

### « Temps perdu »

Abou Bakr Al-Baghdadi, ancien chef de l'organisation Etat islamique [EI] tué par les forces spéciales américaines au terme d'une opération bien menée, cela rassure un instant... avant que ne surgisse son remplaçant. Et dans le même temps, à Hassaké, une centaine de djihadistes ont attaqué, début 2022, une prison remplie de terroristes de l'EI, permettant la fuite d'un certain nombre d'entre eux.

Dans le camp d'Al-Hol, des veuves de djihadistes peuvent fuir facilement, depuis des années, contre espèces sonnantes et trébuchantes, la disparition des radars de la conjointe d'Amedy Coulibaly, le terroriste auteur de l'attaque de l'Hyper Cacher [le 9 janvier 2015], l'atteste.

Dans le camp de Roj, enfin, des enfants français grandissent dans une violence inouïe, hors de tout cadre légal, mais surtout dans un environnement qui risque de les endurcir dans la haine du pays de leur passeport. Certains sont aujourd'hui de jeunes adultes, et le temps perdu depuis les premières alertes remontées à l'Etat ne se rattrapera pas.

Regarder le passé en cage dans une salle d'audience satisfait notre envie de croire à notre sécurité. Affronter le présent et l'incertitude qu'il renferme pour l'avenir nous effraie. Et la manière de s'attaquer à ce problème divise un électorat à séduire.

Prendre position sur un sujet vital

Mais le contraste est terrible entre les moyens et l'attention dévolus à décortiquer un passé qui nous apprend peu et ceux consacrés à maîtriser un risque présent et futur. La dou-

leur et la colère des victimes, la violence des propos de certains accusés monopolisent nos cerveaux, la complexité du dossier syrien les paralyse. Si nous sommes aussi sûrs de notre justice, et de l'efficacité du suivi judiciaire, alors ramenons les djihadistes français ou leurs veuves, jugeons-les et ayons confiance dans notre capacité à les maîtriser. Et prenons en charge leurs enfants, qui croupissent dans ces camps, pour les élever.

Vaste programme : certains y croient et, jusqu'ici, on n'a entendu personne proposer mieux.

On sait bien depuis Henri Queuille, célèbre président du Conseil sous la IV<sup>e</sup> République, qu'il n'existe pas de problème qu'une absence de solution finisse par résoudre. Cet aphorisme fait sourire sur des sujets accessoires ; il n'est accepté par personne en matière de lutte contre le terrorisme islamique.

Le procès en cours nous oblige à voir ce que l'on voit et à dire ce que l'on voit. Il devrait aussi obliger les candidats à l'élection présidentielle à prendre position sur ce sujet vital.

La prison brûle et nous regardons ailleurs.

## Daech renaît-il dans ses anciens bastions d'Irak et de Syrie ?

Trois ans après la chute de leur califat, les djihadistes continuent de perpétrer des attaques terroristes meurtrières.

Le 25 janvier, 200 combattants de Daech ont lancé un assaut bien préparé contre la plus grande prison du nord-est de la Syrie aux mains des Kurdes pour faire libérer des milliers de leurs partisans. Au même moment, de l'autre côté de la frontière, en Irak, un poste des forces de sécurité était attaqué dans la province de Diyala. Malgré ces spectaculaires opérations, l'État islamique (EI) recule en Irak, mais continue de profiter d'une instabilité persistante pour agir en Syrie.

### Pourquoi Daech s'est affaibli en Irak ?

Depuis le milieu de l'année 2020, le nombre des attaques djihadistes à travers l'Irak a diminué. De plus de 800 au cours du deuxième trimestre 2020, elles sont tombées, depuis, à une moyenne de 330, tous les trois mois. En parallèle, la sophistication de leurs opérations a régressé. Alors qu'ils représentaient plus de 60 % des attaques au début 2020, les attentats à l'engin explosif, les opérations contre des barrages des forces de sécurité et les attentats ciblés contre des personnes sont redescendus à 40 % environ du total de l'activité djihadiste. Les causes de ce recul sont multiples. Les combattants de Daech sont de plus en plus isolés de la population. Ils se retrouvent confinés dans des espaces ruraux ou désertiques, avec des accès limités aux centres urbains. L'autre raison est la montée en puissance des

forces de sécurité irakiennes. « Appuyées par les frappes aériennes et les renseignements fournis par la coalition internationale anti-Daech (dominée par les États-Unis qui gardent la maîtrise du ciel irakien), les opérations des forces irakiennes ont été un facteur explicatif du recul de Daech », souligne l'Académie militaire de West Point. Les éliminations de hauts dirigeants de l'EI l'ont également affaibli. Fief djihadiste depuis le milieu des années 2000, la province de Diyala et sa « capitale » Baqouba restent le seul centre urbain où Daech commet encore très régulièrement des attaques, comme fin janvier où 11 soldats ont été tués durant la nuit dans leur caserne.

### Pourquoi Daech se maintient en Syrie ?

Est-ce un effet de vases communicants ? Quand l'activité djihadiste décroît en Irak, elle a tendance à augmenter en Syrie voisine, et vice versa. Ce fut le cas entre 2019 et début 2020 lorsque à un pic djihadiste irakien - expliqué par la fuite des vétérans de l'EI lors de la chute de leur ultime fief syrien de Baghouz - a correspondu une décade en Syrie avec 20 attaques chaque mois en moyenne. Elles ont doublé à une quarantaine au cours des six premiers mois de 2021 pour redescendre, ensuite, à une douzaine. Pour les spécialistes, cette apparente corrélation n'établit cependant pas de liens directs entre les situations irakienne et syrienne, les deux

théâtres étant différents. En Syrie, où Assad n'a pas encore repris l'intégralité du territoire, les djihadistes profitent des vastes étendues du désert du centre et de l'ouest du pays pour se replier, s'entraîner et préparer de nouvelles attaques. Dans le Nord-Est administré par les Kurdes, c'est la marginalisation des populations arabes par les Kurdes qui offre à l'EI des gisements pour recruter. S'ils ont désormais un moindre accès à leurs dépôts d'armes et d'explosifs et ne peuvent plus compter sur l'afflux de combattants étrangers comme au temps de la guerre civile, la diversité des acteurs et la concurrence qu'ils se livrent (régime Assad, forces kurdes, ex-djihadistes au Nord-Ouest) sont des carburants de l'activité djihadiste. La récente attaque - préparée à l'avance grâce à la mobilisation de 200 combattants - de la prison de Ghwayran près de Hassaké où s'entassaient plus de 3 000 djihadistes est une nouvelle preuve de leur capacité opérationnelle. Dans la lignée de précédentes opérations de ce genre, elle visait à récupérer des forces vives, qui font défaut à l'EI. Si elle a échoué, les États-Unis - dont les forces spéciales ont épaulé les Kurdes pour reprendre le site - estiment que d'autres attaques de ce type sont à redouter.

### Quel est l'impact de la liquidation de son chef ?

Même si c'est un nouveau coup dur, Daech survivra à son chef, Abou Ibrahim al-Hachimi

al-Qourachi, liquidé le 2 février par un commando des forces spéciales américaines dans le nord de la Syrie, frontalier de la Turquie. L'impact de sa mort sur les activités du groupe djihadiste sera limité. Sa structure décentralisée entre ses différentes « provinces » à travers le monde lui permet en effet d'atténuer le choc. Disposant d'une large autonomie, les succursales de l'EI au Yémen, en Égypte, en Afghanistan ou en Afrique de l'Ouest, n'ont pas besoin de feu vert du calife pour perpétrer leurs attaques. Sous la direction d'al-Qourachi, l'EI avait renforcé, avant l'arrivée des talibans au pouvoir, la branche afghane de l'EI au Khorasan. S'il était resté très discret après avoir succédé à Abou Bakr Baghdadi en 2019, al-Qourachi avait réussi à garder le contact, via des messagers, avec des cellules dormantes hors du Moyen-Orient, selon le renseignement américain, qui le traquait.

Comme Baghdadi en 2018 et 2019, al-Qourachi concentra une partie de ses efforts sur la réorganisation de la succursale djihadiste au Kurdistan d'Irak, y dépêchant des émissaires et transférant des réfugiés du camp djihadiste d'al-Hol en Syrie ou d'autres cachés en Turquie, pour établir des cellules dormantes, dont certaines passèrent à l'action contre les Kurdes d'Irak. Il est probable que son successeur, dont le nom n'a pas été rendu public, continuera en ce sens. Lorsqu'il sera connu, les différentes « provinces » de l'EI à



travers le monde devraient lui renouveler leur allégeance.

### Recul durable ou simple repli ?

Au cours des prochaines années, l'activité de Daech devrait encore évoluer en dents de scie, au gré des situations politiques en Irak et en Syrie, qui resteront marquées par l'instabilité. Jusqu'à maintenant, les coups de boutoir assénés par la coalition internationale anti-Daech et ses alliés locaux ont empêché l'EI de mener des attaques contre plusieurs villes en Irak et d'exécuter, comme dans le passé, des opérations extérieures contre des cibles étrangères. « De telles actions requièrent une direction centralisée et des ressources qui dépassent les capacités d'une insurrection désormais locale et rurale », affirment les experts de West Point. Les seules attaques ayant néces-

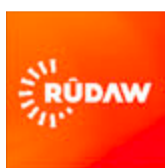
sité un certain niveau de centralisation sont celles perpétrées contre les régions kurdes d'Irak et le secteur de l'électricité irakien à l'été 2021 lorsque des destructions de pylônes eurent lieu simultanément dans le centre et le nord du pays. Toutefois, la résilience djihadiste ne doit pas être sous-estimée. L'omniprésence des milices chiites irakiennes pro-Iran, ajoutée à l'incapacité du gouvernement de Bagdad d'assurer le retour des populations déplacées par la guerre contre Daech dans les régions sunnites offre un espace à l'EI. De la même façon, le manque de coordination entre les forces de sécurité kurdes et celles du gouvernement de Bagdad dans les régions disputées entre les deux entités joue en sa faveur. Sans compter, hors de ses frontières, le chaos persistant au Liban, par exemple, qui lui permet de recruter parmi la jeu-

nesse sunnite sans espoir et déshéritée. Daech peut encore compter sur ses connexions avec la Turquie pour faciliter - via des compagnies prête-noms - ses opérations de blanchiment d'argent, qui lui permettent de survivre financièrement. Sans oublier les possibilités de va-et-vient avec le territoire turc, où se sont repliés d'anciens leaders djihadistes.

### Que faire des anciens djihadistes de la poche d'Idlib ?

La maison où habitait le chef de l'EI assassiné par les Américains était à 200 mètres seulement d'un barrage du groupe Hayat Tahrir al-Cham (HTS), des anciens djihadistes, passés sous le contrôle des renseignements turcs, qui cherchent, désormais, à bien se faire voir des Occidentaux. HTS a lui-même sous son contrôle 140 djihadistes français, réfugiés dans cette pro-

vince, l'une des dernières à échapper au pouvoir d'Assad. Que faire ? Doit-on négocier avec HTS ? Les États-Unis ont eu des contacts indirects avec le groupe. Les Français, aussi, via les services turcs. Le mois dernier, HTS a relâché le Français Omar Omsen, qu'il détenait. Dans cette interminable guerre syrienne, ce sont donc d'anciens djihadistes, syriens pour la plupart, qui ont entre leurs mains le sort de djihadistes étrangers, susceptibles de passer la frontière turque toute proche et revenir en Europe. Leur mue est-elle sincère ? Ont-ils renseigné la CIA pour liquider l'ex-patron de Daech ou, au contraire, fermé les yeux sur sa présence ? Il est encore trop tôt pour répondre. Une chose est sûre : au-delà de Daech, l'angle mort de la menace djihadiste d'Idlib sera un enjeu de sécurité intérieure pour le prochain président de la République.



February 13, 2022

## Iraqi court removes KDP presidential candidate

Iraq's top court on Sunday ruled against the nomination of the Kurdistan Democratic Party's (KDP) candidate for the Iraqi presidency post following his temporary suspension last week.

The Federal Court held its session in the morning to resolve the corruption case filed against KDP's presidential candidate Hoshyar Zebari by a number of MPs.

The court decided against Zebari's nomination for the post, reported state media shortly after the session ended.

Zebari is set to hold a press conference at 3:30 pm and is expected to address the court's decision. Zebari on Sunday afternoon said the court's decision was "unjust and politically motivated," while reiterating his respect for the Federal Court's call.



Kurdistan Democratic Party's (KDP presidential candidate Hoshyar Zebari. Photo: Zebari's twitter (Left):KDP logo (Right); Graphic: Rudaw

The judiciary last week ruled to temporarily suspend Zebari's candidacy until his case was resolved. The ruling was made on the grounds that he did not meet the conditions of "good reputation and integrity" required by the constitution.

Zebari was one of the two front-runners for the presidential race as the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) has nominated the incumbent Iraqi President Barham Salih for the position.

During the press conference, Ze-

bari also confirmed that the KDP does not have a potential candidate for the post yet.

The court's decision comes as the leaders of the two main Kurdish parties are in talks to discuss the Iraqi presidency post, which lies with them, amid rising tensions.

The KDP was expected to hold an advantage over the PUK for the presidency race given their alliance with the Sadrist Movement, the largest parliamentary bloc, led by Muqtada al-Sadr.

Iraq was scheduled to vote in a new president on Monday, but the required quorum of two-thirds attendance of the 329 members of the legislature was not met as the KDP, Sunnis, and Sadrists boycotted the session.

## Recap: This Week's Protests in Iran

According to HRANA, the news agency of Human Rights Activists, a number of protests took place this week in Iran, many of which were continuations of ongoing movements. Read our recap below for details, photos, and videos from the demonstrations.

**A** group of personnel aid off from the Khuzestan Telecommunication Company assembled before the company building. They protested against not being able to return to work despite an order by the justice department. During the protest, the security guards closed the door to hinder the protesters from entering the building.

A group of workers who are working at the pumping station of Oil Pipeline No. 5 Goreh-Jask assembled in Bandar Abbas before the governorate building of Hormozgan. According to the workers, they have not received their wages for six months and both former and new contractors have failed to pay wages. A group of workers recruited by the contractors working with the manufacturing company Machine Sazi Arak went on strike in protest against not delay in payments and other issues.

### Sunday, February 7

In Mariwan City, a number of teachers assembled to protest against the arrest of teachers' union activists. They chanted "free Shaaban Mohammadi" and "imprisoned teacher should be released".

On January 30, 2021, Mohammadi, a member of the Kurdistan Teachers' Trade Association, was arrested in Mariwan. Earlier, another teachers' trade association member, Jafar Ebrahimi was sentenced to four



years and six months in prison. A group of contracted teachers assembled before the office of the President in Tehran city to protest against uncertainties in their job conditions.

A number of contracted workers who work for the Sport Organization of Tehran Municipality assembled before the City Council Building to ask that they address their issues.

A group of people who have pre-purchased cars from Ramak Khodro Company protested before Tehran Province Justice Building as well as the Building No. 2 of the Judiciary. They asked judicial authorities to legally hold the company accountable for failing to deliver their cars after four years.

### Monday, February 7

A group of personnel of the Isfahan Telecommunication Company assembled before the company building in Isfahan City. They protested against layoffs and invalidation of passport cards. The company has taken revenge on protestors as they have delayed wages and created other issues, and has in turn invalidated protestor's passport cards and fired two of them completely.

A group of workers of the Kute Abdollah Municipality assembled before the city municipal building. They asked for three months of unpaid wages and unpaid employer insurance contributions.

A group of workers of the cement factory, Sepahan, gathered on company premises to ask for their demands.

A group of motorcycle couriers working for the Snap Food Company assembled before the company's office in Tehran City to protest against low fees, work hardship and failure to be insured by the employer, among other complaints.

Earlier, they had protested and went on strike but the company has so far neglected their demands.

A number of contractors working for the Mashhad municipality assembled before the governorate building of Razavi Khorasan Province to ask that the municipality to meet its commitments.

Dozens of workers at the Pars paper mill assembled before the governorate building in Shush City to ask for their demands. Reportedly, about 70 workers of the company protested against one month temporary contracts and lack of job security and demanded the implementation of the Job Classification Plan.

A number of citizens who have lost their money in cryptocurrency network KingMoney due to fraudulent financial acts assembled and protested before the entrance of Badran Network Educational Complex in Tehran.

## Neuf personnes arrêtées dans trois villes par la police turque

**L**a police turque a arrêté dimanche de nombreuses personnes, dont un homme handicapé à 90 %, lors de perquisitions dans de nombreuses villes du nord-Kurdistan (Turquie).

Le domicile de la militante du Mouvement des femmes libres (Tevgera Jinên Azad- TJA), Hacire Tanırgan, à Kızıltepe, a été perquisitionnée dans la matinée.

La police a procédé à une fouille violente et a arrêté Mme



Tanırgan. Une enquête menée par le bureau du procureur général de Diyarbakır a été citée

comme motif de la détention. Des perquisitions ont également été menées à Van. Les

membres de l'Assemblée des jeunes du Parti démocratique des peuples (HDP) de Van, Arjin Tuncer, Ferhat Azan, Rojin Varhan et Mehmet Şerif Demirağaç, dont l'invalidité est reconnue à 90 %, ont été arrêtés.

Les membres de l'Assemblée des jeunes du HDP Diyar Sincar et Nurullah Özgün, Şehmus Doku et Mazlum Kardaş ont été arrêtés à la suite de perquisitions à Amed (Diyarbakır).

## Journalist Zeynep Durgut taken into custody

**M**ezopotamya Agency (MA) reporter Zeynep Durgut has been detained in a house raid in Turkey's Kurdish-majority Şırnak province and taken to the Şırnak Security Directorate. The reason for her detention is yet unknown.

With her house raided in the early morning hours today (February 14), journalist Zeynep Durgut, a reporter for Mezopotamya Agency (MA), has been detained in Cizre district in Turkey's Kurdish-majority southeastern province of Şırnak. The reason for her detention is yet unknown.

While the journalist has been



reportedly detained as part of an investigation conducted by the Şırnak Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, no statement has been released as to the reason for her detention.

Taken into custody and handcuffed behind her back, journalist Durgut was referred to the Şırnak Provincial Security Directorate while she was on her way to the Cizre District Secu-

rity Directorate. Her technical materials found in her house during the search have been seized.

Zeynep Durgut was one of the journalists who were put on trial for reporting on Osman Şiban and Servet Turgut, two citizens who had been thrown from a helicopter after being detained by soldiers in Van's Çatak district. Charged with "membership of a [terrorist / illegal] organization" over their news, Durgut and her four colleagues were acquitted on January 6, 2022.



## Après l'assaut de l'EI contre la prison d'Hassaké, le désarroi et la peur des habitants

Avec plus de 370 morts côté prisonniers et assaillants et plus de 120 dans les rangs des Forces démocratiques syriennes, l'attaque djihadiste, bien que mise en échec, a rappelé la force de frappe que conserve l'organisation Etat islamique en Syrie.

Lorsque Farhan Ubaid Al-Hussein a commencé son travail dans le cimetière des martyrs d'Hassaké, en 2015, il n'y avait que quelques rangées de tombes. Depuis, l'endroit, où reposent des combattants des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), les maîtres de cette région du nord-est de la Syrie, s'est étalé de toutes parts, sur plusieurs centaines de mètres. « Aujourd'hui, il est question que les autorités achètent les terrains autour pour agrandir encore le cimetière », explique l'homme qui observe, du coin de l'œil, les groupes de femmes, d'hommes et d'enfants rassemblés autour de certaines tombes.

En ce jeudi du mois de février, il s'agit des familles des militaires tombés dans les combats pour repousser l'attaque de l'organisation Etat islamique (EI) contre la prison d'Al-Sinaa à Hassaké, fin janvier. « On a aménagé cinq tombes de plus parce que dans la morgue il y a cinq corps non identifiés », explique Farhan, le fossoyeur, en désignant les trous fraîchement creusés dans la terre. La bataille a duré dix jours. Elle a mobilisé non seulement des troupes des FDS, une coalition à dominante kurde, mais aussi les forces spéciales américaines et britanniques, qui ont mené des frappes aériennes. Ce fut la confrontation la plus longue et la plus meurtrière contre l'organisation Etat islamique (EI) depuis les combats



LAURENCE GEAI / MYOP POUR « LE MONDE »

pour reprendre l'ultime fief des djihadistes, à Baghouz, en Syrie, en 2019.

Le bilan est très lourd : 374 prisonniers et assaillants tués, plus de 120 victimes du côté des FDS et du personnel pénitentiaire, ont annoncé les autorités kurdes après la reprise de la prison, le 31 janvier. « Nous pensons qu'à peu près une dizaine de prisonniers sont aujourd'hui en fuite », fait valoir, le 10 février, la commandante des FDS, Newroz Ahmed, rencontrée à Hassaké. D'autres connaisseurs du dossier parlent de plusieurs dizaines de détenus en fuite.

### L'armée syrienne « trop fragmentée » contre l'EI

Bien que mis en échec, l'assaut contre la prison d'Al-Sinaa confirme que l'EI a conservé une capacité de nuisance très élevée, à travers notamment ses cellules dormantes, disséminées dans le Nord-Est syrien. « Daech a maintenu une structure centrale, il est capable

de mobiliser des combattants autant en Syrie qu'en Irak, pour lancer une opération militaire de grande envergure, affirme Patrick Haenni, chercheur à l'Institut universitaire européen de Florence et au Centre pour



Onze personnes, considérées comme des martyrs, sont enterrées au cimetière d'Hassaké, en Syrie, le 8 février 2022. LAURENCE GEAI / MYOP POUR « LE MONDE »

le dialogue humanitaire. Le cœur battant de la résurgence de l'EI à l'échelon régional se trouve dans les régions désertiques du sud de l'Euphrate que l'armée syrienne et ses milices, trop fragmentées, sont de

moins en moins à même de contrôler », ajoute-t-il.

Depuis la fin de l'attaque, le 31 janvier, les enterrements s'enchaînent sans discontinuer au cimetière des martyrs d'Hassaké. Le 8 février, douze corps ont été inhumés. A côté de la morgue, derrière un pick-up, les soldats qui observent les familles endeuillées ont un sentiment de déjà-vu. « J'ai perdu des cousins, des amis, des camarades... Je ne sais plus combien de proches j'ai perdus ces dernières années », confie l'un d'eux. Les familles arrivent l'une après l'autre. « Reviens-moi mon fils. Je coudrai tes plaies ! », murmure une mère

en posant sa tête sur un cercueil. Des enceintes diffusent des chansons à la gloire des martyrs.

Le jour de l'attaque, un peu avant 20 heures, deux camions

bouffés d'explosifs ont foncé dans les portes de la prison, les faisant voler en éclats. Des mortars armés appartenant à l'EI ont ensuite fait irruption dans la cour du bâtiment, une ancienne école. Lorsque la première explosion a retenti, l'un des médecins (un pseudonyme, par peur des représailles de l'EI) se trouvait dans la clinique. « Il y a eu aussitôt des échanges de tirs très fournis. Les FDS m'ont rapidement amené un soldat mort et un autre blessé au dos », explique le jeune homme, rencontré dans l'hôpital militaire d'Hassaké.



Dans le cimetière des martyrs, situé à quelques kilomètres de la ville d'Hassaké, en Syrie, le 10 février 2022. Le jeudi, les familles viennent se recueillir. LAURENCE GEAI / MYOP POUR « LE MONDE »

Une heure plus tard, le médecin est capturé par un détenu djihadiste, au visage masqué d'un foulard, qui le reconnaît aussitôt. « Dans la cour, il y avait des centaines de combattants de l'EI en train de crier victoire et

son. « Par le bas de mon bandeau, je voyais le sol, jonché de cadavres. J'essayais de ne pas marcher dessus. »

Il est ensuite rendu aux FDS, avec dix-sept autres otages,

que l'EI a été vaincu. L'attaque contre la prison a démontré que cette analyse est dangereusement erronée » Newroz Ahmed, commandante des FDS

Mohammed n'était pas le seul à redouter un coup de force des djihadistes. « Il y a trois mois déjà, une cinquantaine de combattants s'étaient préparés à attaquer la prison d'Hassaké, mais nous avons réussi à contrer leur plan, explique Newroz Ahmed, la commandante des FDS. A ce moment-là, nous avons alerté la coalition et la communauté internationale quant à l'imminence d'une attaque. Malheureusement, depuis la bataille de Baghouz, le monde a l'impression que l'EI a été vaincu. L'attaque contre la prison a démontré que cette analyse est dangereusement erronée. »

A Hassaké, ville peuplée majoritairement d'Arabes – dont certains se disent victimes de discriminations de la part des Kurdes, maîtres du Nord-Est –, les opérations de ratissage se poursuivent dix jours après la fin des combats. « En tout, nous avons capturé 150 djihadistes autour de la prison et notamment dans les cimetières, explique un membre des FDS en patrouille. Les fugitifs se cachent dans les maisons et sortent quand ils ont faim. La nuit, ils se déplacent de toit en toit. »

Dans le quartier de Ghwayran,

proche de la prison, les habitants parlent de cinq hommes décapités par l'EI durant les jours de l'attaque. « Ils [les membres de l'EI] sont allés directement au domicile de mon cousin, Hussein, et l'ont tué, parce qu'il avait servi dans l'armée syrienne », raconte Khidir Hassin, âgé de 20 ans.

### Des vexations au quotidien

Selon certaines familles d'Al-Zahour, un autre quartier des environs de la prison, peuplé majoritairement d'Arabes, certaines habitations ont été rasées au bulldozer par les FDS. « Le lendemain de l'attaque, nous sommes partis de chez nous pour nous réfugier dans l'école, témoigne Muhamed Ayash Seno, un résident d'Al-Zahour. Quand je suis revenu, j'ai vu que les militaires chargeaient des cadavres de l'EI dans leur véhicule. Ils ont ensuite détruit notre maison, en disant qu'ils cherchaient d'autres combattants, cachés dans les parages. Mais il n'y avait rien. Pourquoi nous ont-ils fait ça ? »

D'autres habitants se joignent à lui, faisant valoir que la destruction de leurs maisons par les militaires kurdes aurait pour but de harceler les Arabes d'Hassaké. Tous parlent des vexations qu'ils subissent dans leur vie quotidienne. « Les militaires voient mon nom arabe sur mes papiers et m'accusent : "Tu es de l'Etat islamique" », explique, remonté, un jeune du quartier.

Les résidents d'Al-Zahour ne comprennent pas pourquoi ils doivent payer le prix de la détention à Hassaké de djihadistes venus du monde entier. « Les pays dont ces hommes sont originaires se disent : "De toute façon, il y a la guerre en Syrie. Nous pouvons donc laisser ces dangereux extrémistes là-bas", s'indigne un autre habitant du secteur, Ahmed Al-Ali Hussein. On en a marre ! Allez construire une prison loin de nous. Nous ne voulons ni électricité ni eau. Eloignez juste ces prisonniers de nous ! »



Une habitante sur le toit de sa maison démolie lors des combats, dans le quartier de Ghwayran, à Hassaké, en Syrie, le 10 février 2022. LAURENCE GEAI / MYOP POUR « LE MONDE »

de brûler matelas et couettes », se souvient le médecin.

### « Je voyais le sol, jonché de cadavres »

Les quatre jours suivants, il les passe dans une cellule, les yeux bandés, en compagnie de combattants des FDS pris en otage, que les ex-prisonniers devenus geôliers passent à tabac. « Les djihadistes m'ont épargné. Ils me disaient : "Tu nous aidais dans la prison. On va t'aider" », se souvient-il. Le quatrième jour, le jeune homme est dirigé vers la sortie de la pri-

son. « Par le bas de mon bandeau, je voyais le sol, jonché de cadavres. J'essayais de ne pas marcher dessus. »

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Dans le quartier de Ghwayran,



## Irak : entre exil, Daech et situation politique bloquée, le désarroi des jeunes Kurdes

Depuis plusieurs mois, de nombreux jeunes du Kurdistan irakien fuient leur pays. Les manifestations de novembre 2021 et la répression sécuritaire qui s'est ensuivie ne leur laissent qu'un choix limité : rester dans un statu quo mortifère, partir en Europe via la Biélorussie ou s'engager avec Daech.

### Impossible choix

Comme lui, des centaines d'étudiants du Kurdistan irakien ont protesté plusieurs jours durant pour demander la restauration des aides financières coupées par le gouvernement. Très vite, les slogans ont dévié sur les conditions de vie en Irak, l'absence de perspectives d'embauche. Selon l'ONU, le taux de chômage dans la région est de 24 % pour les hommes de 15 à 29 ans et de 69 % pour les femmes ! Un horizon bouché qui, comme pour leurs aînés avant eux, invite les jeunes au départ. La première vague remonte à 1991, au moment de la guerre avec l'Irak de Saddam Hussein.

Plus tard, en 2014, la crise économique dans laquelle s'enfonce le pays et la chute des prix du pétrole poussent aussi les jeunes Kurdes d'Irak hors de leurs frontières. Ces dernières années, la guerre contre le groupe djihadiste de l'État islamique n'a pas ar-



Selon l'ONU, le taux de chômage dans la région est de 24 % pour les hommes de 15 à 29 ans et de 69 % pour les femmes ! Ici, Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan irakien.  
Zikocinematographe

rangé la situation. Quelque 800 000 personnes ont été contraintes de quitter leur maison en Irak et en Syrie pour éviter les violences obli-

geant certaines d'entre elles à s'entasser dans des camps de déplacés. Chaque semaine, les attaques perpétrées par les cellules dormantes du groupe

terroriste continuent de pousser des familles au départ. En 2021, plusieurs milliers de jeunes ont repris la route de l'exil.



## Le président turc Erdogan, isolé diplomatiquement, renoue avec les Emirats arabes unis

La visite à Abou Dhabi du président Erdogan, marquée par la signature d'accords de coopération, confirme le dégel entre les deux pays.

Annouçant l'ouverture d'« une nouvelle page » diplomatique, le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, s'est rendu, lundi 14 et mardi 15 février, en visite officielle aux Emirats arabes unis (EAU), où il a été reçu avec tous les honneurs par Mohammed Ben Zayed, l'homme fort de la monarchie, venu l'accueillir en personne à l'aéroport.

Garde d'honneur, salve de canon, affiches vantant le partenariat « stratégique » entre les deux pays, le prince héritier d'Abou Dhabi, surnommé « MBZ », a mis les petits plats dans les grands pour recevoir son hôte, confirmant le dégel intervenu dans les relations entre les deux pays après des années de brouille.

A Dubaï, la plus haute tour du monde, la Burj Khalifa, s'est illuminée aux couleurs des drapeaux émirati et turc pour marquer la visite du président turc, dont le dernier séjour aux Emirats remonte à 2013, quand il n'était que premier ministre. Une aubaine pour Ankara

Sa visite fait suite à celle effectuée par « MBZ » en novembre 2021 à Ankara, lequel avait alors annoncé la création d'un fonds d'investissement d'environ 9 milliards d'euros pour soutenir les entreprises turques, en proie à des difficultés économiques.

Lundi, les deux dirigeants ont poursuivi sur la même lancée, avec la signature de treize accords de coopération dans des domaines divers allant de la



Le président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan accueilli à l'aéroport d'Abou Dhabi, aux Emirats arabes unis, par Mohammed Ben Zayed, l'homme fort de la monarchie, le 14 février 2022. Photo fournie par le service de presse de la présidence turque. MURAT KULA / AFP

santé à la pétrochimie, en passant par les transports. Une lettre d'intention a également été signée sur la coopération entre les industries de défense des deux pays, axée notamment sur la production de drones.

La chute spectaculaire de la livre turque, qui a perdu 45 % de sa valeur face au dollar en 2021, crée des opportunités inédites pour les investisseurs émiratis désireux d'acquérir des parts dans les entreprises turques dévaluées.

Le gouvernement turc se débat contre une inflation galopante (50 %) qui pénalise les PME et ternit la réputation du pays, dont la note de crédit vient d'être une fois de plus revue à la baisse ce week-end par l'agence de notation financière Fitch Ratings.

Les investissements des Emirats en Turquie constituent une au-

baine pour M. Erdogan. A la fin de l'année 2020, ils atteignaient près de 4,4 milliards d'euros, contre 312 millions d'euros d'investissements turcs aux Emirats. Au premier semestre 2021, le volume des échanges bilatéraux s'est élevé à plus de 6,3 milliards d'euros, soit une croissance de 100 % par rapport à la même période en 2020, selon l'agence émiratie WAM.

En janvier, Abou Dhabi a volé au secours de la Turquie en concluant avec Ankara un accord d'échange de devises équivalent à 4,74 milliards de dollars (4,18 milliards d'euros) afin de renouveler les réserves turques de change, tombées au plus bas.

Recomposition en cours au Proche-Orient

Confronté en interne à une crise monétaire majeure et à une baisse sensible de sa popularité, M. Erdogan cherche à rompre

son isolement diplomatique en renouant avec les Etats qu'il vilipendait jadis – Emirats, Arabie saoudite, Egypte, Israël.

Sur le plan géopolitique, la rencontre entre les deux dirigeants confirme la recomposition en cours au Proche-Orient. Celle-ci a débuté en janvier 2021, avec la levée de l'embargo imposé jusqu'ici au Qatar, l'allié indéfectible d'Ankara, par ses voisins du Golfe.

Longtemps, les relations ont été électriques entre le numéro un turc et « MBZ ». En 2016, juste après le putsch raté qui avait failli le renverser, M. Erdogan avait accusé les Emirats d'avoir soutenu et financé les conjurés. La presse turque regorgeait de propos peu élogieux à l'endroit du prince et de son entourage. Abou Dhabi, pour sa part, reprochait à la Turquie son soutien aux Frères musulmans dans la région.

Les deux Etats soutiennent également des camps opposés en Libye et en Syrie. Par ailleurs, Dubaï est devenue le refuge de Sedat Peker, un parrain de la mafia turque dont les vidéos mises en ligne en 2021 ont décrit par le menu la présumée corruption régnant au sein du Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP) dirigé par M. Erdogan.

Depuis le dégel turco-émirati, amorcé par la visite à Ankara en août 2021 de Tahnoun Ben Zayed, le conseiller à la sécurité nationale des EAU, les révélations du mafieux ont brusquement cessé.



15 février 2022  
Par Luc Mathieu

## Syrie : une dizaine de mineurs français dans la prison attaquée par l'EI

**D**es mineurs détenus à la prison Al-Sinaa d'Hasaké, dans le nord-est syrien, on ne sait rien, ou presque. Sauf qu'ils étaient environ 700 et que parmi eux, «une dizaine sont français», assure la vice-présidente d'Unicef France, Adeline Hazan. «Nous n'avons pas plus d'informations sur leur état de santé», ajoute-t-elle.

L'Unicef est la seule organisation internationale qui a pu pénétrer dans la prison, aussi dite de Ghwayran, depuis l'assaut de Daech (Etat islamique, aussi EI), le 20 janvier. Une certaine de jihadistes avaient alors attaqué l'enceinte, d'abord avec deux camions piégés, puis avec des combattants. L'offensive, la plus importante depuis la chute du califat de l'EI au printemps 2019, était coordonnée avec des détenus. Certains d'entre eux se sont révoltés, tuant et prenant en otage des gardiens. Les affrontements, qui se sont étendus aux quartiers jouxtant la prison, ont duré plus d'une semaine. Selon les autorités kurdes, qui contrôlent la région, 374 jihadistes ont été tués ainsi que 40 membres des Forces démocratiques syriennes, 77 employés de la prison et 4 civils.

### «Situation extrêmement précaire»

L'ampleur du bilan tient à la taille d'Al-Sinaa, plus grand centre de détention du nord-est syrien, avec environ 3 500 prisonniers. Parmi eux, 700 mineurs. Certains y ont été envoyés en 2019, alors que les



Vers la prison syrienne Al-Sinaa, le 25 janvier, quelques jours après l'assaut de l'EI. (AFP)

combats des Forces démocratiques syriennes contre l'EI se concentraient à Al-Baghouz, dernière enclave du califat. D'autres y ont été envoyés après avoir vécu dans des camps, avec leur mère.

Lors de l'attaque de Daech, plusieurs ONG ont alerté sur leur sort. Les jihadistes, retranchés et encerclés à l'intérieur de la prison, se servaient des mineurs, détenus dans une partie séparée, comme boucliers humains. L'organisation Human Rights Watch avait diffusé des enregistrements de jeunes qui racontaient des blessés non soignés et l'absence de nourriture et d'eau.

Le 6 février, alors que les autorités kurdes avaient repris le contrôle d'Al-Sinaa et de ses environs, l'Unicef a pu rencontrer quelques-uns de ces mineurs. «Pendant au moins dix jours, ces enfants qui vivaient dans des conditions terribles, beaucoup d'entre eux depuis des années, ont été les témoins et ont survécu à des vio-

lences graves dans et autour de la prison. Même si des services basiques sont désormais disponibles, leur situation reste extrêmement précaire», déclarait alors le représentant de l'Unicef pour la Syrie, Bo Viktor Nylund.

L'agence de l'ONU, ainsi que la quasi-totalité des ONG, dénoncent depuis 2019 les conditions de détention dans le nord-est syrien des enfants dont les parents avaient rejoint Daech et réclament leur rapatriement dans leur pays d'origine. Ce mardi, les principales organisations des droits de l'homme se sont réunies à Paris pour demander à nouveau au gouvernement français de «sortir de l'impasse juridique, humanitaire et sécuritaire» où il s'est lui-même placé, a déclaré Françoise Dumont, présidente d'honneur de la Ligue des droits de l'homme (LDH).

«Pas coupables mais victimes»

Environ 200 enfants et 80 femmes françaises sont détenus au Kurdistan syrien. Seuls 35 enfants, essentiellement des orphelins, ont été rapatriés depuis 2019. Aucun ne l'a été depuis plus d'un an. «Il n'y a aucun argument sérieux pour s'opposer à leur retour, a ajouté Patrick Baudoin, président d'honneur de la Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme. Ces enfants, détenus dans des conditions épouvantables, ne sont pas coupables mais victimes. Les conventions internationales obligent la France à les protéger. Quant aux femmes, la justice française est tout à fait compétente pour les juger.»

Interviewé lundi sur France 5, le chef de la diplomatie française, Jean-Yves Le Drian, a exclu tout rapatriement d'adulte. «C'est complètement absurde, a réagi Henri Leclerc, président d'honneur de la LDH. Toutes les femmes font l'objet de mandats d'arrêts internationaux. Et tous les jours, d'autres femmes qui sont revenues [souvent après avoir été expulsées de Turquie, ndlr] sont jugées par des cours d'assises spéciales. Le véritable refus porte sur les enfants, dont certains sont nés là-bas. Ils vont y mourir. Ce refus de les ramener est incompréhensible, cela doit devenir un sujet de la campagne électorale.» Plusieurs pays européens ont rapatrié femmes et enfants de Syrie ces derniers mois, dont très récemment les Pays-Bas et la Suède.

## Mass murderer of four women in Belgium set free in Turkey

Osman Çallı, a Turkish national who was sentenced to life in prison in Belgium for murdering four women, was set free in 2020 after being extradited to Turkey, according to newly surfaced information. Reporting by BBC Turkish reveals that Çallı only stayed in prison for three years in Turkey.

**A** murderer of four women in Belgium, including his pregnant sister, was set free in 2020 after being extradited to Turkey, according to reporting by BBC Turkish. Osman Çallı was sentenced to life in prison in Belgium but requested that he serve out the remainder of his sentence in Turkey.

"I am enjoying the sun, the sea, and the beach here. I have served my sentence. I started a new life here [in Turkey]," he told Belgian news channel VTM news.

Both the Belgian Ministry of Justice and the relatives of those killed reacted harshly to reports of Çallı's freedom, demanding explanations from the Turkish government.

Çallı was living in the city of Ghent, Belgium, when on the night of November 11, 2004, he murdered four women and injured three others. First, he tied his 25-year-old wife, Teslime, and his pregnant 19-year-old sister, Hacer, to chairs and shot them both. He then draped a quilt over the two women's bodies and set them on fire. From there, he drove to the home of his ex-wife in the city of Aalst, where he shot her, her mother, and a man that was living with her.

Çallı's ex-wife and her mother were both killed, while the man



A woman carries a banner reading «We don't want to die» during a protest against femicides in Turkey.

who was living with them was seriously injured. On his way back to Ghent, he also took a female driver hostage when his car malfunctioned and injured another person once he arrived in the city.

Çallı later surrendered to the police, who took him into custody. During processing, it was revealed that he had also served 18 months' imprisonment for kidnapping his son from his Belgian wife.

He claims he committed his crimes to "cleanse his family's honor."

After a four-year trial, Çallı was sentenced to life in prison in Belgium. However, five years after his conviction, he applied

to complete his sentence in his home country of Turkey and was extradited on June 28, 2013. He was removed from the Belgian criminal system in 2014.

Now, reporting by BBC Turkish reveals that he only stayed in prison for three years in Turkey. According to Çallı's lawyer, Ergun Top, who spoke to Belgian media, he was partially released in 2016, put on parole in 2019, and cleared of all charges in 2020.

When reached via telephone by VTM News, Çallı, who is now 63, said he was expecting a son and wanted to be left alone to live his "new life."

The Belgian Ministry of Justice

has condemned Turkey following this revelation and said that the Turkish government did not inform them of Çallı's release. The Ministry says it has asked Turkey for an explanation but that they have not received a response.

Çallı was released per the "European Convention on the Transfer of Convicts," signed by Turkey in 1983. Belgium is also a party to the convention. Per the convention's rules, the country to which a convict is transferred must inform the country where the convict was sentenced about how the sentence is being applied and in the case of a possible release. Belgium says Turkey failed to do this.



## Le « cri d'alarme » de plusieurs ONG sur le sort des enfants de djihadistes retenus en Syrie

Ces mineurs sont « atteints psychologiquement et physiquement ». Certains ont été « utilisés comme boucliers humains » pendant les combats, alerte Adeline Hazan, la vice-présidente d'Unicef-France.

Plusieurs ONG ont lancé mardi 15 février à Paris un nouveau « cri d'alarme » sur le « danger de mort » qui menace les enfants français de djihadistes retenus dans le nord-est syrien, pour certains depuis 2017, en exhortant les autorités françaises à les rapatrier.

« Il n'existe aucun argument sérieux à opposer » à leur retour, a déclaré devant la presse Patrick Baudoin, président d'honneur de la Fédération internationale des Droits de l'Homme. « Au contraire, tout milite en faveur de leur rapatriement : les conditions (de vie) épouvantables, des traitements inhumains et dégradants » infligés à ces enfants qui « n'ont pas choisi de partir, c'est le choix de leurs parents », a-t-il insisté.

### Des enfants « utilisés comme boucliers humains »

Organisée par Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, la conférence de presse a aussi regroupé Amnesty international et d'autres organisations non gouvernementales mobilisées pour les 80 femmes françaises ayant rejoint l'organisation Etat islamique (EI) et les 200 enfants détenus dans les camps kurdes du Rojava, au nord-est syrien.



Pour l'instant, 35 mineurs majoritairement orphelins ont déjà été rapatriés en France. (MUHAMMED SAID / Anadolu Agency via AFP)

D'intenses combats ont opposé dans cette région en janvier les forces kurdes et des membres de l'EI, près d'une prison attaquée par les djihadistes. Cela constitue « un signal d'alerte supplémentaire », a souligné mardi Bénédicte Jeannerod, directrice France de Human Rights Watch.

Dans cette prison sont détenus 600 enfants, dont dix français, selon Adeline Hazan, vice-présidente d'Unicef-France. L'organisation a pu se rendre sur place après les affrontements et atteste que ces mineurs sont « atteints psychologiquement et physiquement », certains ayant été « utilisés comme boucliers humains » pendant les combats.

### Quelques mineurs déjà rapatriés en France

Le ministre des Affaires étrangères, Jean-Yves Le Drian, avait réaffirmé lundi que Paris continuerait dans la mesure du possible de rapatrier ses ressortissants mineurs. Mais les autorités françaises excluent tout geste similaire pour les adultes, contrairement à certains des voisins européens.

« Cela me brise le cœur de penser à ces enfants mais il y a aussi une question de sécurité en France qui doit être prise en compte », a abondé mardi la ministre déléguée à la Citoyenneté Marlène Schiappa sur BFMTV, en référence à celle représentée

selon elle par les adolescents qui seraient de retour.

Jusqu'à présent, 35 mineurs, majoritairement des orphelins, ont été rapatriés par la France. D'autres sont revenus grâce au protocole Caze-neuve, un accord de coopération entre Paris et Ankara pour organiser le retour sur le territoire des djihadistes français qui sont entre les mains des autorités turques.

Ils sont essentiellement en Ile-de-France, particulièrement en Seine-Saint-Denis. « Les structures existent, il n'y a pas d'obstacles opérationnels à leur retour », a insisté Patrick Baudoin.

## Kurdistan's Weekly Brief, February 15, 2022

### Iraq

In an unexpected move, on Tuesday, February 15, the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq ruled "the unconstitutionality of the oil and gas law of the Kurdistan Regional Government, obligating Kurdistan to "handover" all oil production from oil fields in the Kurdistan region and other areas to the federal government. In 2012, the federal government filed a lawsuit against the Kurdistan Region. However, after a decade, the ruling came out, coinciding with a visit by the Kurdish Prime Minister Masrour Barzani to Qatar, discussing oil and gas "synergies."

On February 13, in a political driven move, the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq rejected Hoshiyar Zebari's presidential candidacy due to "Parliament's withdrawal of confidence from him when he was Iraq's Minister of Finance in 2016." On February 14, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) nominated Rebar Ahmed, the Minister of Interior of the Kurdistan Region, to replace Zebari. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which enjoys close ties with Iran, remains committed to current president Barham Salih's candidacy. Neither the Iranian-backed parties nor Muqtada al Sadr's bloc can elect the next president in the Council of Representatives of Iraq until the KDP-PUK dispute is resolved.

A delegation from the Presidency of the Kurdistan Region began negotiations with Iraq's Kurdish parties to set a date for the 2022 Iraqi Kurdistan parliamentary election and draft a new constitution for the Kurdistan Region. The delegation, led by Dilshad Shabab, a senior advisor to the president, and Chief of the Presidential Office Fawzi al Hariri, held its first meeting with the Change Party (Gorran). The election is currently scheduled for September 30, but the Kurdistan Region Parliament has the authority to postpone it.

Ano Abdoka, the Minister of Transportation and Communications of Kurdistan Region of Iraq, said Iraq and Turkey are discussing plans to construct a new railway between the two countries. Abdoka went on to claim the railway will benefit the Kurdistan Region and said new railway stations in Kirkuk, Mosul, and Dohuk are being considered.

Several Kurdish and Iraqi sources asserted the deployment of the newly minted joint Peshmerga-Iraqi units to the "Disputed Territories" has been postponed until the new Iraqi government is formed. The "Disputed Territories" saw a reduced number of ISIS (Da'esh) attacks last week, and the Iraqi Air Force said it targeted a Da'esh lair in the Zaghaiton Valley.

### Turkey

Leaders of six main Turkish opposition parties convened, discussing switching Turkey's system back to parliamentary against a five-year-old presidential system sponsored by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The meeting lasted hours, and leaders of the parties announced relieving the outcome at the end of this month. However, after the meeting, the opposition parties faced criticism for excluding the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). In response, the HDP Co-chair Pervin Buldan said, "We know well how to ignore the ones who ignore us." Currently, the HDP is establishing a "Democratic Alliance" made out of Kurdish and left-leaning parties. The Turkish party meetings included leaders of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Good Party (IYI Party), Felicity Party (Saadet), Future Party (Gelecek Party), Democracy and Progress Party (DEVA), and Democrat Party.

On the 23rd anniversary of the arrest of Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan, the thousands of people

rallied to end isolation imposed on him by the government in prison. Kurdish protests occurred in Amed, Van, Batman, Siirt, Sirnak, and Izmir. Likewise, protests across Europe by the Kurdish diaspora took place, calling Ocalan's arrest an "international conspiracy." In a statement, the HDP said, "The isolation and conspiracy that has been going on on Mr. Ocalan for 23 years is, in fact, the policies of insolvency in the Kurdish problem, isolation of peace, persistence in war. On Tuesday, Turkish police occupied a public square in Diyarbakir (Amed) and surrounded dozens of protesters. Furthermore, dozens of Kurds and HDP members have been arrested by the Turkish police since Friday in Sirnak, Istanbul, Mardin, Adana, Mersin, and Amed.

### Iran

The exiled Cooperation Center for Iranian Kurdistan's Political Parties (CCIKP) released a statement on the 43rd anniversary of the Iranian Revolution that accused the regime of "grabbing" the revolution that was made by "the Iranian nation" and read, "After 43 years of a bloody revolution made by the Iranian nation, the results are poverty, indigence, and hundreds of social issues." The CCIKP went on to criticize the Iranian regime for its "regional interventions" and provision of millions of dollars to terrorist groups in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. Granted, thousands of regime supporters in Tehran celebrated the revolution, which ultimately resulted in the overthrow of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi's government and its replacement with an Islamic republic led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1979.

Iranian authorities arrested several Kurds last week, including a Kurdish soldier in the Iranian Army (Artesh) named Mohammed Azizi. The Hengaw Organization for Human Rights claimed Azizi told his family he

was detained because his sister is a member of a Kurdish party. Furthermore, Iranian security forces arrested three Kurds in Piranshahr on Sunday, Ramin and Saied Qadiri in Jwanro (Javanrud), and four Kurds in Saqqez. Several local human rights groups claimed one of the Kurds arrested in Saqqez is the husband of a jailed Kurdish activist named Zaman Zewia. Lastly, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) raided a Kurdish printing house in Ilam called "Bashur" and the residence of its owner, a Kurdish poet and writer named Mohammed Nisari.

### Syria

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) released a video of a Da'esh terrorist responsible for fundraising in Raqqa's confession on Sunday. The terrorist, Mohammed Karaz, admitted to targeting businesses that refused to pay the organization protection money with IEDs. That said, dozens of Da'esh terrorists who escaped al Sina'a prison last month remain at large.

SDF General Commander Mazloum Abdi told Rudaw the SDF rejected the Assad regime's proposal to return northeastern Syria to its pre-2011 status and called it "unfit." While Abdi stated the SDF remained open to an agreement with the Assad regime, an acceptable arrangement seems unlikely anytime soon.

Turkey and its proxies again shelled SDF-controlled areas near Ain Essa, Geri Spi (Tal Abyad), and the strategic M4 Motorway. Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said a Kurdish man died after being "deprived of regaining his house that was appropriated by the Turkish-backed al Sham Legion in occupied Afrin." Moreover, Turkey's Syrian National Army continued to illegally excavate archeological sites and exploit seized Kurdish farmlands.

## ISIS transferred large sums of money through Turkey, report shows

According to a new report by the Financial Crimes Investigation Board (MASAK), ISIS transferred large sums of money for the Islamic state through Turkish cities like Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa

The Financial Crimes Investigation Board's (MASAK) latest report shows that money used by the Islamic State terrorist organization (ISIS) was transferred through the Turkish cities like Şanlıurfa and Gaziantep, according to reporting by Deutsche Welle Turkish.

The report found that dual Lebanese and Turkish citizen Fayez Alfliti sold explosive wicks to be used in bombs from Lebanon to the seat of the caliphate, Raqqa, in 2015. ISIS used a money transfer company based in Gaziantep to transfer over \$400,000 to Alfliti.

This information was made public as part of a report on the 365 people whose assets Turkey froze in April of last year for alleged links to terrorism. 86 of those people were allegedly linked to ISIS, including Alfliti.

According to the report, Alfliti would routinely travel to Adana, in Turkey, and reportedly illegally crossed into Syria from the Tel Abyad border. MASAK found that he would travel to Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor in Syria to set up business contacts with the Islamic State. He would then transit back through Turkey to Lebanon.

Alfliti was not the only ISIS



affiliate to transfer money to the Islamic State through Turkey. Chahreddie Omrani, who is known to fund ISIS in conflict zones, allegedly sent 1,924 euros to Abuliezi Abudhamiti of ISIS through Turkey in October 2016.

Another man named Yusuf El Ali Elhasan who was residing in the Black Sea city of Trabzon, would also facilitate money transfers. Money would come to Elhasan, who would transfer the money to collaborators in Ankara and Şanlıurfa. Syrian Ali Elali, who was wanted for alleged membership in ISIS, would then take the money from Şanlıurfa and transfer it to a company called Al Hafiz, which operates in Syria.

The money transfer conti-

nued until recently. According to MASAK, two Syrian nationals named Ammar Salo and Muhammed Salo were heavily involved in the transfer of money to ISIS conflict zones from the city of Kahramanmaraş. They continued operating in the city, facilitating the transfer of large sums of money across the border, until 2019 when the organization began to lose its hold in Syria. The report notes that the remaining money in Syria may have been transferred back across the border into Turkey for a commission.

The monetary support channeled through Turkey did not just go to ISIS conflict zones. MASAK also found that gold

trader and jeweler Ahmed Elahmed Al Harun, who owns many stores in Istanbul, set up a solidarity fund for the families of those killed or wounded in battle. Al Harun allegedly used his gold trade to cover up his membership in the organization and used his businesses to collect and move these funds.

Al Harun also allegedly used one of his offices in Aksaray as a meeting point for members of ISIS in Istanbul and went to Syria and Iraq regularly. He was a confirmed member of the organization and was high-up in ISIS' financial system. Al Harun was allowed to remain in Turkey until he was arrested on December 16, 2019.



## Ces jeunes musulmans français qui s'exilent chez Erdogan

Fuyant « l'islamophobie » dont le président turc accuse la France, ils sont des centaines de musulmans français à choisir de partir pour la Turquie.

**T**hibault, un prénom d'emprunt qu'il a choisi, a 32 ans et une barbe rousse bien fournie. Il est avenant mais un brin méfiant. « Reconverti », selon ses termes, à l'islam depuis plus de sept ans, cela fait près de dix-huit mois que cet ancien boulanger originaire de l'Isère a élu domicile à Istanbul avec sa femme et leurs deux enfants.

Dans un contexte de crispations hexagonales autour de l'islam, le couple en mal d'évasion s'est d'abord installé en Bosnie-Herzégovine et en Norvège, avant de chercher à effectuer la « hijra » : l'expatriation en terre musulmane. « Nous voulions éviter l'assimilation, inculquer une éducation islamique à nos enfants pour faire en sorte qu'ils restent musulmans toute leur vie », plaide Thibault. Si lui et son épouse songeaient en premier lieu à l'Égypte et au Maroc, la Turquie, plus proche de la France « au niveau de la mentalité », s'est imposée comme une évidence.

Aujourd'hui, le couple a refait sa vie sur les rives du Bosphore, scolarisant ses enfants dans un établissement local où, prévient Thibault, « il y a des choses un peu bizarres » tant la laïcité reste de mise dans la plupart des écoles publiques turques. Mais malgré quelques déboires administratifs liés aux titres de séjour, le trentenaire ne regrette pas son exil stambouliote. D'autant qu'il y a six mois il a trouvé un filon : l'exportation de biens à une



La place devant la mosquée Sainte-Sophie à Istanbul, le 11 octobre 2021. (ZUMA Press Wire)

clientèle principalement française et musulmane. Corans, tapis de prière, abayas, chapeliers islamiques ou dentifrices au siwak, telle est la gamme de produits qu'il propose sur son compte Instagram. « Je croule tellement sous la demande que je n'arrive plus à satisfaire toutes les commandes, surtout avec le ramadan qui approche », se félicite-t-il.

De nombreux musulmans de France séduits par la Turquie

Si les organes de presse pro-gouvernementaux turcs ont consacré pléthore d'articles pointant un « exode » de musulmans fuyant « l'islamophobie française » vers la Turquie, le phénomène semble, somme toute, limité. Il est néanmoins indéniable que, depuis quelques années, de nombreux musulmans de France sont séduits par la Turquie. Aussi existe-t-il au moins une dizaine d'influenceurs français, la plupart d'origine maghrébine, qui mettent en scène leur expatriation au pays d'Erdogan. Tous s'y sont installés au cours des cinq dernières an-

nées. Parmi ces influenceurs, un profil revient souvent : celui de l'entrepreneur pieux, mondialisé et productif qui affiche sa réussite, réelle ou fictive, et propose des conseils pour mener à bien sa vie professionnelle et personnelle. Tout en usant des codes de la modernité occidentale et du capitalisme, ces « digital nomads » revendiquent leur religiosité, vantant les mérites de la rigueur morale et de l'orthodoxie sunnite.

À l'image de Zia, Franco-Tunisienne de 25 ans originaire de Lyon, dont la chaîne YouTube est suivie par plus de 40 000 abonnés, et qui s'est installée à Istanbul avec son époux franco-algérien il y a près de deux ans. Dans une vidéo, elle explique comment pratiquer le « développement personnel » en évitant de tomber dans l'idolâtrie des spiritualités New Age.

### Un choix pas anodin

Pour ces musulmans d'Occident, le choix de la Turquie n'est pas anodin. Comme cer-

taines monarchies du Golfe ont pu devenir des pays de co-cagne pour une jeunesse française issue de l'immigration maghrébine, la Turquie est devenue une destination prisée tant elle apparaît comme musulmane, développée économiquement et occidentalisée. « Il y a une sorte de double culture ici, très européenne et moyen-orientale, qui me parle », affirme dans l'une de ses vidéos Fodil Mahani, un influenceur qui a troqué Dubai pour Antalya en 2019, et qui cumule plus de 70 000 abonnés sur sa chaîne YouTube.

David Bizet, qui se présente désormais sous le nom de « Davut Paşa », un Dijonnais converti à l'islam et au nationalisme turc, est installé en Turquie depuis 2019. Sollicité, il n'a pas répondu aux demandes d'entretien du JDD. Il a fondé un groupe Facebook intitulé Émigrer en Turquie en octobre 2020. « Ce groupe a pour but de connecter les musulmans francophones, actuels ou futurs si Allah le veut, en Turquie, annonce la description du groupe. Il s'adresse donc à des francophones qui aspirent à s'expatrier là-bas, ou qui vivent déjà dans ce pays, principalement pour des raisons religieuses afin de pratiquer l'islam en paix. » « Pas une semaine ne passe sans que je ne reçoive de message de Français installés ou souhaitant s'installer en Turquie » se félicitait-il sur le réseau social il y a deux semaines. Son groupe compte aujourd'hui plus de 2 000 membres.

# Iraqi Supreme Court strikes down KRG oil sector independence

Landmark ruling rejects the legal pillars of Kurdistan's oil sector, opening a volatile new chapter in Iraq's long-standing disputes over oil powers.

Iraq's Federal Supreme Court issued a sweeping ruling Tuesday against the legal foundations of Iraqi Kurdistan's independent oil sector.

The court's decision could force a seismic shift in the balance of oil powers between the federal government and the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) — potentially upending a 450,000 barrel per day (bpd) market and altering the dynamics of a government-formation process that has seen multiple blocs court Kurdish MPs.



Iraq's Federal Supreme Court on June 3, 2018, hears a case filed by the Oil Ministry against the KRG. (Source: Federal Supreme Court media office)

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## En Turquie, les réfugiés ne se sentent plus les bienvenus

**REPORTAGE - Victimes du repli nationaliste, Syriens et Irakiens sont confrontés à une hostilité croissante.**

**M**ohammad, réfugié syrien à Izmir, en tremble encore. Fin décembre 2021, il se dirige vers son club de sport quand son portable se met à vibrer. Il consulte sa messagerie, saturée de textos: «Tu as vu ce qui s'est passé à Izmir?», «Sois prudent dans la rue», «Ne parle pas arabe au supermarché»... À l'origine de cette vague de panique: l'annonce de la mort de trois jeunes ouvriers syriens de la ville côtière, brûlés vifs un mois plus tôt en plein sommeil dans ce qui ressemble à un acte de pure xénophobie. Depuis, l'activiste de Damas reconverti en businessman se tient sur ses gardes, même s'il aimerait croire en un incident isolé.

La Turquie, première terre d'accueil des réfugiés syriens - ils sont quelque 3,7 millions -, est ce pays qui lui a tout donné: l'asile, des papiers, un accès à la Sécurité sociale et même un permis de travail. Mais dix ans après le début de la guerre en Syrie, il ne se sent plus le bienvenu. Insultes, menaces, appels à rentrer chez eux, remarques déplacées... À travers le pays, les manifestations de haine se démultiplient, débouchant parfois sur une violence sans précédent.

Ankara, la capitale, en a été le théâtre au mois d'août dernier. En plein cœur de l'été, plusieurs centaines de jeunes hommes munis de bâtons ont brutalement pillé et saccagé des commerces, voitures et logements appartenant à des Syriens dans un quartier d'ordinaire tranquille. Les assail-



En août dernier, Ankara a été le théâtre de violences à l'égard des réfugiés. Plusieurs centaines de jeunes hommes munis de bâtons y ont saccagé des commerces, des voitures et des logements appartenant à des Syriens. SOPA Images/Tunahan Turhan / SOPA Images/Sip

lants disaient vouloir «venger» un jeune Turc tué lors d'une rixe entre Turcs et Syriens. Certains d'entre eux ont été interpellés par la police.

### «Fardeau migratoire»

Pour les défenseurs des droits humains, cette banalisation de la violence est l'illustration flagrante d'une population à genoux, asphyxiée par la crise économique qui frappe aujourd'hui la Turquie. Elle est aussi la conséquence d'un changement de cap dans la politique d'accueil du gouvernement de Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Autrefois enclin à leur ouvrir les portes, et en dépit de l'accord européen visant à les garder sur son territoire, le président turc n'a de cesse de répéter que son pays «ne peut plus supporter le fardeau migratoire». Quand ils ne sont pas instrumentalisés, comme lorsqu'il les envoya à la frontière grecque en mars 2020, ils sont encouragés à rejoindre la

«zone tampon sécurisée» du nord de la Syrie: un périmètre de quelque 30 kilomètres de profondeur, situé le long de la Turquie, où des dizaines de milliers de familles ont déjà été relocalisées. Or, divers témoignages relayés le mois dernier sur les réseaux sociaux font part d'expulsions forcées. Vidéos à l'appui, des dizaines de Syriens rapportent avoir été maltraités, battus et forcés d'apposer leurs empreintes digitales sur des documents de rapatriement volontaire vers le pays voisin. «Quand on m'a arrêté à Istanbul, on m'a dit: "on te renvoie à Mersin", la ville du Sud où j'étais enregistré comme réfugié. Mais après plusieurs jours de détention, j'ai vite compris qu'on me renvoyait à Idlib, au nord de la Syrie», raconte l'un d'eux par téléphone, en préférant que son nom ne soit pas publié.

Ce durcissement remonte à trois ans. Depuis 2019, tout Syrien enregistré comme réfu-

gié dans l'un des gouvernorats turcs ne peut s'installer dans un autre. Plusieurs grandes villes, telles qu'Istanbul, n'acceptent plus les demandeurs d'asile syriens depuis 2018. Qu'ils soient, ou non, en règle, l'ambiguïté de leur statut n'est pas de bon augure pour la suite: considérés comme «invités» par Ankara, les Syriens bénéficient depuis le début de la guerre d'une protection temporaire et non du statut de réfugié au sens de la convention de Genève.

L'actuelle crispation gouvernementale répond, aussi, à des enjeux de politique interne. Aujourd'hui, la plupart des factions de l'opposition turque ont fait de la question des réfugiés - syriens, mais également irakiens ou afghans - leur nouveau fonds de commerce pour discréditer le président Erdogan. Par exemple, le maire de la ville de Bolu (Nord-Ouest), Tanju Özcan, qui déclarait récemment sur la chaîne Habertürk: «À Bolu, 70 % des étrangers sont irakiens. Y a-t-il une guerre en Irak? Nos hommes d'affaires apportent des emplois et des capitaux en Irak (...) Ce système qui a permis de les aider a fait son temps. Il est temps qu'ils repartent chez eux!» Issu du CHP (opposition républicaine laïque), il est à l'origine d'une vive polémique après avoir suggéré d'augmenter les factures d'électricité des ressortissants étrangers et de leur imposer un couvre-feu. Pour l'heure, le projet est gelé. Mais il pourrait refaire surface à l'approche du scrutin de 2023.





February 17, 2022  
By Loyal Shakir

## Woman killed by husband, raising weekly toll of Kurdistan Region's female killings

A woman was shot dead by her husband in Sulaimani province late Wednesday night, a security official told Rudaw as the Kurdistan Region adds another brutal murder of a woman to its never-ending list of honor killings and gender-based violence deaths.

Maryam Yacoob, 40, was gunned down by her husband, Sulaimani police spokesperson Sarkawt Ahmad told Rudaw.

The husband was also reported dead after he shot himself shortly afterwards, the official added.

The details of the incident and the reason behind the murder remain unknown for the public, but crimes of this kind are very common in the Kurdistan Region.

This week alone, four women were killed in different circumstances in a series of gender-based killings across the Kurdistan Region.

Yacoob was a lecturer at Sulaimani's Komar University of Science



Maryam Yacoob, 40, was shot dead by her husband in Sulaimani on February 16, 2022. Photo / Kawis Aziz Faraj/Facebook

and Technology and a postgraduate student at the University of Sulaimani.

Social media in the Kurdistan Region has been overcome with anger and grief as a result of the recent increase in female killings.

Yacoob's death comes one day after a mother and a father allegedly killed their nine-year-old daughter in the Kurdish capital.

Another woman was shot dead by unknown assailants in Koya town last week. The perpetrators are still on the run as the details of the incident remain a mystery.

The Kurdistan Region suffers from high rates gender-based violence, including sexual violence, domestic violence, so-called honor violence, child marriages and female genital mutilation. Twenty-four women were killed in the Region in the past year, according to statistics

from the Directorate of Combating Violence against Women. The term "social dispute" is often used as justification for violence against women.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 2011 passed the Combating Domestic Violence Law, criminalizing domestic violence and equipping the directorate to combat violence by investigating it, yet the practice of domestic abuse and the so-called honor killings is still seen across the Region.

The recent murders come as Iraqi and Kurdish political parties are in negotiations to form the next government in Iraq following October's early election.

This year, women were guaranteed 25 percent of the legislature's 329 seats in the vote, a move set to give them more rights and power, but Iraq is yet to pass its Anti-Domestic Violence Law, which has put forward by lawmakers for almost three years now.

The New York Times

February 19, 2022  
By Carlotta Gall

## 'We Have All Gone Into Debt': Soaring Bills Deepen Crisis for Turks

Hit by spiraling inflation, electricity bills have doubled for households and businesses in only a month.

It began with a few outraged customers posting photographs of their electricity bills to social media, showing how charges had almost doubled at the end of January. But such complaints have quickly snowballed into a full-blown political crisis for the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey. Turks have been hit with run-

away inflation — now officially more than 48 percent — for several months, and criticism is growing even from Mr. Erdogan's own allies as he struggles to lift the country out of an economic crisis. The Turkish lira has sunk to record lows. Food and fuel prices have already more than doubled. Now it is electricity.

Even as Mr. Erdogan raised the minimum wage last month to help low-income workers, his government warned that there would be an increase in the utilities charges it sets. But few expected such a shock.

"We are devastated," said Mahmut Goksu, 26, who runs a barbershop in Konya Province in central Turkey. "We are in

really bad shape. Not only us, but everyone is complaining." Mr. Goksu's January electricity bill soared to \$104 from \$44, and is now higher than the monthly rent he pays on his shop. "My first thought was to quit and get a job with a salary, but this is my business," he said.

The price hikes in electricity

have varied across the country, but every business and household has seen an increase of some kind.

Ilyas Senturk, 29, a motorbike courier in Istanbul, shares an apartment with a roommate and said his power bill had more than doubled, but friends had received bills two times or even four times the size of his.

“We have all gone into debt in the last three months,” he said of his friends and colleagues. “Sometimes we cannot find money.”

Mr. Senturk said the increase in his electricity bill may seem small, but it amounted to the cost of a weekly commute — or his weekly food bill.

“We are trying to dim the lights, or use smaller light bulbs,” he said. “With all the other increases, it is a huge hike.”

Turkey’s economy was already in recession before the pandemic hit, and because it relies heavily on tourism and the hospitality industry, the months of lockdown have badly hurt many businesses. The government offered some compensation, but mostly in the form of loans to tide over businesses and workers. Many like Mr. Senturk are still paying those off.

Restaurants and cafes trying to recover after two years of losses from the pandemic were also reeling this month after electricity and gas bills doubled.

“During the pandemic, we were closed for 19 months,” said Ilker Tiniz, 37, who runs a family-owned restaurant in the southern city of Adana. “We did delivery. My credit cards exploded and we were taken to the debt enforcement office.”

He took a government-sponsored bank loan but complained about the interest payments. “They said it’s support, but it’s



A bar in Istanbul on Wednesday. The cost of power has doubled in some parts of Turkey, fueling widespread discontent. Credit... The New York Times

not,” Mr. Tiniz said. “They take it back with interest.”

In January, his rent rose to 15,000 lira (about \$1,150 at the time), then the electricity bill came in even higher at 17,000 lira, and Mr. Tiniz went on Twitter to voice his alarm. His was among the first of what has grown into a storm of complaints from citizens.

“I wrote that tweet so that the government hears my voice,” he said in an interview at his restaurant.

Despite the difficulties during the pandemic, there had always been hope that things would get better, Mr. Tiniz said, but the galloping inflation was shaking everything in the whole food chain, from the farmers to market traders to the customers in his restaurant.

“In December, peppers were eight lira per kilo. Today, they were 22 lira. Cucumber was six lira, today it was 20 lira,” he said. “I never bought eggplant for more than six lira. Today, it’s 30 lira. It rose by 400-500 percent.”

“It’s really a disaster,” he said. “By March, it will be worse.”

Political opponents of Mr. Erdogan have been warning for months that the country is heading for economic collapse. But

in a system almost completely under Mr. Erdogan’s sole control, he makes decisions on virtually everything and keeps his own counsel.

Despite warnings from economists, Mr. Erdogan has steadfastly refused to raise interest rates, the usual tool to combat inflation, arguing that it would only hurt the poor.

The price of electricity is set by a government agency, the Energy Market Regulatory Board, or E.P.D.K., which would not have made the raises without the president’s approval.

But because Mr. Erdogan has taken charge of so much, he has also risked becoming the target of Turks’ anger. Opponents have leapt at the doubling of electricity bills as the latest sign of mismanagement by his government.

The leader of the largest opposition party, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, announced that he would refuse to pay his electricity bill in an act of protest.

“I have to announce the pain of the broad masses,” he explained later in a speech. “They didn’t leave space for the citizen who cannot pay their electricity bill to raise their voice. Who would be their voice?” Many also blamed the private electricity distribution com-

panies, which are owned by some of Turkey’s largest conglomerates, some of them close associates of Mr. Erdogan, for profiteering.

“It did not happen suddenly,” said Mehmet Ozdag, a board member of the Chamber of Electrical Engineers, a professional association. “We have been hearing these footsteps for the last 20 years.”

The government, which has spent billions of dollars propping up the declining currency and is increasingly cash strapped, had to scramble this week to answer the complaints rippling around the country.

The energy minister, Fatih Donmez, defended the increase in comments twice in the last week, saying it reflected the rise in global prices, but promised cheaper rates on a portion of the bill for traders. The government also announced last weekend that it was reducing a value-added tax on food products to 1 percent from 8 percent.

Mr. Erdogan addressed the topic at length in a speech on national television after a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, appealing to his audience to be reasonable. It was thanks to his government that Turkey no longer suffered electricity shortages, and Turkish citizens still enjoyed the cheapest electricity prices of any developed country, he said.

More than 60 percent of consumers benefited from some form of subsidy on electricity bills in January, he said, and he promised additional assistance for low-income households, small businesses and nonprofit organizations.

“As always, to this day, we are listening to the voice of our nation,” Mr. Erdogan said, “and finding solutions to their problems.”

The New York Times

19 February, 2022  
Par Jane Arraf

# Conflict and Climate Change Ravage Syria's Agricultural Heartland

Drought and a decade of war have brought failing crops and poverty to a region once known as Syria's breadbasket. Even the bread has changed.

**A**t a government bakery in Hasaka, Syria, a faded image of former President Hafez al-Assad looms over the aging machinery and clanging steel chains of the assembly line. The painting dates from long before the war, when this region of northeast Syria was still under government control.

Outside, a long line of families and disabled men wait for bags of subsidized flat bread, which sells at about a quarter of the market price.

What is new at this bakery, the largest in the region, is the color of the flour dumped into giant mixing bowls: It is now pale yellow instead of the traditional stark white.

"This is a new experiment we started three or four months ago," said Media Sheko, a manager of the bakery. "To avoid bread shortages, we had to mix it with corn."

In a region ravaged by ISIS and armed conflict, prolonged drought and drying rivers have made stability even more precarious. Here, the normally abstract idea of climate change can be seen in the city's daily bread.

The new recipe is not entirely welcome.

"We feed corn to chickens," said Khider Shaban, 48, a grain farmer near the town of Al Shaddadi, where bare earth has replaced most of the wheat fields because of lack of water. "What are we — chickens?"



Farmers in northeast Syria say their sheep are thinner, less healthy and selling for much less. Credit... Ivor Prickett for The New York Times

The prolonged drought in the region has been linked to climate change worldwide. But in northeast Syria, the country's historic breadbasket, its effects have been compounded by more than a decade of war, a devastated economy, damaged infrastructure and increasing poverty, leaving a vulnerable society even more at risk of destabilization.

Across Syria, the U.N.'s World Food Program reported last summer that almost half of the population did not have enough food, a figure expected to rise higher this year.

Many of the fields of red earth have been left fallow by farmers who can no longer afford to buy seeds, fertilizer or diesel to run water pumps to replace the low rainfall of previous years. The wheat they do grow is lower quality and sells for much less than before the current drought two years ago, according to farmers, government officials and aid organizations.

This semiautonomous break-away region in northeastern Syria, desperate for cash and stable relations with Damas-



At a government bakery in Hasaka, climate change has affected the traditional flatbread, which is now made with corn meal mixed with wheat flour. Credit... Ivor Prickett for The New York Times

cus, still sells much of its wheat crop to the Syrian government, leaving little for its own population.

And farmers who cannot afford to feed and water their animals are selling them off at cut-rate

prices.

"This problem of climate change is combined with other problems, so it's not just one thing," said Matt Hall, a strategic analyst for Save the Children in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. "There's a war, there are sanctions, the economy is devastated. And the region can't pick up the slack by importing wheat because it no longer has the money."

For thousands of years, the Euphrates River and its largest tributary, the Khabur River, which cuts through Hasaka Province, nurtured some of the world's earliest farming settlements. But the rivers have been drying up.

The U.S. space agency, NASA, which studies climate change, says the drought that began in 1998 is the worst that some parts of the Middle East have seen in nine centuries.

In northeast Syria, the drought



has been particularly acute over the past two years. But lower than average rainfall is only part of the problem.

Turkey, which controls the region's water supply from parts of northern Syria that it controls through proxy fighters, has been accused of reducing the flow to the area inhabited by the Kurds, whom it considers an enemy.

Since Turkey captured the Alouk water pumping station, the main water source for Hasaka Province, in 2019, aid agencies say forces under its command have repeatedly shut down the pumps, putting about a million people at risk.

Turkey has denied the accusation, blaming outages on technical problems and the lack of electricity from a dam outside of its control.

Whatever the cause, UNICEF says the water supply has been disrupted at least 24 times since late 2019.

The effects of the drought are on vivid display in the small city of Al Shaddadi, 50 miles south of Hasaka. The Khabur River, which flows through the town and was so vital in ancient times that it is referred to in the Bible, has been reduced to puddles of murky water.

Muhammad Salih, a president of the municipality, said 70 percent of the farmers in the area left their fields fallow this year because it would cost more to grow crops than they would receive selling them.

The low level of the Khabur, which many farmers depend on to irrigate their fields, means they have to operate their diesel-powered pumps longer to get the same amount of water. And the cost of diesel fuel has soared, along with prices of other essentials, because of an economic embargo on the region by its neighbors, Turkey and the government-controlled part of Syria, and American economic sanctions against



People waiting outside the government bakery in Hasaka, which sells subsidized flat bread at about a quarter of the price of bread from private bakeries. Credit...Ivor Prickett for The New York Times

Syria, which also affect this region.

Mr. Salih also blamed Turkey for reducing the water supply at the Alouk pumping station. "One day they open the water and 10 days they do not," he said.

He estimated that 60 percent of the local population was now living under the poverty line. "Some people are eating just one meal a day," he said.

"This climate change, this drought is affecting the entire world," he said. "But here in the autonomous administration we don't have the reserves to cope with it."

The war against ISIS left entire sections of Al Shaddadi in ruins. U.S.-led airstrikes destroyed a large residential complex, water pumping stations, schools and bakeries used by ISIS, according to local authorities. The main bakery and some schools have been rebuilt.

Farmers from the countryside drive motorcycles through dusty streets. Women with their faces covered by black niqabs walk past chickens few people can afford to buy anymore.

In the surrounding farmlands, thin stalks of wheat and barley in the few fields planted last fall are less than half their height in pre-drought years.

"We can only pray for God to send us rain," said Mr. Shaban, the wheat farmer. He said that he had to sell his sheep two years ago at reduced prices because he could not afford feed or water.

"I had to make the choice to give water to my family for



Irrigation pumps on the Khabur River, which has slowed to a trickle. Now the pumps have to work overtime, using more diesel fuel to get the same amount of water. Credit...Ivor Prickett for The New York Times

drinking or give it to the sheep," he said.

On a neighboring farm, Hassan al-Harwa, 39, said the high cost of feed meant his sheep were subsisting on straw mixed with a small amount of more nutritious barley instead of the higher-grain diet they used to consume.

"They should be fatter and healthier," Mr. al-Harwa said. "When there was rain two

years ago, we had enough milk to get milk and cheese but now it is barely enough for their lambs."

Before, he said, each sheep could fetch about \$200 in the market. Now they sell for \$70 or less, he said, because they are skinnier and because few people can afford to buy them.

The next day, four of the lambs had died. Mr. al-Harwa thought it was a virus but with no veterinarian it was hard to be sure.

Across the region, intense poverty and lack of opportunity have contributed to young men joining the Islamic State.

"It's one small piece of this large, disastrous puzzle," said Mr. Hall of Save the Children. "The grievances that are exacerbated by climate change are the same ones that drive disillusionment and recruitment" by ISIS.

The persistent drought has also been driving families from farms held for generations to the cities where there are more services but even less opportunity to make a living.

"The water is holding together many of these areas," Mr. Hall said. "These agricultural communities are the social foundation for many areas. If you take away the agricultural capacity there is nothing holding these towns together."



February 19, 2022  
By Julian Bechocha

## Surge in petrol prices worries Kurdistan Region residents

Scenes of emptiness surrounded gas stations across various cities in the Kurdistan Region as petrol prices have hiked more than 50 Iraqi Dinars over the week, with citizens in the Kurdistan Region expressing vast discomfort with the unpleasant situation.

The gradual spike in petrol prices has become a nuisance to residents of the Kurdistan Region. Upticks in prices have forced residents to become conservative with operating their vehicles, with demand having decreased as evident from the lack of queues at many petrol stations.

"Petrol prices negatively affect people's demands. Previously,

people used to refuel their cars with 25,000 IQD when the petrol price was 500 or 600 IQD. Now, the citizens are getting half of that amount with 25,000 IQD," Jangi Majeed, a gas station owner told Rudaw's Hadi Salimi on Saturday.

Majeed also claimed that the sale of petrol at his station has diminished from 20,000 liters to approximately 1,200 liters per day in the span of a week due to the high prices.

Updating the price of petrol on the boards of gas stations across Kurdistan Region's cities has become commonplace.

"People are forming in long

lines for petrol, oil, LPG, electricity, and water. We are so annoyed and exhausted because of these kinds of problems," said Osman Ali, a taxi driver in the region's capital of Erbil.

In addition to the rising prices, drivers also complain about the long queues in gas stations that sell government-provided fuel, as well as the low quality of petrol, which damages their vehicles, forcing them to spend additional money fixing potential issues.

"I'm worried if I can even get my portion because of the queue. I wait in the queue for approximately an hour and a half or two hours. Also, the quality of the petrol is very low.

I changed my fuel pump because of the low quality of the petrol that I filled in this station," said Sherzad Hussain, another taxi driver.

The Kurdistan Region needs approximately 6 million liters of petrol in a single day.

Iraq's Nineveh province is also facing a lack of fuel, with the shortage accredited to the fuel being allegedly smuggled to the nearby Kurdistan Region.

Petrol in the Kurdistan Region is not subsidized by the government, and as such, sells for almost double the price than federal Iraq, where the price is around 500 Iraqi dinars per liter.



21 février 2022  
Par Emilie Baujard

## Syrie : où en est-on du rapatriement des enfants de djihadistes ?

La centaine de femmes françaises et leurs 300 enfants sont toujours détenus dans un camp au nord-est de la Syrie. 35 enfants au total sont rentrés en France depuis 2019. Aucun depuis 13 mois.

C'est un sujet totalement absent de la campagne présidentielle : le sort des enfants et des femmes djihadistes retenus en Syrie depuis 2019. Cinq ONG françaises lancent un nouveau cri d'alarme. "Il faut les rapatrier au plus vite" disent-elles. Quelle est leur situation aujourd'hui après la chute de l'Etat islamique ?

Elle n'a guère évolué. La centaine de femmes et leurs 300 enfants sont toujours détenus dans un camp au nord-est de la Syrie. Des camps gardés par les

forces kurdes, soutenus financièrement par les pays étrangers dont la France. La plupart sont là-bas depuis la chute de Baghouz en février 2019, d'autres depuis plus longtemps, retenus dans des conditions très précaires, dans des tentes, avec impossibilité de sortir à l'extérieur des limites du camp.

Pour l'instant, la France refuse de les rapatrier. Cette position est-elle encore tenable ? Elle l'est de moins en moins. Au départ, le gouvernement a procédé à des rapatriements au

cas par cas, pour les orphelins et les plus fragiles : 35 enfants au total sont rentrés en France depuis 2019. Aucun depuis 13 mois.

### Peut-on juger ces femmes en France ?

Pourtant, d'autres pays européens ont choisi récemment d'aller récupérer leurs nationaux. C'est aussi la demande des Kurdes qui disent de ne plus pouvoir assurer la sécurité des camps face à la résurgence de Daesh.

Peut-on juger ces femmes en France ? En fait elles sont toutes recherchées par les autorités françaises car le simple fait d'être parties en Syrie, fait que le Parquet National anti-terroriste est saisi. Elles sont donc recherchées, elles ont des mandats d'arrêt. Et puis elles sont aussi, pour certaines, des mines d'informations. Comme les femmes des frères Clain, les djihadistes français qui ont revendiqué les attentats du 13 novembre. Ces femmes sont recherchées, localisées et pourtant pas encore rapatriées.

## Recep Tayyip Erdogan en RDC sous le signe de la coopération économique et sécuritaire

Après Kinshasa, le président turc doit se rendre à Dakar et à Bissau. Le volume de ses échanges entre Ankara et le continent a été multiplié par douze en presque vingt ans.

**A**près Kinshasa, le président turc doit se rendre à Dakar et à Bissau. Le volume de ses échanges entre Ankara et le continent a été multiplié par douze en presque vingt ans.

Les questions sécuritaires et économiques ont été au cœur de la visite officielle du président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan, arrivé dimanche 20 février, en République démocratique du Congo (RDC), pour un séjour de deux jours.

Le président congolais Félix Tshisekedi s'est entretenu avec son homologue turc, qui était accompagné d'une importante délégation composée de membres du gouvernement et d'hommes d'affaires de Turquie. « Ce jour est un jour historique dans les relations entre la Turquie et la République démocratique du Congo » en raison « des accords signés entre nos deux pays et qui symbolisent la volonté de raffermir nos relations », a déclaré le président Tshisekedi à l'issue d'un tête-à-tête avec son homologue turc.

Ces accords portent sur « plusieurs domaines de coopération » notamment « la sécurité, les infrastructures, la santé, le transport », a-t-il indiqué, saluant une « coopération gagnant-gagnant ». Dans le domaine sécuritaire, « nous avons sollicité le soutien de la Turquie pour lutter contre les milices et groupes terroristes dans l'est de notre pays », a dit M. Tshisekedi.

Le président Erdogan est arrivé



Le président de la République démocratique du Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, et son homologue turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, à Kinshasa, le 20 février 2022. ARSENE MPIANA / AFP

dimanche après-midi à Kinshasa, première étape d'une tournée africaine prévue du 20 au 23 février. Il devrait ensuite se rendre au Sénégal et en Guinée-Bissau. Sa visite « se veut le symbole d'une volonté maintes fois exprimée par Ankara et Kinshasa de renforcer leur coopération dans les domaines politiques, économiques et sécuritaires », a précisé la présidence congolaise.

### Quarantaine d'ambassades

Elle « fait suite aux rencontres bilatérales tenues entre les deux chefs d'Etat » en septembre 2021 à Ankara et en décembre à Istanbul. En septembre, le président Tshisekedi avait effectué une visite officielle à Ankara, également sous le signe de la coopération économique. Le président

congolais s'était ensuite rendu à Istanbul en décembre où il avait pris part au sommet Turquie-Afrique.

Les relations entre Ankara et Kinshasa sont au beau fixe depuis plusieurs années et le volume des investissements turcs en RDC ne cesse de croître. Entre les deux pays, le commerce bilatéral s'élève à environ 40 millions de dollars (35 millions d'euros).

La Turquie veut renforcer sa présence en Afrique. Depuis 2003, le volume de ses échanges avec le continent est passé de 2 milliards de dollars à au moins 25 milliards de dollars. M. Erdogan s'est rendu près d'une quarantaine de fois en Afrique depuis 2005, en tant que premier ministre et président, toujours accompagné

d'hommes d'affaires de son pays.

Depuis, la Turquie a ouvert une quarantaine d'ambassades sur le continent et étendu le réseau de la compagnie aérienne nationale Turkish Airlines. Mais l'influence de la Turquie va au-delà, avec notamment des ambitions en matière de défense. Le pays a inauguré sa première base militaire en Afrique en 2017 en Somalie.

La RDC est confrontée à l'insécurité dans sa région orientale en raison de la présence de dizaines de groupes armés qui menacent les civils. Des opérations militaires sont en cours contre ces groupes, notamment les Forces démocratiques alliées (ADF), présentées par l'organisation Etat islamique (EI) comme sa branche en Afrique centrale.



## MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY: 'Ban on education in mother language torments Kurdish children in Turkey'

**Y**esterday, February 21, was the International Mother Language Day. In Turkey, education is offered in only one language while there is a multilingual life: Kurds, Arabs, Laz, Hamsheni people...

The children of these peoples, among several others, learn their own languages at home, but they are educated in Turkish when they start school at the ages of 6-7. Encountering Turkish perhaps for the first time in their lives, these children are traumatized in various ways.

Against this background, Helin Yılmaz from Pirha speaks with Marmara University student Cansel Tan and Melik Çelik, Jinnews editor Roza Metina and young activist Sevda T. about their own experiences.

Tan and Çelik received their education in different villages in eastern Erzurum province's Karayazı district. When Tan went to school for the first time for enrollment, he was subjected to an interview.

'You are gonna learn this language'

Cansel Tan remembers that during this interview before starting school, the children 'who could not speak Turkish properly' were asked to enroll in school the next year: "They asked me something in Turkish. I couldn't answer properly. I couldn't understand it anyway."

Tans says that he had difficulties in his first year at school. Noting that teachers would inflict violence as well, he remembers that one time, he and his friends were held in the classroom until 9 in the evening though the class ended at noon because they could not spell the words correctly:



"We apparently couldn't read them properly. The teacher kept us at school till 9. I remember him saying, 'You are gonna learn this language.' We were so scared. Our families could barely come and take us from school."

Tan stresses that it was through such practices that he learned Turkish. He notes that after learning it, they received a very simplified education oriented towards improving their Turkish, adding that when they went back home, they had difficulties in finding sources in Turkish:

"When we came back home, we would read the subtitles of news. We didn't have other sources. I remember having made great efforts. I could luckily learn this language at the end of the 1st year."

Coming to İstanbul after finishing primary school, Tan saw that the education there was very different from the one in his village in Erzurum. He says that when he came to İstanbul as a 6th year student after the simplified education in Erzurum, he had great difficulties in adapting to the school:

"The education given there at

the 3rd class was apparently given during the 1st in İstanbul. That we started the school without knowing the language in fact caused us to receive a preparatory education in the 1st year. While I was the most successful student in the village, it took me three years to get used to the school in İstanbul.

Those years passed with both an adaptation to society and again a problem with the language."

### Dreams in another language

Cansel Tan is also a pious person. He remembers that he was stronger in faith when he was a child. When he dreamt or said prayers as a child, he would speak in Kurdish. But after starting to learn Turkish, all of these have become Turkish: "Interesting as it may sound, when I imagine myself in the village, the incident-context is in Kurdish; the place I find myself in changes the language in my mind. When I go to the village, I don't speak any Turkish at all. Despite all the time that has passed, I sometimes forget the Turkish words and ask, 'How is it called in Turkish?'"

Kurdish child treated as 'dumb'

Melik Çelik also remembers

having great difficulties in the 1st year at school. One time, he wanted to say he forgot to do his homework, but as he didn't know how to say it in Turkish, he couldn't answer: "At the 2nd class, I was supposed to write 'ağız' (mouth in Tr.) in the blank, but I wrote 'dev' (giant in Tr.) instead. I wrote in Kurdish as I didn't know its Turkish equivalent, either."

He says that he had such difficulties until his 3rd year at school, adding that he didn't forget Kurdish despite the obligation to learn Turkish: "Because Turkish was spoken for 5-6 hours at school. But, at home, so for the rest of our lives, we spoke Kurdish. This was of course a result of village life."

Sevda T. also went to the primary school in Erzurum. She expresses similar difficulties: "When I started school, I could neither speak nor understand Turkish. Teachers would get very angry for this reason; they would hurl insults and inflict violence. I didn't want to go to school. I would throw my bag into the stream after school so that they would not send me there again."

She adds, "When I came back home, my mother would beat me this time because I threw my bag into the stream and ripped up my notebooks. I was also beaten at school because I didn't speak Turkish. One time, a friend of mine wetted oneself because s/he didn't know how to speak. The teacher came, took her/him by the ear and took her/him out of the classroom. In my fourth year, I could barely express myself. The teacher would always call us 'dumb'. As I didn't know what it

meant, I would say this to everyone."

### Children feel safe in their mother language

Jinnews editor Roza Metina went through what Cansel, Melik and Sevda went through. Her first year at school was also like a preparatory class for foreign language education. She remembers that despite having difficulties herself, there were her other friends who were having more difficulties than her and were beaten up by teachers for this reason:

I remember it very well. Some teachers a few neighborhoods away from us banned children from speaking Kurdish. As you cannot receive education in your mother language in the

first years of school, your attitude to school changes and you come to the conclusion that school is not a beneficial and safe place for you. Because children see their own mother language as a shelter where they feel safe. We, Kurds, have always been deprived of this shelter and we have come to forget several Kurdish words as we have come under the influence of Turkish.

Metina says that despite these policies of assimilation, she didn't abandon her own stance or struggle and notes that there are several writers who write in their own mother language. She defines mother language as the safe shelter and existence of people. For this reason, Metina says, she has been resisting the policies of assimilation.

### Rediscovering one's mother language

Remembering how she has reunited with her mother language as she didn't know how to read and write in Kurdish, Metina says: "After I graduated from high school, I learned how to read and write in Kurdish at the KURDÎ-DER, which has been closed by a Statutory Decree. After the course, I have improved my mother language Kurdish by reading books and doing research in Kurdish. Now, I pay considerable attention to not being influenced by Turkish while speaking Kurdish."

Metina has started writing and publishing books in her own mother language over the years. Concluding her remarks, she says:

"As my service for my mother language is a conscientious responsibility, I felt an inner peace to an extent. It is indispensable for every Kurd to not forget that feeling this inner peace in the end is the result of a great struggle, that they lay claim to their mother language and develop self-defense against this wheel of assimilation. As in the case of every other field, the force of unity that Kurds should never abandon comes to the fore again in order to protect and keep alive the Kurdish language.

"This can be done if we wage a struggle together and we can raise our struggle against the system that wants to destroy our language." (AEK/SD)



February 22, 2022

## Kurdistan's Weekly Brief February 22, 2022

### Iran

On International Mother Language Day, February 21, the Cooperation Center for Iranian Kurdistan's Political Parties (CCIKP) said the Islamic Republic of Iran has contradicted "its own laws" by repressing the Kurdish language for over four decades. The CCIKP also drew attention to the five-year prison sentence imposed on a female Kurdish language teacher named Zara Mohammadi for "establishing a committee against the stability and security of the Iranian system."

Kermanshah's Islamic Revolutionary Court sentenced a Kurdish activist and poet, Kamaran Takouk, to two years and four months in prison for "disrespecting the Supreme Leader" and "propaganda against the state." Moreover, Iranian security forces arrested an activist named Kaiomaras

Latifi in Sanandaj (Sena). Iranian intelligence officers (Ettela'at) then raided Latifi's sister's home and took her into custody. Concurrently, Iranian authorities detained several activists, including Nadir Aminzadah, Mawloud Khawanche, and Salman Imamzanbil, in Bokeran and a Kurdish language teacher named Maisam Khorani in Ilam.

The Turkish government returned another Kurdish activist to Iran last week. The Hengaw Organization for Human Rights said the activist, Saed Mirzaee, was deported to Iran from Turkey in early February and is currently jailed in Urmia.

Iranian border guards wounded two Kurdish border porters (kolbars) in Nusa and Baneh last Tuesday and Wednesday. Another kolbar named Ali Daweshanafard died of a heart attack near Salas-e Babajani.

### Iraq

Iraqi Kurdistan continues to grapple with the ramifications of the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq's decision to declare the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Oil and Gas Law No. 22 of 2007 unconstitutional. All of Iraq's major Kurdish parties, except the New Generation Party, denounced the ruling, which effectively prevents the KRG from producing and selling its oil and gas and raised Kurdish fears of future rulings that could dissolve the Peshmerga and shut down the KRG. At the same time, several observers have said the ruling is an Iranian attempt to pressure Muqtada al Sadr's coalition, which includes the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), into adopting positions more favorable to Iran's interests. The KDP's leader, former President of Kurdistan Region Masoud Barzani, spoke with al

Sadr on the phone on Thursday. Additionally, a senior KDP official announced plans for the KDP, al Sadr's party, and the Sunni members of al Sadr's coalition to meet in Erbil. Simultaneously, the US Ambassador to Iraq, Matthew Tueller, met with Kurdish officials and discussed recent developments regarding Erbil's relationship with Baghdad. Barzani's office claimed Ambassador Tueller and Barzani discussed the "constitutional steps" following the new parliament's first session.

Turkish airstrikes hit two locations near Duhok Governorate's Amedi District and Shiladze subdistrict. The strikes are part of Turkey's ongoing military incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan that it professes is meant to counter the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Syria  
The Syrian Democratic Forces

(SDF) conducted joint military exercises with US armored units in Deir Ez Zor Governorate's rural areas. The SDF said the exercises were intended to "test new tactics for combating ISIS (Da'esh) cells" and improve "methods of providing rapid support to military outposts." The SDF also claimed it killed a Da'esh leader and arrested three terrorists, including a teenage suicide bomber, while conducting raids in Deir Ez Zor. Separately, the Tal Tamer Military Council announced two of its personnel were wounded by a Turkish drone strike near a Russian military base in the region on February 17. Finally, Kurdish sources announced a member of the local security

forces (Asayesh) died, though no further information was provided regarding the cause of death.

An Afrin Human Rights Organization spokesperson, Ibrahim Shekho, said Turkish proxies have kidnapped 96 people, including 11 women and five children, in occupied Afrin in 2022. Shekho also told the Kurdish Hawar News that Turkey and its proxies have killed ten people, cut down five thousand trees, and pillaged nine archaeological sites in 2022 so far.

#### Turkey

Last Wednesday, Ankara's 18th High Criminal Court held a new hearing against the Co-

leader of the Pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), Pervin Buldan, for speeches she delivered and attended certain "events" years ago. The court requested further information from the constitutional court, and the next hearing will hold in May. Further, Turkey's Appeals Court upheld three years and six-month sentence against the jailed Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtas. Last year, Demirtas was sentenced for "insulting the president" publicly. The Kurdish politician has been jailed since 2016 and faces more than 140 years in prison. Likewise, in Istanbul, a Turkish court decided to continue jailing dozens of activists, including the renowned Turkish

philanthropist Osman Kavala. In the newest hate crime against the Kurds, the HDP office in Adana's Yüreğir District was attacked by "Molotovs," resulting in property damages only. HDP supporters and other Turkish organizations held a protest in front of the office, but the police blocked HDP politicians from holding a press conference. "The governor and the police chief of Adana are favoring illegal practices. We have the right to make a statement wherever we want. They are trying to suppress us because they're afraid. We will get rid of this oppressive government by developing our own solidarity against this fear," said Kemal Peköz, the HDP lawmaker.

Le Monde

24 février 2022

Par Ghazal Golshiri & Philippe Ricard

## L'accord nucléaire avec l'Iran est sur le point d'être sauvé

Alors que les pourparlers engagés étaient dans l'impasse en décembre 2021, chacun a, depuis, fait des concessions. Si l'Iran accepte le projet d'accord négocié à Vienne, un compromis pourrait être trouvé dans les tout prochains jours.

Ces négociations-là sont occultées par le conflit entre la Russie et l'Ukraine, loin des regards et de la pression médiatique. Après trois mois de tractations aussi intenses que confidentielles dans le charme désuet d'un palace viennois, le sauvetage de l'accord nucléaire (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA) signé en 2015 avec l'Iran, puis dénoncé en mai 2018 par les Etats-Unis de Donald Trump, est sur le point de se conclure. Dans le meilleur des cas, un compromis pourrait même être dévoilé dans les tout prochains jours. « Un projet d'accord est sur la table », explique au Monde une source proche du dossier.

Les représentants des autres pays signataires – France, Allemagne, Royaume-Uni, Chine et Russie – n'attendent désormais

qu'une décision des plus hautes autorités iraniennes. « Il faut désormais bien comprendre qu'il faut des décisions politiques de la part de Téhéran », a récemment expliqué le chef de la diplomatie française, Jean-Yves Le Drian. « Nous sommes à un point de bascule, une décision est nécessaire maintenant », dit une source.

L'objectif des travaux en cours est double : permettre le retour des Etats-Unis dans l'accord, tout en contraignant Téhéran à suspendre son programme nucléaire. Depuis que l'ancien président républicain Donald Trump a tenté de torpiller le compromis signé par son prédécesseur démocrate Barack Obama, en retirant unilatéralement son pays, l'Iran s'est affranchi des engagements pris trois ans plus tôt pour mieux relancer le déve-

loppement de l'arme atomique. D'après les experts, le pays enrichirait d'ores et déjà assez d'uranium, pour passer à la fabrication d'une bombe, s'il en décidait ainsi. Ce temps dit de « breakout », de quelques semaines à ce stade, serait allongé de manière substantielle avec le nouvel accord, sans atteindre les douze mois agréés voici sept ans.

Le Guide suprême, Ali Khamenei, plutôt encourageant

Les Occidentaux ont prévenu qu'ils ne souhaitent pas discuter au-delà de la fin février, avant que le dispositif qu'il s'agit de restaurer ne devienne totalement caduc en raison des progrès rapides, selon eux, du programme nucléaire iranien. Pour les pays qui négocient l'accord, le moment est donc venu de conclure sur la base d'un don-

nant-donnant délicat à mettre en œuvre. Au fil des pourparlers, les Etats-Unis ont offert de lever de très nombreuses sanctions financières et économiques qui frappent l'Iran, mais pas toutes, en échange du retour de la République islamique aux engagements qui ont été pris voici sept ans. Les délais retenus par l'accord initial ne vont pas être prolongés : ainsi, il sera interdit à Téhéran de mener des activités d'enrichissement d'uranium d'ici à 2025.

En échange, l'administration Biden a proposé de lever une bonne partie des mesures imposées par Donald Trump dans l'idée alors de bloquer toute perspective de retour au texte de 2015 et d'exercer une « pression maximale » sur le régime. L'interdiction d'exporter du pétrole serait aussi levée.



Dans la dernière ligne droite, le négociateur iranien Ali Bagheri Kani est rentré, mercredi 23 février, pour un « court séjour » à Téhéran afin d'obtenir l'aval de ses autorités. Il devrait revenir samedi à Vienne. Lors d'un discours télévisé, le Guide suprême, Ali Khamenei, s'est montré plutôt encourageant, le 17 février : « La diplomatie est bonne aussi et nos frères révolutionnaires œuvrent pour faire lever les sanctions et persuader l'autre côté [de le faire] », a soutenu la plus haute autorité du pays. La veille, Mohammad Marandi, un conseiller de l'équipe de négociation iranienne, et une figure très conservatrice, avait tweeté : « Il est possible qu'un accord soit conclu en quelques jours. »

En attendant, il est tout aussi possible que Téhéran fasse des demandes de dernière minute, avant de se décider à l'ultime moment. Dans ce cas-là, les Européens sont décidés à ne pas prolonger les discussions. « Nous sommes unis et déterminés », souligne une source.

### Chacun a fait depuis des concessions

« Les négociations pour restaurer le JCPoA sont sur le point de franchir la ligne d'arrivée », a estimé, mardi, le négociateur russe, Mikhaïl Oulianov, une figure centrale dans les pourparlers, tout comme l'est son pays, qui continue de travailler main dans la main avec les Occidentaux dans ce domaine, en dépit de la crise russo-ukrainienne. Ces derniers jours, Emmanuel Macron et Vladimir Poutine ont d'ailleurs évoqué la question à différentes reprises, en marge de leurs échanges infructueux pour tenter d'éviter la guerre entre Moscou et Kiev.

Comme en 2015, la Russie est pressentie pour être le pays de stockage de la matière fissile que l'Iran va être obligé d'exporter afin de se mettre en conformité avec ses engagements – le pays ne pourra pas garder plus



Hossein Amir Abdollahian, le ministre des affaires étrangères iranien, avec son homologue irlandais, Simon Coveney, à Téhéran, le 14 février 2022. VAHID SALEMI / AP

de 300 kilos d'uranium enrichi à 3,67 %. Moscou fait aussi régulièrement pression sur Téhéran pour permettre à l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique de mener ses inspections sur le terrain, en dépit des obstacles mis sur sa route par les Iraniens.

Les négociateurs américains et iraniens ne se parlent toujours pas directement, mais par le truchement des autres délégations. Et les pourparlers reviennent de loin. Les tractations pour sauver le « deal » ont été engagées quelques mois après l'élection de Joe Biden à la présidence des Etats-Unis. En dépit des progrès constatés au printemps 2021, elles ont ensuite été interrompues pour cause d'élection présidentielle en Iran. Le scrutin a vu un ultraconservateur, et proche du Guide suprême, Ebrahim Raïssi, prendre la succession d'un des plus fervents avocats de l'accord nucléaire, le modéré Hassan Rohani, qui avait soutenu le compromis de 2015.

Après cinq mois de suspension, le nouveau gouvernement iranien a accepté de revenir à la table des négociations, avec des exigences inacceptables pour les Etats-Unis. Il réclamait en particulier la levée de toutes les sanctions américaines et des garanties pour éviter qu'une nouvelle administration ne dénonce à nouveau le texte. Fin décembre 2021, les pourparlers

étaient dans l'impasse. Chacun a, depuis, fait des concessions.

### En Israël, l'inquiétude est vive

L'imminence d'un accord ne va pas sans quelques mouvements de fébrilité. Aux Etats-Unis, des élus du Congrès, en grande majorité républicains, ont averti Joe Biden qu'un retour au compromis de 2015 ne pourrait pas se faire sans un nouvel examen parlementaire du texte. Cette perspective préoccupe les capitales européennes, qui craignent que l'accord renouvelé ne butte sur une vive opposition, même s'il s'agit d'une des priorités du président démocrate.

En Israël, l'inquiétude est déjà vive. Dimanche, le premier ministre, Naftali Bennett, a jugé que l'accord serait « plus fragile » que le texte d'origine. Allié des Etats-Unis et ennemi de l'Iran, l'Etat hébreu s'était opposé au compromis de 2015. « Israël se prépare pour le jour d'après [la conclusion de l'accord] afin d'assurer la sécurité de ses citoyens par nos propres moyens », a ajouté le chef du gouvernement. « Le principal problème avec ce [nouvel] accord est que dans deux ans et demi (...) l'Iran pourra développer, installer et mettre en marche des centrifugeuses nucléaires », a-t-il dénoncé.

Enfin, l'accord pourrait être accompagné d'échanges de prisonniers entre l'Iran et les

Etats-Unis, même si cette dimension dépasse l'objectif de non-prolifération qui mobilise les négociateurs installés depuis des semaines à Vienne.

En janvier 2016, le jour de l'entrée en vigueur du précédent compromis, cinq Irano-Américains avaient été libérés par l'Iran. En contrepartie, Washington avait décidé de relâcher ou d'abandonner les charges contre sept Iraniens, presque tous accusés ou condamnés aux Etats-Unis pour violation des sanctions contre la République islamique. Le gouvernement américain avait également renoncé à poursuivre quatorze autres Iraniens vivant à l'étranger. Le même jour, il avait procédé au transfert en Iran de 1,7 milliard de dollars (1,5 milliard d'euros), dans le cadre d'un vieux différend entre les deux pays concernant un contrat de vente d'armes.

### Echanges de prisonniers

En cas d'entente à Vienne, différentes déclarations, aussi bien en Iran qu'aux Etats-Unis, laissent penser qu'un nouvel échange pourrait avoir lieu. En janvier, l'émissaire spécial de Washington pour l'Iran, Robert Malley, avait suggéré que la relance du pacte nucléaire était difficilement imaginable, « alors que quatre Américains innocents sont retenus en otage par l'Iran ». Dans un tweet, le 22 février, le diplomate américain a demandé leur libération.

Samedi, le ministre des affaires étrangères iranien, Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a déclaré que la République islamique d'Iran était prête pour un échange immédiat de prisonniers avec Washington. Téhéran demande, de son côté, la libération de plus d'une douzaine de ses ressortissants emprisonnés aux Etats-Unis, dont sept Irano-Américains, deux Iraniens résidents permanents et quatre Iraniens sans statut légal. Cette fois encore, la plupart ont été emprisonnés pour avoir violé les sanctions américaines contre l'Iran.

# Surviving Migrants at Greek Border Say They Were Left to Die

## Survivors of Deadly Night at Greek Border Say They Were Left to Die

It was a cold night, lashing with rain and with a sharp north wind blowing, when Greek border forces pushed up to 50 migrants back across the river that marks the border with Turkey.

“It was so bad,” said one, Jaber Jang Singh, 33, a farm laborer from India. “With the weather conditions they should not have done that. This was to leave us to die.”

Nineteen did die that night, unable to reach shelter in the waterlogged rice fields on the Turkish side. They were found over the next two days, huddled against a low cement wall and collapsed on the edge of a muddy road. Before pushing the people back, Greek officers had stripped them of their



A view of the area near Ipsala, Turkey, where several of the 19 migrants who died earlier this month were found. Credit... Nicole Tung for The New York Times

grants in the provincial city of Edirne. Their accounts matched recent Turkish government statements, which accused the Greek authorities of conducting pushbacks illegal

people had ever been in Greece.

“These migrants never made it to the border,” he said in a statement. “Any suggestion they did, or indeed were pushed back into Turkey, is utter nonsense.” His spokesman declined to comment further this week.

The toll on the night of Feb. 1 was the highest of any single incident yet discovered in the two years since the Turkish authorities and human rights groups say Greece has embarked on a hard-line campaign under the conservative Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to turn away migrants trying to reach Europe, whether by land or by sea.

Greece not long ago received hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers, at the height of the migrant crisis in 2015, when more than one million asylum seekers surged into Europe. Though the flow is now vastly reduced, Greeks have grown exhausted and bit-

ter that, as a frontline state, they have had to bear a greater burden of dealing with the asylum seekers than their E.U. partners.

Greek Coast Guard forces have been accused of setting migrants adrift in flimsy rafts, which has sometimes led to drownings before the crafts are intercepted by Turkish patrols.

At least three people have died in the Aegean Sea since last September, victims of almost 540 incidents of informal returns by Greece reported since the beginning of 2020, Filippo Grandi, head of the United Nations refugee agency, said in a statement released Monday.

The tactics are much the same along Greece’s land borders, which have for decades been a major crossing point, and the scene of pushbacks, of migrants from Asia, the Middle East and Africa heading to Europe.

The situation has grown worse since 2020, when President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey announced he was lifting restraints on migrants heading to Greece, and Greece strengthened its border controls. The two countries remain at loggerheads.

In a rare rebuke, Mr. Grandi warned in his statement that increasing violence against migrants and refugees on European borders was leading to loss of life, and singled out Greece for “recurrent and consistent reports” of violent pushbacks.



Riaz, left, and Jaber Jang Singh, two of the survivors, at a migrant center in Edirne, Turkey. “They took my phone, wallet, passport, a locket and bracelet, and my bus ticket,” Mr. Singh said of the Greeks. Credit... Nicole Tung for The New York Times

jackets, sweaters and shoes. Four survivors recounted the episode in interviews with The New York Times at a Turkish government center for mi-

under international law. The Greek migration minister, Notis Mitarachi, said at the time that the deaths were a tragedy, but he denied that the



Mr. Mitarachi expressed surprise at Mr. Grandi's comments in a statement issued by his ministry, and said that Greece protects the external borders of the European Union in compliance with international law and human rights.

That was not what the four survivors described. They said they had been detained inside Greece by uniformed Greek police, and held in makeshift camps for up to a day. Greek officers confiscated their belongings and stripped them of their outerwear and drove them to the edge of the River Evros, which divides Greece and Turkey.

"They took my phone, wallet, passport, a locket and bracelet, and my bus ticket," Mr. Singh said. He had not even come from Turkey but had entered Greece from Serbia and was traveling by bus to the capital, Athens, when he was detained, but he was pushed into Turkey nevertheless.

At the river they were made to board a rubber dinghy in groups of eight to 10 and were pulled across the river with a rope and pulley system. Armed men in uniforms and black balaclavas oversaw the operation. «It was not good but there was nothing we could do," said Muhammad Saiful Islam, 22, an electrician from Bangladesh who was detained a few hours after crossing into Greece.

Barefoot, stripped down to a thin, hooded sweatshirt and jeans, he set out walking fast in pouring rain across the area's patchwork of rice paddies, criss-crossed by canals and dirt roads hard to navigate even in daylight.

Two others from Bangladesh said they had crossed into Greece the night before and were pushed back to Turkey in a group of about 40 men around 10 p.m. "I was scared and so tired from the rain and cold,"



Playing football at a migrant center in Edirne. Turkey hosts nearly four million refugees. Credit... Nicole Tung for The New York Times

said Riaz, 27, a tailor from Bangladesh, who like many in his country uses only one name. He said he recognized one of the men who died, after photos were shared on social media. "We were walking fast and maybe they were behind," he said, "and those who stayed behind died."

After two to three hours walking and running Mr. Singh said his group reached a road and was picked up by a Turkish police patrol, which gave them clothes, juice and biscuits. "I was shivering and I was scared," he said.

It was not till morning that a farmer heard a cry and, looking across a flooded canal, saw a group of migrants huddled against the low wall of a water pump. By the time rescuers reached the group through the floods, the lone survivor was unable to speak and died soon after.

Five men were found beside the pump, and seven more a few miles north across the waterlogged fields. Initial reports said 12 had died. It took another day before rescuers found the rest of the 19.

Their bodies were purple and icy to the touch, one rescuer said. Some had tried to pull off their shirts and pants in the last throes of death, he said. He spoke on condition his name not be published because he was not permitted to speak to the media.

The tensions and lack of coordination between Greece and Turkey are increasingly endangering lives, warned Philippe Leclerc, head of the U.N. refugee agency in Turkey. He called on Greece and Turkey to investigate the episode, as has the government of Somalia, which said five of the dead men were its citizens.

"The first thing is to ensure there is management and cooperation on both sides to avoid the loss of life — that is the first imperative," he said. "



Migrants from Morocco took shelter in an abandoned hotel near Ipsala. The men have tried to cross into Greece, but say they have been pushed back by border guards who stripped and beat them. Credit...Nicole Tung for The New York Times

Among migrants who have suffered pushbacks there was little doubt who was to blame. A group of Moroccan migrants camping out in a derelict hotel on the outskirts of Ipsala, a town in the area where the deaths occurred, said the Greek border was the most difficult crossing in all of Europe, al-

though they said Bulgarian border guards on the Turkish border used more violence.

The Moroccans said they had attempted the crossing from Turkey to Greece multiple times in recent weeks and had been beaten and pushed back by Greek soldiers, each time after being stripped of their money, documents, warm clothing and shoes.

One man, 38, who gave his name only as Hassan, a firefighter from the city of Fez, said on two occasions he had been shoved into the river and made to swim. A strong swimmer, he had helped several cross, but many had drowned, he said.

He was set on reaching France where his three children were taken into government care after their mother died. "We are not criminals," he said. "We just want to work." The survivor, Mr. Riaz, was bitter about his treatment by

the Greeks, and said that days after his freezing ordeal, he still did not have feeling in his feet. "We know we were there illegally, but the government is not illegal, so they should not treat us illegally," he said. "They treated us in an illegal manner and because of that one of my friends is dead."



# Kirkuk Minute February 24, 2022

## Kirkuk

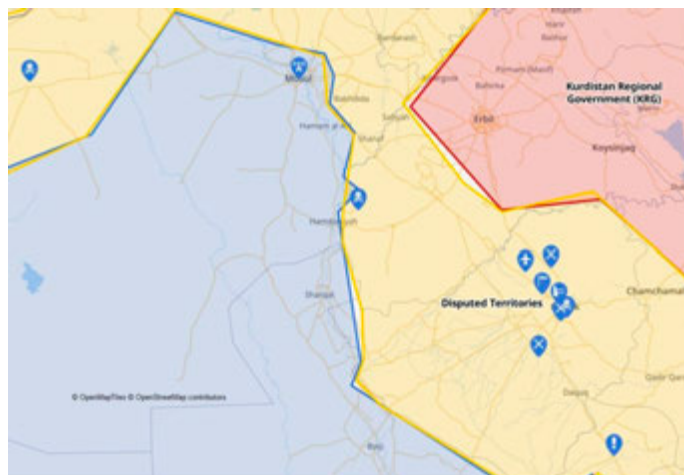
Kirkuk police announced the arrest of yet another group dealing drugs in Kirkuk consisting of eight members detained in two separate security ambushes. Since October 16th, 2017, drug dealers have been busted in Kirkuk weekly, as the province has become the main route for drug trafficking from Iran.

On Wednesday, February 23rd, an off-duty Peshmerga named Akam Mohammed was kidnapped in front of his home in the al Nasr neighborhood. Hours after the incident, his family received a call from an unknown kidnapper, telling them that they would no longer see their son.

A militant from the Iranian-backed militias attacked a Kurdish family and pulled a gun on them using slurs. The video went viral on social media, pressuring the security forces to arrest him. The militant is from Tuz Khurmatu and resides in Kirkuk.

The Iraqi army is establishing three new military divisions: Northern, Central, and Southern. The Northern Division will be responsible for Kirkuk, Diyala, Saladin, and Nineveh Provinces. Their respective headquarters will be inside the K1 military base of Kirkuk. General Hussein al Mufriji will command the Northern Division, which will consist of five brigades, 38 officers, and 139 scouts. Kurdish officers have been excluded so far from this formation.

On Wednesday, February 23rd,



the Spokesperson for the Iraqi Military Forces, Yahya Rasoul, announced the death of five ISIS (Da'esh) members near Dibis district. Iraqi warplanes bombed the terrorists near Qoshqaya after hitting two Da'esh hideouts.

Due to poor sewage systems, a 0.5-inch rainfall in Kirkuk led to flooding in several areas, including three neighborhoods in the city and Daquq distinct. The floods caused property damage.

Turkish-backed Turkmen Front leader, Hassan Turan, said his party's nominees must take the new government's position on the Turkmen share. His remarks came in front of his supporters in Mosul, contradicting Shia Turkmen officials, backed by Iran. Turkey supports the Turkmen Front despite having some of the Shia members parts of it.

A United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Daesh (UNATAD) visited Kirkuk's Taza district last week to investigate Da'esh attacks using chemical substances in 2016.

According to sources, the fed-

eral government will reimpose customs on goods from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The customs were imposed on and off since October 16th, 2017, but Baghdad paused the process due to significant corruption and complaints by locals. The new decision comes after a visit by Iraq's Agriculture Minister Mohammed Karim to Kirkuk to "stop the smuggling of food," but this decision will dramatically raise goods prices. Khanaqin

The security of the central court in Khanaqin prevented a peaceful protest by journalists against the conditions of free speech, forcing them to hold it in a place nearby. The journalists and activists demonstrate "violations" facing them and the deterioration of free speech and writing. Separately, a Diyala lawmaker named Salah al Timimi revealed that hundreds of caravans, worth 20 million dollars, went missing after returning the Internally Displaced People (IDP) to their homes. The lawmaker called for investigations and said only "30 caravans" remain in the IDP camp.

## Tuz Khurmatu

The National Security Department closed down all the privately owned gas stations in the town since they do not "obtain permits." Gas smuggling has been a significant issue facing the provinces, and many armed groups and militias are involved.

## Makhmour

On Wednesday night, February 23th, Da'esh attacked a military base with RPGs near Soila village, killing two soldiers. The village is near Shergat-Mosul-Makhmour's main route.

## Shingal (Sinjar)

On Monday, February 21st, the KRG's office for Freeing Kidnapped Yazidis released an updated report of the Yazidis in the country and the missing ones since the Yazidi Genocide in 2014. The report said that 550,000 Yazidis Kurds were in Iraq in 2014, and 360,000 of those were displaced after the Yazidi Genocide. However, only 150,000 have returned to their homes. The report also stated that the terror group kidnaped 6,417 Yazidis, and only 3,552 have been freed. Moreover, Da'esh has destroyed 68 holy shrines of the Yazidis, and the authorities so far have found 82 mass graves for the victims of the Genocide. Meanwhile, on Tuesday, under the UN's supervision, a joint expert team from Baghdad and Erbil cultivated six mass graves of the Yazidi Genocide near the Snuny subdistrict for DNA tests and identification of the victims.



24 février 2022  
Avec AFP

## Syrie: l'ONU estime que la France «viole les droits des enfants» détenus dans les camps

**L**e Comité des droits de l'enfant affirme que la France ne protège pas «le droit à la vie» des enfants emprisonnés dans les camps syriens. Et réclame des mesures urgentes.

C'est un sujet brûlant sur lequel l'opinion publique se déchire: le rapatriement des enfants français détenus en Syrie. L'ONU, elle, a tranché: selon l'organisation internationale, la France viole les droits de ces enfants en omettant leur retour au pays. C'est du moins ce que conclut un communiqué publié ce jeudi par le Comité des droits de l'enfant, après avoir examiné trois requêtes concernant 49 enfants français.

Les conditions de détention de ces mineurs mettent «leur vie en danger depuis des années» et le refus de les rapatrier en France «viole leur droit à la vie, ainsi que leur droit à ne pas subir de traitements inhumains et dégradants», déclare le Comité, une instance composée de 18 experts indépendants chargés de surveiller la mise en œuvre de la Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant par ses Etats parties.

Les requêtes ont été déposées par un groupe de ressortissants français dont les petits-enfants, nièces et neveux sont actuellement détenus dans des camps sous contrôle des forces kurdes. Certains d'entre eux sont nés en Syrie, tandis que d'autres y ont voyagé avec leurs parents français à un très



Dans le camp d'Al-Hol, le 1er mai 2021, dans le nord-est de la Syrie, où sont détenus des familles suspectées de liens avec l'Etat islamique. (Baderkhan Ahmad/AP)

jeune âge. Ces derniers auraient collaboré avec Daech, le groupe terroriste de l'Etat islamique.

### Onze enfants rapatriés

Depuis que les familles ont porté leur cas devant le Comité en 2019, le gouvernement français a rapatrié onze de ces enfants. Les 38 autres, dont certains n'ont que cinq ans, sont toujours détenus dans des camps fermés en zone de guerre.

Le Comité estime que la France a «la responsabilité et le pouvoir de protéger les enfants français dans les camps syriens contre un risque immi-

nent pour leur vie en prenant des mesures pour les rapatrier». La détention prolongée des «victimes dans des conditions mettant leur vie en danger équivaut également à des peines ou traitements inhumains et dégradants». Toujours selon l'organisation, la France n'a pas démontré qu'elle prenait en compte l'intérêt supérieur de ces mineurs.

«Les enfants vivent dans des conditions sanitaires inhumaines, manquent de produits de première nécessité, notamment l'eau, la nourriture et les soins de santé, et font face à un risque imminent de mort. Au moins 62 enfants seraient dé-  
cédés dans les camps à cause

de ces conditions depuis le début de l'année 2021. La situation est donc extrêmement urgente», alerte Ann Skelton, membre du Comité des droits de l'enfant. «Nous demandons à la France de prendre des mesures immédiates car chaque jour qui passe crée un risque pour de nouvelles victimes», a-t-elle encore ajouté. L'ONU exhorte donc la France à prendre des mesures urgentes pour rapatrier les 38 enfants restants. Dans l'intervalle, le pays doit «prendre des mesures supplémentaires pour atténuer les risques pour la vie, la survie et le développement des enfants victimes pendant leur séjour dans le nord-est de la Syrie».



25 février 2022  
Par Luc Peillon

## La Turquie peut-elle fermer les détroits du Bosphore et des Dardanelles aux navires russes?

Ces deux passages maritimes, qui donnent accès à la mer Noire, sont régis par une convention internationale.

**A** lors que les combats font rage en Ukraine, cible des troupes russes depuis jeudi matin, l'ambassadeur ukrainien en Turquie a demandé à Ankara de fermer l'accès, à la marine russe, aux détroits des Dardanelles et du Bosphore, selon Reuters. Ces deux étroits passages maritimes sont hautement stratégiques, dans la mesure où ils relient la Méditerranée à la mer Noire. Dès lors, vous nous demandez si la Turquie pourrait répondre favorablement à la demande ukrainienne.



Un sous-marin russe dans le Bosphore le 13 février 2022. (Yoruk Isik/Reuters)

Ces détroits sont régis, depuis 1936, par la convention de Montreux, qui prévoit trois situations différentes. En période de paix, la règle est celle de libre circulation de tous les navires dans les Dardanelles et le

Bosphore. «Avec néanmoins des restrictions de tonnage et de durée passée en mer Noire, sauf pour les navires des pays riverains», explique à Check-News Alina Miron, professeure de droit international public à l'Université d'Angers.

Deuxième configuration possible, qui est celle qui prévaut actuellement dans la région: une situation de conflit où la Turquie n'est pas belligérante. Pour les navires de guerre des pays non concernés par le conflit, la libre circulation reste

la règle. Les autres - en l'occurrence ceux de l'Ukraine et de la Russie - ne pourront en revanche plus passer. Sauf, et ce point est essentiel, s'il s'agit de rejoindre leur port d'attache en mer Noire. Il apparaît donc difficile pour la Turquie, selon ce texte, d'interdire le passage à des bateaux russes rattachés à des ports de la mer Noire.

En cas de conflit, enfin, où la Turquie est belligérante, «le passage des bâtiments de guerre sera entièrement laissé à la discrétion du gouvernement turc», détaille l'article 19 de la convention. «Celui-ci aura donc le droit de décider ce qu'il veut», rappelle Alina Miron. Et pourra ainsi, s'il le souhaite, en interdire l'accès à tous les navires, quel que soit leur pavillon.

The New York Times

February 25, 2022  
By Farnaz Fassihi

## Asghar Farhadi's Rule: 'Always Focus on Ordinary People'

Asghar Farhadi, who has won two Oscars, says stories about the rich and famous "are not part of my emotional bank."

**A** sghar Farhadi made his first film at age 13, shot with an 8-millimeter camera, about two boys who agree to share an abandoned radio on alternate days, but who then discard it because neither can listen to their favorite nightly program.

The film — which won him a new bicycle as a prize — is a story of children grappling with trivial challenges. But like all stories Mr. Farhadi has scripted and directed to wide acclaim as one of Iran's pre-eminent filmmakers, it deployed the mundane to convey the profound.

"It is very valuable for me to always focus on ordinary people," Mr. Farhadi, who at 49 is a two-time Oscar winner, said in an interview from Los Angeles where he was visiting from his home base in Tehran. "I don't think my work will ever be about people who are special or fa-

mous because they are not part of my emotional bank."

For the characters in that emotional bank, drawn largely from his own childhood, circumstance can turn a prized object into a useless annoyance. People struggle with pains-



taking decisions and intricate compromises, anticipating one outcome but facing an entirely different result. Individuals are nuanced, not easily categorized as saviors or villains.

His most recent film, "A Hero," which won the second-most prestigious prize at Cannes, integrates all these subthemes. Its ordinary characters are engulfed in chaos, suspense and thrill.

After all, Mr. Farhadi is a child of a revolution that toppled the monarchy, instituted an Islamic theocracy and turned America into a political enemy. By the time he was 10, Iran was at war with Iraq and children were practicing bunker drills in elementary school.

"Our childhood was at a time when we experienced a bomb exploding in our neighborhood," he said. "This is something that won't vanish from our memory, and it'll influence us forever."

If Mr. Farhadi were to name his personal hero, it would be his grandfather with whom he spent most of his childhood. He was not highly educated but a gifted storyteller who gathered the family around to tell feel-good tales.

Mr. Farhadi, the captive audience of his grandfather, wanted to be like him. So, he made storytelling his profession.

The protagonist in "A Hero" is a man jailed for financial debt and struggling with a moral dilemma that could secure his release. News coverage and social media buzz elevate him into an overnight hero for a good deed. But the same forces quickly tear him down when twists and half-truths emerge, casting doubt on his motive.

Mr. Farhadi said the film examines why a society needs to make someone a hero. He wanted to show the flaws of idolizing a person and expecting others to follow. Time and insight will eventually bare the not-so perfect sides of a hero and the image will shatter, he said.



Asghar Farhadi, the Iranian filmmaker, in West Hollywood, Calif., in January. Credit... Rozette Rago for The New York Times

If his films are meant as social and political commentary, "A Hero" delivers a daring take-down of the tendency among Iranians to revere religious and political figures as Godlike. Mr. Farhadi said this outcome was inevitable "when you are trying to tell a story that is as close as possible to real life."

Iranians still name their children after ancient literary heroes. Shia Islam, Iran's dominant religion, is anchored on emulating religious clergy. The political structure of the country, from the Shahs to the current Supreme Leader, has centered on a cult of personality.

"In a society saturated with slogans, this could happen," said Mr. Farhadi. "We want to constantly create idols and, say, be like them. The core of it is wrong." He added, "When we have heroes in society, we are basically escaping from our responsibilities."

Mr. Farhadi, who lives in Tehran with his wife and younger daughter, says he is at his creative best when working in his home country. But he is not indifferent to the suffering he witnesses. He said the anger brewing among Iranians is palpable and nobody is trying to address it.

But at the same time, the younger generation of Iranians gives

him hope, he said, because they ask questions and demand accountability.

As a public figure with an international platform, Mr. Farhadi is pressured to take sides. He is mindful that navigating Iran's



Asghar Farhadi (3rd L), with the cast and crew of "A Hero" at the 74th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, in December. Credit... John Macdougall/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

political landscape requires a balancing act. If he keeps silent, he is criticized as a tool of the government. If he speaks too loudly, he could be banished to exile as other film directors have been.

Government supporters accuse him of making films that show a negative side of Iran. Others criticize what they regard as his excessively bright portrayals.

"For everything, not just for artists, for every aspect of Iranian

life there is this polarization. It's not very transparent, you say something, and they interpret it another way," said Mr. Farhadi. "The question is raised, where does one stand?"

Mr. Farhadi prefers to make statements through films, he said, because art is more enduring and impactful than passing comments. Occasionally, however, he just cannot hold his tongue.

In November, Mr. Farhadi railed at the government in a long Instagram post that declared: "Let me say it clearly, I despise you."

He condemned factions that try to define him as a government-affiliated artist and said if that's the perception, Iran should withdraw "A Hero" as its official entry for the Oscars. Iran did not. (The film made the initial Oscar list but was not nominated.)

In 2017, Mr. Farhadi took a stand against former President Donald Trump's travel ban policy, which affected Iranians, by

boycotting the Academy Awards ceremony, where he won his second Oscar.

Hamid Naficy, an emeritus professor at Northwestern University and a scholar of Iranian cinema and culture, said that while Mr. Farhadi is one of Iran's most renowned filmmakers, he should not be expected to serve as a political ambassador.

Mr. Farhadi's contribution, Mr. Naficy said, was "to create a

complex and thrilling and painful and joyful picture of a society that has had thousands of years of existence.”

If Iranian filmmakers were to see their work as ambassadorial, he said, “it would be a kind of propaganda film for either side — pro-regime or anti-regime.”

Mr. Farhadi was born in 1972 in Homayoun Shahr, a small town outside of Isfahan, to a middle-class family that owned a grocery store. He spent summers working at a local print shop framing and cutting photographs from customers’ camera rolls. When he was a teenager, he found a book about making films and wrote his first screenplay, about the radio. He made

the short film with the support of a local government-sponsored cultural center.

He moved to Tehran to attend university, majoring in theater and obtaining a master’s degree in stage design. Mr. Farhadi wrote screenplays for state television and radio before writing and directing his own films.

In 2009, his film “About Elly” won best director at the Berlin film festival and best picture at the Tribeca film festival. In the world of global cinema, he attracted attention.

He went on to win two Oscars in the category of best international feature for “A Separation” in 2012 and “The

Salesman” in 2018. Mr. Farhadi now belongs to an elite club of just a handful of iconic directors — Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman — who have won multiple Oscars in the foreign film category.

Despite all the accolades, Mr. Farhadi reminisces about the joy of seeing his first award, a beautiful bicycle placed onstage. He had attended the awards ceremony alone in Isfahan and worried how he would ride the bike home. Night had fallen and rain was pouring. Mr. Farhadi said he pedaled for two hours.

When his father opened the door and saw him drenched and exhausted but proudly showing off his prize, he didn’t have

the heart to scold him. He asked gently, “Was it worth it?” That question has preoccupied Mr. Farhadi as he reflects on his career.

“I don’t want to say that I’m not happy about my path, but people who get successful in life make other sacrifices,” Mr. Farhadi said. “And sometimes you ask yourself, ‘Was it worth it?’”

If he could ask his 13-year-old self now, with the hindsight of a celebrated director, Mr. Farhadi said, he would answer that “you didn’t have to work so hard, you didn’t have to start so early.”

Cinema, he said, “isn’t all there is to life. I realized this a bit late.”

Le Monde

27 février 2022

By Par Adrien Sénécat

## En Irak, le géant des télécoms Ericsson soupçonné de pots-de-vin et de financement de l’organisation Etat islamique

Un rapport interne dénonce la gestion de la branche irakienne de l’entreprise de télécoms, qui avait refusé de quitter Mossoul malgré sa conquête par le groupe terroriste en 2014, révèlent des documents internes obtenus par le Consortium international des journalistes d’investigation.

Il ne s’agissait, au départ, que d’une affaire banale impliquant un employé aux notes de frais trop salées. Mais c’est une véritable boîte de Pandore qu’ont ouverte, en 2018, les enquêteurs internes du groupe suédois de télécommunications Ericsson, en s’intéressant aux pratiques de ce cadre du groupe en poste Irak.

Que cet employé ait détourné plus de 308 000 dollars (270 000 euros environ) via une caisse noire impliquant des fournisseurs de l’équipementier suédois n’était finalement que la face émergée de l’iceberg. L’intéressé a pris la porte le 16 janvier 2019, mais les enquêteurs ont poursuivi leur travail en interrogeant vingt-huit per-

sonnes et en analysant 22,5 millions de courriels et 4 téraoctets de données. Corruption, conflits d’intérêts, transactions suspectes, et même soupçons de financement indirect de groupes terroristes... Les résultats confidentiels de cette enquête interne, remise à la direction du groupe en décembre 2019 et obtenue par le Consortium international des journalistes d’investigation (ICIJ) dans le cadre de l’enquête « the Ericsson List », dressent un constat accablant des pratiques ayant eu cours dans la branche irakienne d’Ericsson entre 2011 et 2019.

### Contourner les douanes

Le groupe suédois a gardé le se-

cret sur ces investigations internes pendant plus de deux ans. Jusqu’à ce que l’ICIJ et ses partenaires l’interrogent à son sujet. A défaut de répondre à nos questions, Ericsson a diffusé, le 15 février 2022 à la presse, un communiqué évoquant l’un des points les plus brûlants du rapport : le versement possible de pots-de-vin à l’organisation Etat islamique (EI), qui a proclamé son « califat » en juin 2014 sur un tiers de l’Irak (et de la Syrie), avant d’y être défait fin 2017. Le rapport confidentiel examiné par Le Monde et l’ICIJ apporte des détails embarrassants sur des faits ayant eu lieu en 2016-2017, lorsque Ericsson a fait appel à la société de transports Cargo Iraq pour

acheminer du matériel de la région autonome du Kurdistan irakien, dans le nord-est du pays, à la province sunnite de l’Anbar, dans l’Ouest. Le sous-traitant proposait à l’époque deux types de prestations : d’un côté, la voie « légale », barrée de longs et coûteux contrôles douaniers irakiens ; de l’autre, une « voie rapide » traversant des territoires où l’organisation Etat islamique était encore présente, et où les milices chiites irakiennes affiliées à l’Iran, qui ont participé à la reconquête des territoires tombés sous le contrôle du groupe djihadiste, assayaient leur contrôle.

En choisissant la deuxième option, Ericsson aurait-il préféré la vitesse

au respect du droit ? L'équipementier suédois reconnaît avoir « utilisé des routes alternatives pour contourner les douanes irakiennes, à une période où les organisations terroristes, dont le groupe Etat islamique, contrôlaient certaines routes ». De l'argent a-t-il été versé aux djihadistes pour faciliter le passage des camions transportant le matériel d'Ericsson ? Interrogé par l'ICIJ, le patron de Cargo Iraq, Bahez Abbas, assure que non. Dans leur rapport interne, les enquêteurs d'Ericsson se montrent moins catégoriques, estimant qu'« on ne peut pas exclure » cette possibilité. Faute d'avoir interrogé l'ensemble des parties prenantes, les « enquêteurs n'ont pas pu déterminer les destinataires finaux » des paiements, qui ont bien existé.

### Ericsson

Fondé à Stockholm (Suède) en 1876 autour du télégraphe, Ericsson a saisi, dans les années 1990, le virage de la téléphonie mobile pour devenir l'un des leaders internationaux du marché des télécommunications. Après avoir cessé définitivement de fabriquer des téléphones portables en 2011, le groupe s'est recentré sur les infrastructures de communication (antennes, tours, câbles...).

Détrôné par le chinois Huawei dans les années 2010, le groupe suédois est revenu sur le devant de la scène mondiale à la faveur du déploiement de la 5G. Présent dans plus de 140 pays, avec 100 000 salariés, le groupe suédois a réalisé 22 milliards d'euros de chiffre d'affaires en 2021.

L'enquête du Monde et de ses partenaires n'ayant pas non plus permis de retrouver la trace de cet argent, il n'est pas possible, à ce stade, de comparer l'imbroglio irakien d'Ericsson aux faits reprochés au cimentier Lafarge, accusé de « complicité de crimes contre l'humanité » pour avoir versé de l'argent à des groupes terroristes en Syrie.

Ce dossier n'en est pas moins alarmant pour ce qu'il raconte de la conduite des affaires d'Ericsson. En 2016 et 2017, l'entreprise se savait déjà depuis quelques années

sous le coup d'une enquête de la justice américaine sur de nombreux faits de corruption dans plusieurs pays. Le simple fait que Cargo Iraq n'ait pas été déclaré comme sous-traitant de l'entreprise dans les règles et ait été payé en liquide, comme plusieurs autres prestataires, signe la légèreté de l'équipementier dans sa gestion. Le rapport interne conclut d'ailleurs à l'existence de manquements « systématiques » dans les procédures de sous-traitance.

### Un kidnapping et des « arrangements »

L'enquête interne décrit aussi l'entêtement d'Ericsson à maintenir ses activités à Mossoul, en Irak, en dépit de sa conquête par l'EI, le 10 juin 2014. Déterminée à ne pas « détruire le business », la direction régionale d'Ericsson a rejeté les appels à invoquer le cas de « force majeure » et à suspendre, dans la capitale irakienne de l'EI, le projet de modernisation du réseau de l'opérateur télécoms Asiacell, l'un des plus gros clients d'Ericsson dans le pays. Le rapport évoque la décision prise, le 14 juillet, avec Asiacell, d'obtenir la « permission de l'autorité locale "EI" » pour poursuivre les travaux.

Le kidnapping d'Affan, un ingénieur employé sur ce projet par le sous-traitant Orbitel Telecommunication, a douché ces velléités. Ce chef d'équipe, alors âgé de 25 ans, a été missionné par des responsables d'Ericsson et d'Asiacell pour se présenter à un bureau de l'administration djihadiste à Mossoul muni d'une lettre lui demandant de « faciliter la mission de l'équipe technique (...) d'Ericsson (...) pour la maintenance et la mise sur pied de tours » de télécommunications, selon le témoignage livré à nos confrères allemands de la chaîne de télévision NDR.

Kidnappé par des membres de l'organisation Etat islamique, le Mossouliote a été détenu plusieurs heures dans une geôle. Un « cheikh » djihadiste aurait alors profité de sa présence pour faire pression sur Ericsson en exigeant, lors d'un appel téléphonique, le paiement d'une taxe pour poursuivre ses activités à Mossoul. In-

terrogé par les enquêteurs, l'un des cadres locaux d'Ericsson impliqués dans ces échanges avec les djihadistes, Rabah Dannawi, a indiqué qu'Asiacell avait procédé aux « arrangements » nécessaires à la libération d'Affan, mais assure ne pas être au courant de paiements effectués par Ericsson à l'EI. L'enquête interne s'est arrêtée là.

### Flatter le clan Barzani

Les documents de « the Ericsson List » décrivent également des pratiques douteuses destinées à obtenir les faveurs du clan Barzani au Kurdistan irakien. Cette puissante famille n'a pas seulement la main sur le gouvernement et l'armée de cette région autonome de l'Irak : elle est aussi un acteur incontournable des télécommunications, par le biais de Sirwan Barzani, qui est à la fois le cousin du premier ministre, le commandant d'une unité des forces kurdes peshmergas et le patron de Korek Telecom, l'un des trois opérateurs du pays.

Les enquêteurs s'interrogent sur le fait qu'Ericsson ait pu financer le clan Barzani, notamment en déguisant, en 2014, un paiement de 50 000 dollars officiellement destiné à une fondation d'aide aux déplacés. En effet, rien ne prouve que l'argent d'Ericsson a réellement atterri dans les caisses de ladite fondation, puisque le paiement a été fait en liquide, et que le reçu émane de Darin Group, une entreprise de télécoms et de construction dirigée par Waleed Khalid Barzani. Selon un témoignage interne, l'un des cadres d'Ericsson, Elie Moubarak, aurait, peu de temps avant, évoqué l'idée de faire un don du même montant pour « soutenir les efforts de l'armée kurde », dont Sirwan Barzani venait de rejoindre les rangs pour défendre la capitale, Erbil, d'un assaut de l'EI. Qui a finalement mis la main sur cet argent ? Imposable, là aussi, d'être catégorique, faute d'en avoir retrouvé la trace.

Un autre membre du clan, Rasech Barzani, a quant à lui été embauché comme consultant en 2007 avec un salaire qui a pu atteindre 18 500 dollars mensuels, hors bonus. Outre des entorses aux

règles internes dans l'enregistrement de son contrat, « aucune fonction précise n'a été assignée à Rasech Barzani », lit-on dans le rapport. Contactés par l'ICIJ, Waleed Khalid Barzani, Rasech Barzani et Elie Moubarak n'ont pas donné suite.

Sirwan Barzani, quant à lui, n'a pas répondu aux questions portant sur ces dossiers. Un porte-parole a en revanche fait valoir qu'il s'est mis en retrait de Korek Telecom en 2014 « pour retourner sur le front afin de défendre son pays et le monde occidental de la menace que représente l'EI ».

### Cigares et stylos Montblanc

L'enquête interne réalisée par Ericsson pointe, en outre, de nombreuses dépenses abusives, hors du cadre prévu par le groupe. Un employé a, par exemple, acheté pour plus de 9 000 dollars d'alcool et de cigares pour l'organisation de « nuits du cigare » entre 2014 et 2016. Des soirées mélangeant collègues d'Ericsson et représentants de l'opérateur télécoms Asiacell ont été organisées. Des cadeaux à des clients comme des iPhone, des iPad, des montres ou des stylos Montblanc pour un total de 48 000 dollars sont également pointés du doigt. Ce chiffre n'inclut pas les nuits d'hôtel, dîners, billets d'avion et événements organisés en marge du Mobile World Congress de Barcelone, grand-messe annuelle du secteur.

Face à l'inventaire des entorses à la loi et aux bonnes pratiques, la réaction d'Ericsson aux conclusions de cette enquête interroge. L'entreprise affirme que plusieurs salariés ont dû quitter l'entreprise à cause de ce dossier et que d'autres sanctions ont pu être prises en interne. Mais certains employés identifiés par l'enquête comme étant responsables d'importants manquements au règlement de l'entreprise semblent y avoir conservé des rôles-clés. C'est notamment le cas d'Elie Moubarak, promu directeur en Irak en septembre 2019, en pleine enquête interne. Cette dernière a pourtant conclu à son implication dans la donation suspecte en liquide et dans des dépenses in-





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## Iraqi Kurds stranded in Ukraine face uncertain situation amid Russian invasion

"We can be out for [more than] a minute," Mohammad told Kurdistan 24 on Friday

Iraqi Kurds stranded in Ukraine are taking shelter alongside Ukrainian citizens in underground metro stations and basements as Russia's intense military assault on the eastern European country continues.

Months of tensions between Russia and Ukraine culminated in an enormous combined air, sea, and land assault by the Russian armed forces on Ukraine early Thursday. Since then, intense fighting has been ongoing, including street battles in parts of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

Iraqi Kurds who went to the country to study are now stranded there amidst these destructive and violent clashes.

Under strict government curfew, residents in Ukraine are taking shelter in metro stations and basements to protect themselves against Russian bombardments. Moscow claims its forces are only attacking military targets.

"We cannot leave Kyiv as there is no means of transportation," Ozer Harbi, a Kurdish student of electrical engineering at Kyiv Polytechnic University, told Kurdistan 24 on Sunday.

He heard a huge explosion as he was speaking to Kurdistan 24 from his flat in the Ukrainian capital.

The 28-year-old Kurd is anxiously waiting for an oppor-



A woman and child peer out of the window of a bus as they leave Sievierodonetsk, the Luhansk region, eastern Ukraine, Feb. 24, 2022. (Photo: Andreea Alexandru/AP)

tunity to leave the country. Nobody there knows where the next Russian air, artillery, or missile attack will be.

With the strict curfew in place, no one can leave their homes, Harbi said. He called on the Iraqi authorities to provide them transportation and safe passage out of the country.

On Saturday, the Iraqi foreign ministry announced that it is in talks with Poland to help its stranded citizens leave Ukraine overland through Polish border crossings.

"Money transfers have stopped, and we do not know how to pay for our rent if the conflict continues for months," the Kurdish student, originally from Erbil, told Kurdistan 24.

There are over 5,500 Iraqi citizens in Ukraine, 450 of

whom are students studying in nearly 40 academic institutions throughout the country, according to official figures from Iraq's foreign ministry.

At least 190 Ukrainians, including children, have been killed so far as a direct result of the invasion, according to Ukraine's top health authority.

As of Saturday, 150,000 Ukrainian refugees have crossed the borders into neighboring countries, including Poland, Romania, and Moldova, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

Russia's assault on the port city of Odesa in southern Ukraine forced Sebar Bani Marani to relocate to Poltava in the center of the country. The 33-year-old, a Kurd from Erbil, has been working in the

eastern European country for a while now.

Nechirvan Mohammad, another Kurdish student, is taking shelter in a basement in Kyiv.

"We can be out for [more than] a minute," Mohammad told Kurdistan 24 on Friday, adding that authorities would force them back into the basements if they stayed out any longer.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Department of Foreign Relations advised its citizens in Ukraine to contact the Iraqi Embassy there since it does not have any diplomatic representative in the country.

"We left Iraq to escape war... but it's the same thing in Ukraine (now)," Ali Mohammed, an Iraqi student in the western Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi, told AFP.