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## **IRAQ: THE COUNTRY FACES THE DANGER OF AN INTRA-SHIA CIVIL WAR**

**O**n 1<sup>st</sup> August, Iraq woke up, as *Le Monde* put it, "*with the sensation of walking on the edge of a precipice*". Since 30 July, supporters of the populist leader Moqtada Al-Sadr have occupied the Baghdad parliament, demanding its dissolution before new early elections. On 31 July, Sadr called for a wider mobilisation and "*the opportunity for a radical change in the political system*". In response, supporters of the "Coordination Framework", a coalition of pro-Iranian parties

and militias, accused Sadr of preparing a coup and announced their own demonstrations.

Such a confrontation risked provoking irreparable violence that could lead the country to civil war. While Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, who is in charge of current affairs, made repeated calls for dialogue, military reinforcements were brought in during the night to secure the "green zone" where the parliament and the main institutions are located. The commander

of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's *Al-Quds* Force, Esmail Qaani, considered to be the Iranian pro-consul in Iraq, arrived in Baghdad for talks with the various political players.

Since the early elections of October 2021, which were themselves triggered by the major anti-establishment protests of October 2019, inter-communal tensions between Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds have been overshadowed by serious intra-communal fractures. The most

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dangerous seems to be the one concerning the Shiites, the majority in the country, but divided between pro-Iranians, Iraqi nationalists obeying Sadr, and the still very active protest movement. If they are very opposed to the pro-Iranian bloc, the protesters also accuse Sadr of an attempt to recuperate their movement. The populist leader has sought to use the movement born in 2019 to his advantage, alternately calling on his supporters to support and repress it... This division of the Shiites into three irreconcilable blocs is largely responsible for the current political paralysis.

Tensions increased further after the Coordination Framework nominated Mohamed al-Sudani as its candidate for Prime minister. Already perceived as pro-Iranian, Soudani is also close to former Prime Minister Al-Maliki, hated by Sadr since he ordered in 2008 the crushing in Basra of the "Mahdi Army", the militia Sadr had formed to fight the American occupation.

On the 5<sup>th</sup>, despite a temperature at nearly 50°C, tens of thousands of people, some from the south of the country, demonstrated in Baghdad in support of Sadr. Both sides held new demonstrations the following week, which fortunately did not lead to clashes. However, the fear of an escalation remained, as did the fear that tensions would spread to the Kurdish and Sunni regions of the country... (*Le Monde*)

On the 12<sup>th</sup>, supporters of the Coordination Framework settled themselves on an avenue in Baghdad leading to the Green Zone. Sadr, for his part, filed a request for the dissolution of Parliament with the Federal Supreme Court. The latter replied on 16 December that it could not take such a decision. The populist leader then called for a "million person demonstration" on the 20<sup>th</sup>, before withdrawing his call.

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, a "national dialogue" meeting, called by Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi the previous week, was

held at the government headquarters. The different political forces participated... with the exception of the Sadrist current, which had announced its non-participation the same morning. In addition to the Iraqi President Barham Saleh (Kurdish) and the President of the Parliament Mohamed al-Halboussi (Sunni), an ally of Sadr, the meeting was attended by leaders of the Coordination Framework and of the *Hashd al-Shaabi* militias, as well as those of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, plus the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI), Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. At the end of the meeting, the participants said in a joint communiqué that they were committed to working on a "roadmap" to break the deadlock in the country, not excluding the organisation of early elections. They also invited the Sadrist Current to join them in the dialogue (*AFP*).

On the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup>, in one of his secret surprise decisions, Moqtada Al-Sadr announced his "withdrawal from political life". This announcement provoked serious violence in the Green Zone in the afternoon, which continued on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Thousands of his supporters invaded the seat of government, while the security forces tried to disperse other demonstrators trying to enter the Green Zone with tear gas canisters. Fifteen demonstrators were shot dead and some 350 others injured, either by bullets or by breathing in tear gas. In addition, according to a security source, exchanges of fire, sometimes with mortars, took place between the "Peace Brigades" (*Saraya al-Salam*), an armed Sadrist group stationed on the outskirts of the Zone, and the *Hashd Al-Shaabi* and army special forces, who responded from inside (*AFP*). Clashes also took place in Basra. A curfew was declared from 7 p.m. in the whole country, except for Kurdistan Region.

Eventually, Sadr called on his supporters to leave, which put an end

to the violence. Although calm returned to Baghdad on the last day of the month, August ended as it had begun, with great tension and concern for the future...

These strong tensions have obviously had echoes in the Kurdistan Region. To a certain extent, they have led to a certain rapprochement between the two main Kurdish parties, the KDP and the PUK, which are in different camps in Baghdad, the KDP supporting the Sadrist alliance, the PUK being close to the "Coordination Framework". The PUK and KDP are still in conflict over the choice of the future Iraqi President, each one presenting its own candidate. On the 9<sup>th</sup>, the leaders of the two parties announced that they wanted to "work on a unified position of the Kurdish political parties in the light of the challenges facing Iraq and the Kurdistan Region". The Kurdish leaders have also sought on several occasions to promote dialogue between the different alliances in conflict in Baghdad. Thus, on 30 August, the President of Kurdistan, Nechirvan Barzani, urged the parties concerned to "return to logic" and to engage in a "national dialogue".

On the other hand, the position of the Kurdish parties remains important at the central level; the KDP, for example, became one of the leading parties in Iraq in terms of number of seats in the last parliamentary elections. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, the "Coordination Framework" sent to Erbil the head of the Badr Organisation, Haidi al-Ameri, who urged the Kurdish parties to hold a parliamentary session to finally designate the next Iraqi President... The KDP-UPK disagreement on this issue plays an important role in the prolongation of the stalemate suffered by the country for the last year. With regard to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the pro-Iranian camp has not always just being "politely asking"... Following the numerous attacks launched over the past months

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against Kurdish oil and gas installations, the leaders of the KDP, who dominate the KRG, accused Iran of threatening them by this means to force them to leave the Sadrist alliance. It should also be noted that on the 30<sup>th</sup>, while Baghdad was in chaos, in Kirkuk, the pro-Iranian militias of the *Hashd al-Shaabi* advanced ostensibly towards the checkpoints leading to Erbil and Sulaimaniyeh to confront the peshmergas deployed on the other side of the line separating the two forces...

Besides, the Kurdistan Region has in a way experienced the contagion of the demonstrations that took place this month in the rest of Iraq: on the 6<sup>th</sup>, the Suleimaniyeh Security Police dispersed with tear gas and rubber bullets a rally called by the opposition party "New Generation" to protest against economic difficulties, the authoritarianism of the KRG and the corruption of the two dominant parties. Seven "New Generation" parliamentarians, six with seats in Baghdad and one in Erbil, were briefly detained as they prepared to demonstrate (AFP).

Several consuls representing their countries in Erbil expressed concern about the dozens of arrests of politicians, journalists and MPs following the demonstration. A media outlet close to the party said on the 7<sup>th</sup> that more than 600 people had been arrested during the previous day's demonstrations, and the *Metro Center for Journalists Rights and Advocacy*, a local media advocacy group, stated that 11 journalists had even been preventively arrested the day before the march – a claim denied by Sulaimaniyeh Security. Following messages of concern posted on *Twitter* by the consuls of the UK and Germany, the Dutch Vice-Consul General in turn called on the Kurdistan Region authorities to "respect the freedom of expression of the protesters" (Rûdaw).

With regard to the forthcoming regional legislative elections, President Nechirvan Barzani organised a meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> which was attended by most of the leaders of the Kurdistan parties, with the exception of "New Generation", as well as the UN envoy in the country, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. Discussions focused on ways to "resolve disagreements". Some parties want the electoral law to be amended before the elections (Rûdaw). In the statement issued after the meeting, the Presidency said that the President had stressed that "Delaying the elections would damage the image and reputation of the Kurdistan Region", and that "the political parties will continue to discuss and prepare for the elections in cooperation with the UNAMI team of experts".

Another project underway is the drafting of a regional constitution for Kurdistan. The Presidency of the Parliament launched on the 28<sup>th</sup> the first of a series of meetings during which the different parties will discuss this subject.

Regarding attacks on hydrocarbon sites, on the 30<sup>th</sup>, the peshmerga disabled three *Katyusha* rocket launchers aimed at the Qadir Karam gas site, which has already suffered several attacks with this type of weapon, most likely by members of the *Hashdal-Shaabi*. In Washington, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and one of its members, Robert Menendez and James Risch, wrote to Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the 15<sup>th</sup> requesting "the highest level" of US engagement to help resolve the disputes between Erbil and Baghdad over Kurdistan's oil and gas exports and thus "preserve the economic stability of the [Kurdistan Region of Iraq]". Their letter denounced the Iraqi Supreme Court's decision to declare the KRG's oil and gas law unconstitutional and the continuing attacks, which negatively

impacted "the foreign investment climate and Iraq's ability to become independent of Iranian energy" (Foreign Relations). On the 19<sup>th</sup>, three members of the House of Representatives wrote to Antony Blinken to ask the Biden administration to support the KRG in the face of attempts by Iran and pro-Iranian Iraqi parties to force it to reduce its energy production. The authors point out that "the KRG's gas resources could help Iraq and eventually Turkey and Southern Europe to do without Russian and Iranian gas supplies as we put Russia under sanctions [...]". The two letters are both bi-partisan, with both Republican and Democratic authors. It seems doubtful, however, that the State Department, whose current priority is the restoration of a nuclear agreement with Iran, would risk upsetting that country by condemning too strongly its attacks on Kurdistan... (Kurdistan-24)

Besides Iranian or pro-Iranian attacks, Kurdistan is also still confronted with the jihadist terrorism of ISIS and Turkish operations.

ISIS' jihadists continue to take advantage of the lack of coordination between Kurdish and Iraqi forces in the disputed territories. On 10 August, they fired three missiles at an Iraqi army position near Daquq (south of Kirkuk), wounding three soldiers, before killing a lieutenant and wounding two other officers in clashes. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, the security forces announced the arrest of 6 jihadists in the province, but this did not prevent the killing of a *mukhtar* (village head) on the same day, followed on the 25<sup>th</sup> by an attack on a village near Daquq where an IED (improvised explosive device) killed one Iraqi soldier and wounded two others (WKI). On the 28<sup>th</sup>, a Kurdish shepherd was killed near the lake of Rokhana, in the south-east of the province. At least 4 shepherds were attacked by 2 suspected ISIS militants. The shepherds put them

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to flight, even shooting one of them. These attacks are attempted kidnappings, a means the jihadists, lacking funds, use to finance themselves by demanding ransoms of about \$25,000 from the family. Since April, five Arab or Kurdish shepherds have been kidnapped in Kirkuk (*Kurdistan-24*). On the 29<sup>th</sup>, two more were kidnapped near the Jabar Bor oil field. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, security forces killed one jihadist and wounded a second during a search for hostages. On the 31<sup>st</sup>, the inhabitants of the village of Salayi put many jihadists on the run.

In Khanaqin, the Peshmerga and the Iraqi military carried out a joint operation on the 23<sup>rd</sup> that "cleared" the eastern part of the district. The region still remains in a security vacuum, as Baghdad has still not authorised the joint forces to deploy in the area, in accordance with the agreement reached with Erbil.

3<sup>rd</sup> of August was the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the genocide perpetrated by ISIS against the Yezidi community. On this occasion, the KRG Committee in charge of the investigation of this event published chilling statistics. According to the figures, the fate of 2,717 Yezidis abducted by the jihadists, 1,273 women and 1,444 men, remains unknown. 3,554 abducted Yezidis have been rescued, including 1,207 women and girls, 339 men and 1,051 children, while 146 have been killed (*WKI*). The International Organisation for Migration (IOM, a UN agency) said in its own assessment on the 4<sup>th</sup> that some of the 2,700 Yezidis still missing were still being held by ISIS. The agency also put the number of Yezidis still displaced at over 200,000. The lack of returns to Sinjar, Yazidis home area, is due to the lack of reconstruction and basic services in the district, where ISIS had almost

completely destroyed the infrastructure, as well as to the continuing violence. In early May, clashes broke out there between the Iraqi army and Yezidi fighters affiliated to the PKK. Finally, Turkey regularly strikes Sinjar as part of its anti-PKK operation (*AFP*).

It should be recalled that after a Turkish artillery strike killed 9 tourists in Zakho on 20 July, Iraq requested an emergency session of the UN Security Council. During the session, which took place on 26 July, Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein demanded the "total withdrawal" of Turkish forces from Iraq. However, the Turkish representative stated that the Turkish army would continue to target "terrorists" in Iraq. On 1<sup>st</sup> August, a Turkish drone strike hit a vehicle between Ranya and Chwarqorna, killing one occupant and wounding the other. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, a drone strike on a village killed 2 and seriously wounded 1 "Sinjar Resistance Units" (YBS) fighters, while another strike killed a father of 6 girls in Makhmour refugee camp and wounded 2 other civilians (*WKI*).

Finally, Kurds continue to face discrimination in the disputed territories that Baghdad regained control of in October 2017. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, a division of the Iraqi army cut off the electricity to the village of Kabala in the Sargaran district of Kirkuk, which has long been claimed by Arab settlers. According to the villagers, it was one of them, wanting to occupy more Kurdish land, who asked the officers to cut off the electricity. On the same day, the Mosul Military Court held the final hearing in the trial of 14 Kurdish police officers accused of participating in the Kurdistan independence referendum in September 2017. After 5 years, the court ruled that there was insufficient evidence to convict the defendants.

Kirkuk does not have a Military Court, so a committee from the Mosul Military Court visits Kirkuk twice a week to review cases involving security officers.

On the 10<sup>th</sup>, the Kirkuk provincial administration launched a recruitment campaign for 1,000 positions. However, the online form automatically excludes candidates born in the Kurdistan Region, allowing access only to Iraqis born in the other 15 provinces of the country... This despite the fact that a large proportion of the Kurds in Kirkuk, displaced during the time of Saddam Hussein's regime, were born in Kurdistan. Similarly, potential candidates whose identity card was issued in the district of Qadir-karam, belonging to the province of Kirkuk but administered by the KRG, are excluded. In addition, Kakai Kurds have been excluded from the quotas for minorities. Finally, the hiring priority given to the relatives of the victims of the war against ISIS completely ignores the peshmergas, who have lost 1,400 fighters in this battle since 2014... (*WKI*)

On the 8<sup>th</sup>, eight Kurdish police officers from Tuz Khurmatu were transferred to the police of Salahaddin province. This transfer provoked protests in the city's Kurdish community because the departure of these officers further reduces the proportion of Kurdish police officers, already only 13%, compared to 40% for Arabs and Turkmens. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, the Kurdish MP for Tuz Khurmatu, Mullah Karim Shukur, also indicated that 600 Kurdish families displaced in October 2017 have still not returned, due to the lack of compensation to rebuild their homes, which were burned and destroyed by Shiite militias. The latter destroyed hundreds of houses, forcing thousands of Kurdish families to leave.

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## ROJAVA: TOWARDS A TURKISH-SYRIAN RAPPROCHEMENT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE KURDS OF SYRIA?

**A**fter the Iranian-Russian-Turkish summit in Tehran on 19 July, many observers had concluded that the Turkish President's plans for a new invasion of Rojava had come to a halt: Iran and Russia had reiterated their opposition to such an operation, and so far indeed, none has been launched. But Iraq's Kurdish channel *Rûdaw* noted on 1<sup>st</sup> August that "since the summit", "an unprecedented number of air strikes and drone attacks have targeted Syrian Kurds", making July "the deadliest month of 2022 for Kurdish fighters". Mr Erdoğan, in a quiet bargain, may well have won the right to launch unlimited air strikes against the PYD. The Russian military, which virtually controls Syrian airspace, has so far taken no action to shoot down any of the many Turkish drones that constantly fly over it. While Turkey continues to proclaim its intention to complete the 30 km deep "security zone" it has begun to create with its 3 previous operations, the Kurdish news channel *Rûdaw* observes that at the end of July, "Russian military police patrolled for the first time ever in the eastern areas of Qamishli with a depth of 30 km"...

The Turkish threats play in favour of the regime, as the Kurds have no other option than to call on the Syrian army to deploy in areas that were previously under their exclusive control, such as Tal Rifaat, Manbij, Kobane and Ain Issa...

It is in this context that the Turkish president met his Russian counterpart in Sochi on 5 August, a meeting at the end of which the joint declaration mentioned a "strengthening of trade" between the two countries (AFP). Less than a week later, on the 11<sup>th</sup>, the Turkish Foreign Minister revealed that he had met his Syrian counterpart in Belgrade in October during the Non-Aligned Movement Summit. He then called for "recon-

ciliation between the opposition and the regime in Syria" in order to seal a "lasting peace" (*Middle-East Eye*). This statement literally set fire the next day to all Syrian territories controlled by the opposition or the Turkish army and its Syrian proxies, in Idlib, Azaz, Al-Bab or even Afrin... In nearly 30 different places, tens of thousands of Syrians marched, taking down or burning Turkish flags. In Azaz, the demonstrators attacked the Turkish security office. At the Jerablus border crossing, the Turkish military had to shoot in the air to try to keep the demonstrators away from the crossing point (SOHR).

Faced with this outcry, the ministry issued a clarification avoiding the term "reconciliation" and reaffirming "Turkey's full support for the opposition"... (AFP) But the hints of reconciliation continued. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, AKP MP Hayati Yazıcı hinted that "the level [of diplomatic contact] could increase". On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Erdoğan said on his return from Ukraine: "For us, it is not about defeating or not defeating Assad", adding that keeping the channels of dialogue open with the Syrian government was "necessary" (*Al-Monitor*).

An Ankara-Damascus rapprochement is a direct threat to the AANES, but in order for it to materialise, Ankara has to accept the idea of withdrawing its troops from Syrian soil... Turkey's planned "Security Zone" on Syrian territory seems incompatible with a reconciliation. This is probably why on the 19<sup>th</sup>, Mr Erdoğan also said that Turkey had "no views on the territory of Syria". He also called for "strengthening" coordination with Moscow in northern Syria to fight "terrorism" (AFP) – a word which for Erdoğan first and foremost means the Syrian Kurds...

All these diplomatic moves were however paradoxically accompa-

nied by an intensification of Turkish attacks against the Kurds, but also against Syrian troops, now frequently deployed in the same areas. Ankara's message is clear: the regime's army must stop giving the Kurds indirect support through its presence, the condition for effective rapprochement is the joint fight against the Kurds (*Al-Monitor*).

In response to the Turkish escalation, the SDF has occasionally targeted the Turkish side of the border. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, they claimed 3 attacks on the Turkish province of Mardin that killed 23 Turkish soldiers. Despite numerous previous exchanges of fire, this is the first time the SDF has claimed such attacks. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, they claimed responsibility for the deaths of another 6 soldiers near a border post in Şanlıurfa. Turkey retaliated by bombing... a Syrian military base near Kobanê.

Interestingly, these diplomatic developments have had an impact on the joint Turkish-Russian patrols conducted regularly in northern Syria since the November 2019 ceasefire, showing how volatile relations are between the forces involved. While on 1<sup>st</sup> August, the 108<sup>th</sup> of them did take place, covering several villages to the west of Kobane, the one planned for the 11<sup>th</sup> in the Darbasiyah region (Hasakeh) was cancelled by Turkey, as was the one on the 18<sup>th</sup>. It was only on the 22<sup>nd</sup> that the 109<sup>th</sup> joint patrol was held near Kobanê, during which the two Russian helicopters taking part had to fire tear gas and bullets at the inhabitants of one of the villages they passed through, who were blocking the passage of military vehicles to express their rejection of the Turkish presence. Two joint patrols were then held as normal on the 25<sup>th</sup> in Darbasiyah and on the 29<sup>th</sup> in Kobanê, but on the 31<sup>st</sup> Turkish forces and their Syrian auxiliaries opened fire on a Russian patrol as it passed through a village

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east of Ain-Issa, forcing the patrol to withdraw to avoid further engagement.

During August, the Turkish army further intensified its harassment of all border areas and sometimes beyond. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, the SOHR gave the following assessment of the first week of the month, counting from 3 to 9 August 8 drone attacks on vehicles, military positions but also a market near Hassaké, for a total of 9 dead, including 2 children and 7 SDF fighters, and 7 injured. At this date, the SOHR had counted 50 Turkish attacks since the beginning of the year, resulting in 3 civilian deaths, including 2 children, and 37 fighters, with more than 77 injured more or less seriously.

On the 8<sup>th</sup>, the SOHR spoke of an “undeclared [Turkish-Russian] agreement” when describing the Turkish withdrawal of 2 bases from the Tel Abyad (Raqqa) area. After firing several shells at the empty bases (!), the Russians advanced on the evacuated areas...

The Turkish army launched numerous artillery attacks on northern Aleppo province, resulting in civilian casualties. A woman wounded on 26 July died of her injuries on 1<sup>st</sup> August in Tell Rifaat, where on the 4<sup>th</sup> children were injured by a Turkish drone. On 2<sup>nd</sup> August, Turkish mortars targeted Manbij Military Council and regime army positions in several villages near the city. Further Turkish artillery bombardment on the 12<sup>th</sup> resulted in missiles being fired at a Syrian proxy military vehicle in response. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, the SOHR reported violent Turkish-Kurdish clashes west of Kobane, where “*Turkish military escalation*” caused “*significant population displacement*”. A SDF military vehicle was also reportedly targeted by a Turkish drone, and 5 Turkish soldiers were killed by SDF rockets. It should be noted that the city of Kobanê is home to a Russian military base (the former American base...). On the same day, a Turkish air strike killed or wounded 19 peo-

ple near a regime military base in Tal Jariqli, west of Kobanê, without the SOHR being able to indicate immediately whether they were only Syrian soldiers or also civilians. The SDF said in a statement that “*Turkish military aircraft*” had carried out “*12 air strikes against Syrian army positions deployed on the border strip west of Kobanê*” (AFP). The Turkish army also fired more than 30 mortar shells at Kurdish-controlled villages near Afrin.

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, a Turkish drone attack on the market of Tel Rifaat, not far from the regime’s Military Security HQ, killed 2 civilians and injured 9. Conversely, on the 19<sup>th</sup>, in the Turkish-controlled town of al-Bab, pro-regime forces fired artillery into a market, killing 15 civilians, including children, and injuring 40. The SDF spokesman, Farhad Shami, assured that his forces had “*nothing to do*” with this strike (AFP).

The Turkish military also continued its pressure on the Hasaka region, and in particular the M4 motorway and the Christian town of Tel Tamr, where artillery bombardments and drone attacks took place. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, a drone killed a member of the Tel Tamr military council. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, a regime checkpoint was targeted on a road north of Hasaka. Further strikes on the 9<sup>th</sup> again targeted Tel Tamr, killing a civilian in his home. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, further Turkish shelling on nearby villages killed two members of the town’s military council and injured two regime soldiers and a lieutenant. At the same time, the Turkish army brought reinforcements to the front line. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, a drone strike injured a member of the Tel Tamr Military Council...

One of the Turkish strikes has particularly moved observers. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, a Turkish drone attacked a SDF military post in Hasaka province, 45 km inside Syrian territory, killing 2 and wounding 3. The targeted site is near the Istrahat Wazir base where international coalition forces are stationed, on the Hasaka – Tel Tamr road. The next day, another

drone strike in the same area, on a UN-sponsored training centre for girls, killed 4 minors and injured 11 others. The victims, originally recruited by *Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriyah* (“*Revolutionary Youth*”) to become female fighters, had been transferred to the centre by the SDF for return to their families, in accordance with the agreement against underage recruitment with the United Nations. They were killed while playing volleyball... (SOHR)

The city and region of Qamishli were also hit. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, a drone killed 4 people, including 2 children, in a residential area of the city. The drone targeted people digging trenches near a hospital. On 9 September, Damascus army positions and around 25 villages and towns in the Qamishli countryside were bombed. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, a civilian in front of his house in a village near Qamishli was the collateral victim of a Turkish drone strike targeting a SDF vehicle. The commander and the fighter on board were killed (SOHR). On the 11<sup>th</sup>, a civilian and 2 SDF members were killed in their vehicle by a drone strike in Qamishli (*Rûdaw*).

The Turkish gendarmes (*jandarma*) guarding the border continue to distinguish themselves by their abuses. Since the beginning of the year, they had already killed 13 civilians, including 3 children, and injured 20 others. These figures have increased again this month: near Kobanê, one of their armoured vehicles shot down on the 4<sup>th</sup> a civilian who was working in his field; on the 14<sup>th</sup> in Hasaka, they opened fire on a group trying to cross into Turkey, killing 1 civilian and wounding 3 others; on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, they beat up another civilian north of Aleppo. In addition, on the 15<sup>th</sup> they exchanged fire with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) near Darbasiyah.

Pro-Turkish Syrian factions continue their abuses in the Turkish-occupied territories, and in particular in Afrin. In particular, arrests on



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trumped-up charges to obtain ransoms from families are as common as ever.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the so-called criminal court set up by the occupation and its militias sentenced to death a young father who was arrested at his home last April for “*resisting*” the Turkish forces and their auxiliaries during the invasion of Afrin. At the time, he was completing his compulsory military service with the YPG. Several other members of the same family were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 3 to 13 years. The convict’s wife received 12 years.

On 3 July, the SOHR published a damning assessment of the systematic violations committed during July by the Turkish-backed factions in the Afrin district. The NGO counted 68 abductions and arbitrary arrests for ransom, 47 human rights violations, accompanied by fratricidal fighting, noting in particular the death of 10 people. The violations involved the sale of 20 despoiled houses and 2 agricultural plots and the extortion of illegal “taxes” for the passage of goods, agricultural work or the construction of houses, all of which a simple pretext for racketeering. Some civilians resisting the felling of their fruit or olive trees or refusing to pay the “taxes” were violently beaten. Finally, the ransacking of classified archaeological sites continued. On this occasion, the SOHR renewed its repeated appeal to the international community to intervene.

Illegal felling of trees by the militia continued throughout the month, so numerous that it is impossible to report them all. Thousands of trees have been lost. The militia also continued to sell at low prices houses or flats stolen from displaced people or confiscated by force. In some cases, disputes between rival factions over the profits of looting have led to outright clashes, as in Shiran district on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

Several incidents have been reported this month that are characteristic of the disorderly state of the area. For example, members of the “military police” who tried to arrest members of factions had to give up after being attacked and beaten. A displaced activist from the Damascus region had demanded an investigation into 3 *Jaish Al-Islam* commanders, regarding their murky relationship with the regime’s security, and rapes they had committed in their areas of control... Arrested on 10 May, he was sentenced on 22 August by the Afrin “Military Court” to one year in prison and a fine of 2,000 Turkish Liras for “*defamation, threatening to kill, undermining religious sentiment and insulting the National Army*”. Clearly, Ankara’s mercenaries are frequently common criminals...

In another example of the endless violence in these territories, the Al-Mowali tribe recalled all its members after a section of the “National Army” supported by the Military Police tried to take control of the village of Kokan. The villagers severely beat the attackers, destroyed their vehicles and disarmed them. The SOHR reported violent exchanges with automatic weapons in the village on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The dispute had started with an unsuccessful attempt to arrest a tribesman.

AANES continues to try to manage the Al-Hol and Roj camps, where tens of thousands of jihadists or their relatives are still interned. The aim is to release those who can be released, to transfer to their country of origin those who must be tried there, and to ensure the security of the camps by repressing the ISIS cells that carry out numerous assassinations there. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, nearly 700 Iraqis, 620 relatives of fighters, men, women and children, and 50 leaders or fighters, were transferred from Al-Hol back to their country in coordination with the

Iraqi authorities (AFP). On the 26<sup>th</sup>, the Kurdish security forces launched a multi-day operation in the camp which resulted in the arrest of 48 people suspected of several terrorist attacks (*Rûdaw*).

On the same day in France, lawyers published a press release in which they demanded the urgent repatriation for health reasons of several people detained in Roj, in particular, the alarming state of health of a minor child suffering from a heart disease, and that of a mother of two children hospitalised after a stroke. The undersigned say they are “*flabbergasted*” by the lack of response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the numerous letters they have sent. On 5 July, 16 women and 35 minors were brought back to France, an event that marked a shift in the French position, which until then had been very hostile to repatriation, but it is clear that there are still French nationals in the Syrian camps. Asked by AFP, the ministry said they would be repatriated whenever possible. According to *Reuters*, at least 44 people, including 14 women, have been killed this year in the al-Hol camp.

The conflict between the US and Iran also spills over into Syria. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, the US Central Command (*Centcom*) announced that it had carried out air strikes the previous day in the province of Deir Ezzor against ammunition stockpiles belonging to pro-Iranian militias responsible for attacks on American troops on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The statement said: “*The United States does not seek conflict with Iran, but we will continue to take the necessary steps to protect and defend our people*”. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, pro-Iranian militias tried to retaliate by attacking the Conoco and *Green Village* sites, but the US military struck them before they could launch their rockets, killing four of them.

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## TURKEY: THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES ITS HATE SPEECH TO DIVIDE SOCIETY FOR ITS OWN BENEFIT

**A** mocking remark made by pop singer Gulsen in April to her musicians during a concert earned her the arrest on 25 August, though she had apologised on *Twitter* for calling graduates of the Imam and Islamic preacher training schools (*Imam Hatip*) “perverts”. But the artist, known for her support for LGBT people (she had notably unfurled the rainbow banner on stage), was already particularly unpopular with conservative Muslims forming the AKP’s electoral base. Gulsen is now accused of “inciting hatred and hostility” (*Al-Monitor*).

This appalling affair illustrates what can be expected until the parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for 18 June: facing the worst economic situation since he came to power and a sharp decline in popularity, Erdoğan is counting on the over-polarisation of society to keep himself in power. The singer Gulsen was an obvious vehicle for stirring up anti-secular sentiments. Likewise, Syrian refugees are stigmatised as profiteers stealing the work of the Turks and are increasingly subjected to aggression. Kurds who do not pledge allegiance to Erdoğan are enemies of the interior and allies of terrorism. Finally, the economic crisis that the country is currently experiencing can only be due to Western countries, which are plotting Turkey’s ruin...

However, nothing says that these manoeuvres will be enough to ensure the staying in power of the Turkish president and his far-right allies of the MHP, while the economic situation does not show any sign of improvement, on the contrary. On 3 August, the Turkish Central Bank raised the forecast inflation rate for the end of the year from 42.8% to 60.4%, and on 20 August, the annual inflation forecast for July jumped to 79%.

However, this did not stop the Turkish Central Bank, following the President’s theory that “*higher interest rates cause inflation*”, from lowering its rates again, a unique economic policy in the world.

As the defence of the currency and the \$2 billion-a-month occupation of northern Syria drain the state coffers, the chosen recourse seems to be Russia, at the risk of Western sanctions. After his meeting with Vladimir Putin in Sochi on the 5<sup>th</sup>, Mr Erdoğan announced the adoption by five Turkish banks of the Russian *Mir* payment system. As for Russian oil, which Turkey has doubled purchases of since January, (*Wall Street Journal*) it will now be paid for in roubles.

According to the *Washington Post*, citing anonymous Ukrainian intelligence sources, the Russian president also asked his Turkish counterpart to help Russia circumvent Western sanctions. The means: the opening of correspondent accounts in Turkish state banks by major Russian banks under sanctions, and Russian equity investments in Turkish oil refineries, terminals and tanks. This would allow Russia to conceal its exports. While Erdoğan is unlikely to agree to such laundering, which would certainly expose Ankara to US sanctions, a somewhat more sophisticated set-up using a third country as a cover could be used. After all, recalls *Al-Monitor*, which reports the information, Turkey has demonstrated with the *Halkbank* case in the US its expertise in circumventing sanctions against Iran!

It should be recalled that so far Ankara remains the only NATO member country that has not imposed any sanctions on Moscow, which has allowed it to benefit from a continuous flow of Russian money that is particularly helpful in its present difficulties. This is not

just public money. The oligarchs, not content to anchor their yachts in Turkey, also keep their money safe there. Turkey has also become the preferred transit country for Russia, whether for road, rail, air or sea transport... Moreover, in the context of the construction of the future nuclear power plant in Mersin, entrusted to *Rosatom*, the Russian company (not sanctioned) sent its Turkish subsidiary 5 billion dollars, part of which was temporarily placed in dollar bonds of the Turkish Ministry of Finance, a gift to Turkish foreign exchange reserves... (*Le Monde*) Finally, during the first half of 2022, Russian nationals opened 500 businesses in Turkey, more than double the score for all of 2021... (*Wall Street Journal*).

This strengthening of Turkish-Russian economic ties obviously worries the West. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the US Treasury warned in writing two major Turkish business associations, including TUSIAD (45,000 members), that companies that entered into relations with sanctioned Russian companies would themselves be exposed to sanctions. These warnings have hardly discouraged Turkish business leaders, especially since Turkish Finance Minister Nureddin Nebati has described any concerns about this as “*meaningless*” (*Reuters*).

As for Europe, it is likely to avoid too direct criticism of Ankara, which keeps its hand on the NATO membership of Sweden and Finland, while playing via the *TurkStream* pipeline the role of a transit corridor to Europe for part of the Russian gas (“*European consumers should be grateful to Turkey for this uninterrupted flow of natural gas*” said Putin in Sochi).

In the meantime, the incessant work of undermining and polarising society distilled by the AKP-MHP government continues to produce its

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deleterious effects in the country. On 30 July, 4 Alevi places of worship (*cemevi*) in Ankara (5 according to the *Stockholm Centre for Freedom – SCF*) were attacked in the middle of a ceremony, injuring a woman with a knife. On 2<sup>nd</sup> August, the “pro-Kurdish” HDP party condemned the attacks, accusing the anti-Alevi rhetoric of the government of being the cause. The different prayer places were hit in a row between 1.30 and 3.40 pm. The police arrested a single suspect, but the lawyer of the affected institutions, Hüsnüye Şimşek, challenged this theory, saying that videos and witness descriptions made it possible to distinguish several perpetrators and that the attacks, carried out by one group, had therefore been “*organised and prepared in advance*”. On the 5<sup>th</sup> a new attack targeted the head of an Istanbul *cemevi*, Selami Saritas. Two men on motorbikes stopped him while he was in his car to ask for directions, but as soon as he rolled down his car window, they insulted him and tried to hit him. According to a 2020 report by the *Freedom of Belief Initiative*, more than half of the hate crimes committed in Turkey that year targeted Alevis (*SCF*).

Anxious not to lose the votes of an entire community, which according to various estimates represents 15 to 25% of the population, Mr Erdoğan went to the *HuseyinGazi Cemevi* on the 8<sup>th</sup> following the attacks, his first visit to an Alevi temple since his election as president. The date was not chosen at random, as it corresponds to the Shiite festival of Ashura, celebrated by the Alevis. However, some members of the community refused to attend, saying that the visit was just a political show. At the same time, the Interior Ministry accused of the attacks a far-left group, the THKP-C, which denied any involvement (*Al-Monitor*).

As already mentioned, the Kurds are also targeted by the government, which exercises a relentless repression on the progressive HDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party), often

characterised as “pro-Kurdish” by the Western media, but which also incurs the wrath of the government for its defence of the country’s many “minorities”.

On the 6<sup>th</sup>, the HDP held a big rally in Diyarbakir denouncing the government’s anti-Kurdish wars, in Turkey itself, but also in Syria and Iraq. A second rally on the same theme took place the next day in Istanbul. The authorities tried to prevent these rallies by launching a wave of preventive arrests, notably in Istanbul (12 people arrested) and in Antalya (4 people) (*WKI*). However, both rallies could be held, with HDP co-chairs Pervin Buldan and Mithat Sancar present. In Istanbul, the co-spokesperson of the Peoples’ Democratic Congress (HDK), Cengiz Çiçek, said: “*Those who present themselves as ambassadors of peace in the Ukraine-Russia war are imposing war on the Kurdish people in all geographical locations*” (*HDP*).

While thousands of party officials, MPs and ordinary members are still imprisoned on terrorism charges, including its former co-chairmen Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüsekdağ, and many of its elected municipal officials have been removed and replaced by pro-AKP *kayyım* (administrators), the crack-down continues. On the very day of the Diyarbakir rally, the lawyer of the detained Aysel Tugluk, Serdar Celebi, announced that the court had ordered her continued detention, despite her having dementia. The former HDP vice-president was sentenced in 2018 to 10 years in prison for “*belonging to a terrorist organisation*” because of her activities in the “Congress for a Democratic Society” (DTK). However, “*the judges saw with their own eyes that Ms Tugluk did not understand the questions put to her and was not capable of presenting a defence*”. Nevertheless, they refused to have her transferred to a hospital.

On the 12<sup>th</sup>, the Constitutional Court in turn rejected Tugluk’s request for release. However, it

ordered an emergency measure so that the detainee could receive treatment and regular neurological and psychiatric consultations in a hospital (*AFP*).

In parallel, HDP co-chair Mithat Sancar met with the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey (KDP-T) to discuss the possibility of a “Democratic Alliance” for the 2023 elections. This could bring together with the HDP other Kurdish and left-wing parties.

The “main” opposition to the AKP-MHP coalition, led by the Kemalist CHP, which also includes the far-right İYİ party (a scission from the MHP), is careful to keep its distance from the HDP. Yet it knows that the HDP vote holds part of the key to the outcome of the upcoming elections: the CHP mayor of Istanbul thus owes his victory over the AKP candidate in the last municipal elections to the fact that the HDP refrained from fielding a candidate against him... Thus, the CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu went earlier this month, accompanied by his Kurdish-speaking wife Selvi, to the village of Roboski, where the Turkish air force had killed 34 civilians in 2011. He met with relatives of the victims, promising them justice (*Al-Monitor*). But the Kurds are familiar with such charm offensives, which they are regularly the targets of before elections. They have been in the AKP school and know full well that after the elections, they give way to a renewal of repression...

The opposition once again showed its unwillingness to coordinate with the progressive and Kurdish movement when it met for the 6<sup>e</sup> time on the 21<sup>st</sup> in Ankara to discuss the designation of a single candidate for the next presidential elections... excluding the HDP from this meeting. At the end of this meeting, the opposition leaders announced their willingness to oppose Mr Erdoğan with a single candidate whose identity will be announced after a new meeting on October 2.

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This strategy of exclusion is not without risks, as shown by an incident in the parliament at the end of July: in the absence of the HDP, the opposition failed to reach the quorum necessary to hold a session on "violence against health workers". The HDP had not received an invitation from the opposition, which merely made a general appeal to the opposition blocs to join...

After the success of the large meetings organised by the HDP in Diyarbakir and Istanbul, the authorities continued their repression of the party. The police carried out numerous raids on the homes of members and leaders and arrested 8 people in Mersin, 20 in Adana, 4 in Van, 2 in Diyarbakir, and 15 in Izmir and Manisa, while the Hatay Prosecutor General launched criminal proceedings against several Kurds for chanting pro-Kurdish slogans in 2015. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, HDP parliamentary group wrote an open letter to the President of the Parliament asking for an investigation into the human rights violations committed in Syria in the territories under Turkish occupation by the so-called "National Army" (WKI). The text begins by recalling the "extortion, torture, looting, harassment, rape and extrajudicial killings" committed by these armed groups and covered "for a long time" in "the international press and NGO reports", as well as "the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria affiliated to the UN Human Rights Council". The letter also accuses the government of having for the past 10 years "virtually ignored the crimes committed by these criminal networks and observed by the whole world". Recalling how "the AKP government has used armed groups derived from al-Qaeda, some of which also had joint activities with [ISIS]", the text calls for a parliamentary enquiry into "the actions of these groups" in order to "reveal how they are protected and with what resources they are supported financially and logistically" (HDP).

In the last week of the month, police again made arrests, including 6 people in Ankara, for posts critical of the government on social networks. In

Urfa, the father of a Roboski victim was arrested without a warrant.

Beyond the political field, it is always the simple fact of being Kurdish and daring to express one's belonging publicly that provokes repression. In this respect, the AKP government is now totally in line with the institutional anti-Kurdish discrimination practised by the Republic of Turkey since its creation and in an almost continuous manner. In the cultural sphere, the world-renowned Kurdish soprano Pervin Chakar has just fallen victim. The University of Mardin, her home town, decided to cancel the concert she was to give there because she had included a Kurdish-language piece in the programme. Chakar, who has performed at La Scala in Milan, Vienna and most recently in Paris, said in an interview with *Al-Monitor* on the 10<sup>th</sup>, her first since making her story public, that she was not "surprised" but rather "saddened" by the university's decision. Many Kurdish artists have encountered this kind of problem recently, such as Aynur Dogan, Mem Ararat, and even Kurdish bands performing during private weddings have been worried... Regarding Chakar, Abdurrahman Kurt, a former AKP MP and member of the party's Executive Council, insists that the suppression of Kurdish concerts is not a government policy and that he personally opposed these measures. Chakar acknowledged that Kurt had tried to reverse the decision of Artuklu University, but without success. It seems that in this case the rector of the university, himself a Kurd, acted out of fear of losing his position, which says a lot about the prevailing atmosphere.

As several such cases have already shown, anti-Kurdish discrimination and contempt extends even to the dead. The Diyarbakir Bar Association filed a complaint this month with the Judges and Prosecutors Council (HSK) against a prosecutor who returned to two families the bones of their child killed in fighting with the Turkish army in a box or plastic bag. This practice, which violates interna-

tional standards of respect and protection of the dead, has been repeated since the 1990s. For example, one father told the *Mezopotamya* news agency that he received the bones of his 12-year-old son in a bag 20 years after his arrest in Mardin in 1995, although he expected to receive his remains in a coffin. The bar association said: "National and international law sets out in detail how such deliveries should be carried out, respecting the memory of the person and protecting the right to be buried. This treatment of the deceased constitutes the crime of torture and ill-treatment. This practice violates the standards of respect and protection of the dead and the right to a decent burial" (*Kurdistan au Féminin*).

Finally, the region of Mardin was hit by 4 very serious road accidents on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, resulting in numerous deaths. There were two groups of two related accidents. The first occurred on the highway between Gaziantep and Nizip, when a passenger bus collided with rescue teams working at the scene of an earlier accident, killing 16 people and injuring 22 others. The Turkish news agency *Ilhassaid* two of its journalists were killed after stopping to help victims of the first accident (*Al-Jazeera*). A few hours later, 150 kilometres away, west of Derik (Mardin province), a truck whose brakes failed ran off the road and crashed into a busy footbridge, killing at least 19 people and injuring 26 others. Again, the accident occurred while medical personnel were already attending to an earlier accident between a semi-trailer and two other vehicles (*Express [USA]*). In total, at least 35 people were killed in these multiple accidents.

The tragedy provoked public and opposition anger over the safety standards of cargo companies. HDP co-chair Mithat Sancar blamed the government, calling on those responsible, especially the Interior minister, to resign. To contain the public reaction, the authorities banned the media from covering the Mardin accident, but allowed journalists to write about the Gaziantep accident... (WKI)

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## IRAN: STILL NO NUCLEAR DEAL, NEW REPRESSIVE CRACKDOWN, ANTI-BAHA'I CAMPAIGN

**T**he official Iranian rhetoric has suddenly hardened regarding the objectives of the country's nuclear programme. Until now, the official communication repeated over and over again that the programme was aimed exclusively at civilian use. Didn't the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, issue a *fatwa* against nuclear weapons in 2005? But on 17 July, Kamal Kharazi, one of his advisers, suggested that Iran had the capacity to build a nuclear weapon, but that the decision had not yet been taken. On the 29 July, a video posted on a *Telegram* channel of the Revolutionary Guards (*Pasdaran*) asked: "When will Iran's sleeping nuclear bomb wake up?", and on 1<sup>st</sup> August, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, Mohammad Eslami, again mentioned the question (*Farda*).

It may be that these statements are intended to increase the pressure on the West to obtain better terms in a new agreement. But they do reflect a reality: IAEA chief Rafael Grossi warned on the 2<sup>nd</sup> that Iran's programme is "advancing very, very rapidly" and "gaining in ambition and capability" (*Reuters*). These declarations also coincide with an Iranian-Russian rapprochement, partly motivated by Western sanctions on both countries, which worries the West. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of this month, Russia successfully launched the Iranian *Khayyam* intelligence satellite from Kazakhstan. This event puts back in the spotlight an Iranian space program somewhat forgotten, and which, worry the United States, regularly increases Iranian capabilities in terms of ballistic missiles... In a more down-to-earth manner, Tehran has just concluded a 40 billion dollars memorandum of understanding with *Gazprom*, under which the Russian compa-

ny is to restore the Iranian energy infrastructures (*L'Express*).

In the meantime, on the 4<sup>th</sup>, the indirect Iran-US talks resumed in Vienna, with a meeting between the Iranian chief negotiator, Ali Bagheri Kani, and the European Union's special envoy, Enrique Mora, who is playing the role of mediator between Washington and Teheran. For this first meeting in 11 months, none of the parties involved, Washington, Tehran or Brussels, is very optimistic about the chances of success. While Kani said it was up to Washington to make concessions, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said: "We're not going to wait forever for Iran to agree to the deal"... (*Reuters*)

A few days after this meeting, the European Union submitted what it presented as "the final text", non-negotiable, warning that there were only "a few weeks" to conclude. While Washington indicated that it was ready to sign as is, Tehran refused to block the content, before sending its response on the 15<sup>th</sup>. The EU said on the 17<sup>th</sup> that it was studying the response, and the US said it would inform the EU of its views on the Iranian response in private. There were rumours that the Iranian message had been considered "constructive", without being overly optimistic. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, unnamed US officials said that Iran had dropped some of its demands – but Iranian officials appear to have contradicted these claims (*Farda*). However, after the US response, in the words of *Al-Monitor*, "the ping-pong continued". It seems that Tehran insists on closing the IAEA investigation into its undeclared activities as a key condition, but the details of the ongoing discussions have not been made public. As of the end of the month, no agreement had been announced.

A glimmer of hope, both sides know how disastrous the consequences of failure would be for them...

Another factor of tension with Iran was the attack on 12 December in Canada on the writer Salman Rushdie, who was stabbed during a conference. Rushdie has been targeted since 1989 by a *fatwa* issued by Ayatollah Khomeini condemning him to death, which has never been lifted. While Tehran denied any involvement in the attack, which the writer survived, the conservative Iranian press was overjoyed, especially the daily *Keyhan*, whose editor-in-chief is directly appointed by the Supreme Leader. As it happens, the latter had declared in 2017 that the conviction was still valid... Moreover, Tehran has never hesitated to strike at its dissidents or enemies outside its borders, as the Kurdish opposition parties know only too well... Thus, on the 10<sup>th</sup>, the US Department of Justice unveiled criminal charges against Shahram Poursafi, a member of the *pas-daran*, accused of having tried to orchestrate an assassination attempt against former National Security Advisor John Bolton, and this is just one of the most recent cases linked to Iranian state terrorism... (*New York Times*).

The Islamic Republic, from its inception, has led the campaign of assassinations, kidnappings and intimidation abroad that continues to this day. For example, on the 16<sup>th</sup>, an appeal court in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, upheld the death sentences of 3 men convicted of the March 2018 murder of a Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDP-I) peshmerga commander named Qadir Qadiri. Two other defendants were sentenced to 5 years in prison. The court also ruled that Qadiri's case was a ter-

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rorist case. The assassination was orchestrated by Iran...

Inside the country, the government, faced with growing resistance from society, is responding by increasing its attempts at social control and repression. Those in the cultural sphere have been tightened recently, with dozens of concerts and events banned in recent weeks. Earlier this month, human rights activist Maryam Karimbeigi was sentenced to more than three years in prison for attending a concert by a popular Iranian singer in Turkey. A few days earlier, security guards interrupted a music concert in Tehran while the musicians were already on stage. This new hardening is concomitant with that concerning women's clothing, with the implementation in July of a new law on the *hijab* (which must now also cover the shoulders) and greater severity in this regard (HRANA).

Intimidation, or government by terror, is clearly an objective of the authorities. It was learned on the 3<sup>rd</sup> that the authorities had proceeded on 27 July to amputate the fingers of a prisoner convicted of theft, using the rotating blade machine recently installed in Evin prison (Tehran). According to *Amnesty International*, which speaks of an "unspeakably cruel punishment", Pouya Torabi was not given an anaesthetic before the operation. At least 8 other prisoners are at risk of this barbaric punishment (HRANA).

Iran also came to the attention of the international community in early August for its crackdown on the Baha'i religious minority. Their persecution and discrimination against them has never really stopped over the years, but this month it has taken on an alarmingly systematic character, with new arrests and destruction of homes. Bani Dugal, the UN representative of the Baha'i International Community, said Iran arrested 52 Baha'is in July,

raided dozens of homes, closed businesses and demolished property. The authorities accused those detained of being spies with links to Israel. To give just one example, on 2 July, around 200 Security and Intelligence officers carried out quite a full-scale military operation against the small Baha'i village of Roshankouh (Mazandaran). After blocking the access roads, they fired shots in the air and pepper sprayed the villagers, before bulldozing 6 homes and farmland. The mobile phones of the inhabitants were confiscated to prevent them from spreading information about the raid. A few days before, 3 community leaders and 13 members had been arrested across Iran. In addition, Baha'is continue to be denied university enrolment under false pretences. At the end of August, HRANA (*Human Rights Activists News Agency*) had identified 64 who had been refused registration on the grounds of "incomplete records". In the case of Roshankouh, the local prosecutor, who is a mullah, defended the operation as being about "protecting the environment", which would have been encroached upon by the destroyed houses (*New York Times*). On the 10<sup>th</sup>, a group of 70 Iranian activists, academics and artists, in Iran and abroad, condemned the persecution in a joint statement. Among the signatories were Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi and former political prisoner Atena Daemi (*Farda*). On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, UN human rights experts urged the Iranian authorities to end "the persecution and harassment of religious minorities and to stop using religion to restrict the exercise of fundamental rights".

In Kurdistan, killings of cross-border carriers (*kolbars*) by security forces continued. On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the KHRN reported that in July, at least 2 *kolbars* had been killed by border guards and 30 injured, 10 of whom fell while fleeing the attack or were hit by mines. The *Hengaw* organisation reported 3

dead and 34 injured, with 24 cases of direct fire resulting in 3 dead and 21 injured. It should be remembered that these porters are almost never armed and therefore pose no danger to the border forces, who systematically shoot them on sight.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, HRANA reported that police killed 2 children near Khorramabad on 31 July by shooting at a vehicle near a checkpoint. The young victims are two brothers, aged 9 and 13; the parents, themselves seriously injured, have been transferred to an unknown location. According to an informed source, the police shot at the vehicle without prior warning. According to HRANA's annual report, in 2021, 242 citizens were targeted by uncontrolled fire from the regime's military forces, of whom 94 were killed. In addition, border guards killed a Kurdish porter near Salas-e Babajani on the 12<sup>th</sup> and injured four others in Baneh and Nowsud. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month, another *kolbar* was killed and 12 others injured near Baneh, while 2 others were injured by mines in the same area. Finally, at the end of the month, 2 more *kolbars* were shot dead near Baneh, while a mine from the Iran-Iraq war killed a 70-year-old man near Gilanegharb (*WKI*).

In addition, arrests were made in Iranian Kurdistan throughout the month. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, the Intelligence Ministry claimed to have arrested ten "terrorists" belonging to ISIS who were planning attacks on the Shiite religious celebrations of Ashura. According to the statement, those arrested were from Iraq and Turkey. These arrests follow others made in July of several members of a Kurdish opposition party, accused of espionage and planning attacks on behalf of Israel. The ministry also accused Israel of using "takfiris" (jihadists) to strike Iran (*AFP*). The Iranian Kurdish party Komala had already accused the intelligence service of spreading false informa-

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tion after 4 of its peshmerga, arrested in mid-July near Ouroumieh, were accused of having links with Mossad, the Israeli secret service. The party had accused the authorities of trying to use this propaganda as a pretext to increase repression in Kurdistan. At the beginning of August, 9 Kurdish human rights organisations made the same accusation, asking the authorities to reveal the fate of these 4 prisoners, who were put in solitary confinement after their arrest (WKI).

At the same time, a court sentenced a Kurdish trade union activist, Rebwar Abdullahi, to two years in prison for membership of a banned Kurdish party. Security forces also arrested two activists, Shadi Dargahai and Logman Grami, in Marivan (WKI).

On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, the KHRN published its report on human rights violations against the Kurds in Iran for July. In addition to the killings of *kolbars*, which we have already mentioned, the NGO lists 8 executions, including those of 6 prisoners sentenced for premeditated murder and 2 for drug-related offences. In fact, the number is probably higher, as the authorities keep a large number of executions secret. In addition, at least 49 people were arrested and imprisoned, including the 4 Komala peshmerga mentioned above, and 3 people were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 2 to 5 years. Finally, on 29 July, the police killed a 20-year-old man from Kamyaran (Kordestan province) near Ahvaz in Khuzestan. According to the *Hengaw* organisation, since Ebrahim Raisi came to power, 600 Kurds have been arrested and 64 executed, including the political prisoners Haider Qurbai and Fairoz Musaloo.

In the first week of August, security forces arrested several activists: 2 in Oshnavieh, 2 in Marivan, and 1 in Sanandaj. The following week, 5 more people were arrested

in Oshnavieh, while armed clashes took place near Saqqez between the *Pashdaran* and a PDKI-affiliated group, the “Eagles of Zagros”, forcing the authorities to close the Saqqez-Marivan road. At the same time, an unidentified group attacked an Iranian army post near Urmia. According to *Hengaw*, a large military force was deployed along the Iraqi border from Oshnavieh to Piranshahr (WKI). On the 16<sup>th</sup>, security forces arrested without showing a warrant another 5 people in the village of Geok Tepe (Mahabad), before holding them incommunicado (HRANA). Three other arrests took place in Miandoab, while a criminal court in Urmia sentenced a Kurd from Turkey named Mohammed Pirdal to 16 years in prison for membership of the PKK (WKI). On 24 August, 5 residents of Sanandaj were each sentenced to 4 years in prison for “*propaganda against the regime, collaboration with one of the anti-regime parties and formation of illegal groups*”. The next day, a resident of Shahin-Dej was arrested and transferred to Miandoab. Other arrests took place on the 30<sup>th</sup> in Oshnavieh and Mahabad. In Sanandaj, the *Etelaat* (Intelligence) warned female activist Arazo Amjadi to refrain from participating in social events or activities (HRANA).

Economic conditions continue to provoke protests. On the 25<sup>th</sup>, truckers working for mining companies in Qorveh (Kordestan) went on strike to demand better pay for their freight. In Urmia, a number of drivers protested on the 28<sup>th</sup> in front of the town hall against the non-payment of their last 3 months’ wages. Furthermore, the 4 members of the Kurdistan Teachers’ Association arrested in Divandarreh on 15 June after the teachers’ protests are still detained without access to a lawyer or visits from their families. Despite repeated requests from their families, the authorities refuse to release them on parole.

They are far from being the only imprisoned Kurdish teachers (HRANA).

Finally, on the 24<sup>th</sup> it was reported that activist Sa’ada Khadirzadeh had attempted on the 18<sup>th</sup> to hang herself with her scarf in Urmia prison. According to unverified sources, before her suicide attempt, she also tried to kill her infant child with pills. Arrested last October in Piranshahr, she had given birth in Urmia hospital last June. The reason for her arrest and the charges against her are still unknown. She and her child are still being treated in the prison infirmary.

Concerning the Kurdish national movement in Iran, the most important news of this period is undoubtedly the announcement of the reunification of the two branches of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDP-I), which had been separated for 16 years. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of this month, these two parties, the PDKI and the KDP-I, exiled in Iraqi Kurdistan, announced that their negotiations had led to a reunification. Founded in 1945 and having played an important role during the period of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, the PDKI was banned in Iran after the Islamic Revolution as a terrorist organisation (AFP). To commemorate their reunification, the two parties held a ceremony attended by the leaders of the KDP-I and the PDKI, Mustafa Hijri and Khalid Azizi, who agreed that they would lead the party jointly, one as interim leader and the other as spokesperson, until the next congress, scheduled for 2023. The Kurdish political parties in Iranian Kurdistan and elsewhere welcomed this news. The Komala party, which has also been separated into two components since a split, is also in discussions to manage to reunify and, beyond that, to form a united front against the Iranian regime with other Kurdish parties in exile.

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## NEW NATO MEMBERSHIPS: TURKEY CONTINUES TO LOBBY

**O**n 2 August, the French parliament ratified the NATO membership of Sweden and Finland. The deputies adopted the text by 209 votes to 46 with the support of the LR (right-wing), the Socialist Party (PS) and the ecologists, the abstention of the RN (far-right) and the vote against of *La France Insoumise* (left-wing). According to French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna, France joins “twenty allies” who “have already ratified the protocols”. The next day, Italy in turn ratified the same protocols. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, the US Senate, the only body in United States empowered to ratify international agreements, approved the resolution by a very large majority, with elected representatives from both parties (95 votes for, 1 against). On the 9<sup>th</sup>, US President Joe Biden initialled the ratification, making it a final decision. Sweden and Finland need ratification by all 30 member states of the organisation in order to benefit from the protection of Article 5 of its Charter, which provides for a joint response

in the event of an attack against one of its members.

However, NATO membership for Sweden and Finland is not yet a done deal. Turkey is still threatening to freeze the process. After the signing of a tripartite memorandum at the end of June, Ankara had sent extradition requests to both countries for 33 people, most of them considered as “terrorists” by Ankara. But as of 18 August, these requests had still not been answered, in particular those concerning people accused of belonging to the Gulenist network. Turkey’s justice minister said he was disappointed by the announcement of the extradition of a single Turkish national accused of fraud: “If they think they can make Turkey believe they have kept their promises by extraditing common criminals, they are mistaken,” Bekir Bozdağ told the daily *Milliyet*(AFP).

Turkey therefore resumed its accusations of benevolence towards the

PKK and its allies, which Ankara also considers to be terrorist organisations, against Sweden and Finland (but more particularly against Stockholm). A Finnish-hosted meeting on 19 August with Sweden and Turkey failed to break the deadlock, as did a second session on 26 August. Finland and Sweden “reiterated their commitment, enshrined in the trilateral memorandum, to show full solidarity and cooperation with Turkey in the fight against all forms and manifestations of terrorism,” a Turkish statement said. They promised once again to examine the case of suspects accused of involvement in the 2016 coup attempt will be examined, as will that of Kurdish militants. The Finnish Foreign Ministry said a new tripartite meeting would be held in the autumn... NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg had said in June that Sweden and Finland should plan “to continue to amend their national legislation, crack down on PKK activities and conclude an extradition agreement with Turkey” (*International Affairs*).

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## TRIAL OF THE ISIS “BEATLES”: TWO LIFE SENTENCES

**O**n the evening of 10 August, Aine Leslie Davis, a 38-year-old British man and suspected member of the ISIS group nicknamed the “Beatles” because of their British accent, a cell specialising in the capture, torture and execution of Western hostages, was arrested at London’s Luton airport, where he was arriving after being deported from Turkey. He was brought to court the following day. Sentenced in Turkey in 2015 to seven and a half years in prison for terrorist offences, he had been deported at the end of his sentence.

The four members of the group are accused of kidnapping at least 27 journalists and aid workers from

the US, UK, Europe, New Zealand, Russia and Japan. They are also suspected of torturing and killing, including by beheading, American journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, as well as aid workers such as Peter Kassig.

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, another member of this group, 34-year-old El Shafee el-Sheikh, was sentenced to life imprisonment by a US court. In fact, he received 8 simultaneous life sentences for his role in the deaths of journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff as well as aid workers Peter Kassig and Kayla Mueller. Arrested in 2018 by the Syrian Democratic Forces (Kurds) along with another alleged member of the “Beatles”, Alexandra Kotey, he was handed

over to US forces in Iraq. The two men were sent to the United States in 2020 for trial. Alexandra Kotey pleaded guilty in September 2021, and has already been sentenced to life imprisonment last April by the same judge who just sentenced el-Sheikh.

The best known member of this group, Mohammed Emwazi, aka “Jihadi John”, was killed by a US drone strike in Syria in 2015.

The el-Sheikh trial has revealed the atrocities inflicted by the group on its prisoners, with ten former European and Syrian hostages testifying about them. They include simulated drowning, electric shocks or mock executions.



## En Irak, haute tension politique entre les chiites

Les partisans du chef populiste Moqtada Al-Sadr occupent le Parlement à Bagdad tandis que les chiites pro-iraniens organisent des contre-manifestations.

L'Irak s'est réveillé, lundi 1<sup>er</sup> août, avec la sensation de marcher au bord du précipice. Les rivalités au sein du camp chiite qui paralysent l'Etat depuis les élections législatives d'octobre 2021 ont tourné au dangereux face-à-face. Dans la nuit, des renforts de l'armée ont été déployés pour sécuriser la « zone verte », le quartier de Bagdad qui abrite les institutions. En son sein, des milliers de partisans de Moqtada Al-Sadr occupent, depuis samedi, le Parlement pour réclamer sa dissolution et la tenue de nouvelles élections. Des centaines d'autres les ont rejoints, dimanche soir, galvanisés par l'appel du chef populiste chiite à élargir la mobilisation et à saisir « l'opportunité d'un changement radical du système politique ».

En réaction, ses rivaux du Cadre de coordination, une alliance composée notamment de partis-milices proches de l'Iran, devenue la première force au sein de l'assemblée, ont appelé à des contre-manifestations, lundi après-midi, à ses abords pour protester contre l'« escalade continue » de M. Sadr, qui s'apparente, à leurs yeux, à un appel à un « coup d'Etat » contre les institutions étatiques, tout en réitérant leur offre de dialogue.

### Rancœurs anciennes

En engageant le bras de fer dans la rue contre ses adversaires la semaine dernière, Moqtada Al-Sadr a précipité la bataille qui les oppose depuis



Une image satellite montrant les milliers de partisans de Muqtada al-Sadr autour du bâtiment du Parlement irakien à Bagdad, en Irak, le 30 juillet 2022. MAXAR TECHNOLOGIES VIA AP

dix mois pour la direction du camp chiite. Il menaçait de le faire depuis qu'il a claqué la porte du Parlement, en juin, exaspéré de n'avoir pas réussi à former un gouvernement majoritaire avec ses seuls alliés sunnites et kurdes. Il avait alors provoqué la démission de ses soixante-treize députés et laissé le champ libre à ses rivaux pour tenter de former un gouvernement, à la condition qu'il réponde à ses exigences d'être exempt de toute influence étrangère et de corruption.

Lire aussi : Article réservé à nos abonnés [En Irak, la démission des députés sadristes aggrave la crise politique](#)

Moqtada Al-Sadr a mis ses menaces à exécution, mercredi, à la suite de la décision du Cadre de coordination de présenter Mohamed Shia Al-Soudani, un politicien chiite de 52 ans, au poste de premier

ministre. Pendant plusieurs heures, ses partisans ont occupé le Parlement pour s'opposer à cette nomination. M. Sadr a de nouveau battu le rappel de ses partisans, samedi, pour empêcher la tenue d'une session parlementaire destinée à lancer le processus de formation du gouvernement. Ses sympathisants ont saccagé à Bagdad des bureaux du parti Dawa de l'ancien premier ministre Nouri Al-Maliki et des locaux du courant Hikma, la formation d'Ammar Al-Hakim, tous deux membres du Cadre de coordination.

La proximité de M. Soudani avec Nouri Al-Maliki a attisé les foudres de Moqtada Al-Sadr. Une profonde animosité oppose les deux hommes depuis que Nouri Al-Maliki, alors premier ministre, a ordonné une opération militaire à Bassora en 2008 pour écraser l'Armée

du Mahdi, la milice formée par le jeune Moqtada Al-Sadr pour combattre l'occupation américaine après 2003. Les rancœurs ont subsisté entre eux après le retour de M. Sadr dans le jeu politique en 2010, sous le second mandat de M. Maliki. Mis à l'écart du pouvoir en 2014, après la chute d'un tiers de l'Irak aux mains de l'organisation Etat islamique, ce dernier a conservé d'importants relais au sein de l'Etat qui lui ont permis de conquérir trente-huit sièges dans l'actuelle assemblée.

Lire aussi Article réservé à nos abonnés [En Irak, les milices chiites pro-Iran tentent de surmonter leur revers électoral](#)

Depuis le début de la législature, les ambitions de Moqtada Al-Sadr se heurtent à celles de M. Maliki. « Nouri Al-Maliki estime pouvoir prétendre à une part du pouvoir et à jouer un rôle dans le choix du premier ministre. Il veut aussi aider à maintenir le statu quo que Moqtada Al-Sadr tente de faire voler en éclats », estime Fanar Haddad, spécialiste de l'Irak à l'université de Copenhague. Homme controversé en Irak comme à l'étranger, M. Al-Maliki a vu ses espoirs de prendre la tête du gouvernement être douchés après des fuites audio, mi-juillet, d'un échange qu'il aurait eu avec des miliciens chiites – dont il conteste l'authenticité –, dans lequel il agite la menace d'une guerre intrachiite pour éliminer M. Sadr.

Ancien gouverneur de la province de Maysan et plusieurs

fois ministre depuis 2010, Mohamed Shia Al-Soudani convoite lui aussi ce poste de longue date. C'est dans cette optique qu'il avait quitté le parti Dawa lors du mouvement de contestation antipouvoir d'octobre 2019. Cette indépendance affichée n'a pas convaincu M. Sadr. Pour Hamzeh Hadad, du Conseil européen pour les relations internationales, le rejet de sa candidature n'est pour Moqtada Al-Sadr en réalité qu'un « prétexte ». « Sadr a abandonné l'idée d'obtenir le monopole du pouvoir sur le camp chiite par le biais du processus électoral. Il a porté la bataille dans la rue, en pariant sur la colère populaire contre le statu quo pour le soutenir », estime l'expert.

#### Instrumentalisation de la rue

La rue est une arène où le chef populiste chiite se sait en position de force face à ses rivaux. Il dispose d'une capacité de mobilisation inégalée grâce aux millions d'Irakiens qui lui sont fidèles dans les quartiers

défavorisés de Bagdad et du sud chiite du pays. Depuis le mouvement proréformes de 2016 jusqu'à la contestation de 2019, il n'a eu de cesse d'y avoir recours pour renforcer sa stature politique. Un pied dans le pouvoir, un pied dehors, Moqtada Al-Sadr a instrumentalisé la rue pour se tailler une image de nationaliste réformiste face au camp chiite proiranien, tout en plaçant ses hommes aux postes-clés au sein de l'Etat.

Moqtada Al-Sadr mise à nouveau sur cette stratégie. Dimanche, il a appelé tous les Irakiens soutenant la souveraineté de l'Irak à rejoindre la « révolution » en cours pour changer le système politique et la Constitution. Ses appels sont ponctués de rhétorique religieuse destinée à attiser la ferveur des fidèles chiites qui s'apprêtent à célébrer l'Achoura, la commémoration du martyre de l'imam Hussein, le petit-fils du prophète Mahomet. « Nombreux, notamment parmi les contestataires de 2019, apportent un soutien in-

direct à l'initiative de Moqtada Al-Sadr, car ils veulent désespérément une alternative et un changement de système. Ils font le vœu pieux que Sadr soit un moindre mal et un contrepoids face à l'influence de l'Iran, bien qu'il a prouvé par le passé qu'il ne poursuit que son propre intérêt », commente M. Haddad.

Plutôt que l'affrontement, Moqtada Al-Sadr cherche à semer la division au sein du Cadre de coordination pour négocier un compromis qu'il dicterait. Samedi, des divergences étaient en effet apparues au sein de l'alliance ; certains, à l'instar d'Ammar Al-Hakim et de Hadi Al-Améri, le chef de l'organisation Badr, privilégiant le dialogue. Mais ces divisions ont laissé place à une démonstration d'unité après l'appel de M. Sadr à une « révolution ». « Ils partagent la même crainte de voir M. Sadr former le gouvernement. Son projet de reconfigurer le partage du pouvoir au profit d'une version édulcorée du système de répartition confessionnelle des postes [la

« muhasasa »] aboutirait à exclure certains d'entre eux, comme Nouri Al-Maliki et Qaïs Al-Khazali », le chef du parti-milice la Ligue des vertueux [« Asaïb Ahl Al-Haq »], explique M. Haddad.

Face à la crainte de voir la bataille politique tourner à la confrontation entre les deux camps lourdement armés, les appels au calme et à la retenue se multiplient. Samedi, le premier ministre, Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, chargé de gérer les affaires courantes, a appelé les blocs politiques « à s'asseoir pour négocier et s'entendre ». L'opportunité de convoquer des élections anticipées est à nouveau invoquée comme issue à la crise. « En l'absence de compromis, l'organisation d'élections anticipées pourrait repousser à plus tard d'éventuels affrontements », conclut M. Haddad.

Lire aussi Article réservé à nos abonnés [Le premier ministre irakien échappe à un attentat](#)

## Une attaque de drone turque fait un blessé à Ranya

L'État turc poursuit ses attaques dans diverses parties du Kurdistan.

Le gouverneur du district de Raperin, limitrophe de la ville de Sulaymaniyah dans le sud-Kurdistan (nord de l'Irak), a annoncé qu'un avion de reconnaissance, a frappé une voiture lundi.

Selon le communiqué, le drone a visé une voiture en mouvement sur la route Charqurne-Ranya. Les premiers rapports indiquent qu'une personne a été blessée à la suite de l'attaque.





1 août 2022  
By Hala Kodmani

## L'Irak à la case chaos politique après une longue paralysie

**A**gitation tous azimuts ce lundi dans les rues de Bagdad où manifestants, contre-manifestants et forces de l'ordre ont tenté de s'imposer, sans accès de violences redoutés. Après des mois de paralysie politique, un bras de fer entre partis irakiens chiites rivaux s'est engagé par une mobilisation de leurs partisans dans la rue. Sans président de la République en raison des rivalités inter-kurdes pour élire un candidat à ce poste qui revient constitutionnellement à un kurde et avec un gouvernement démissionnaire expédiant les affaires courantes dans l'impossibilité de s'accorder sur la désignation d'un nouveau Premier ministre, le chaos politique se poursuit en Irak.

### Pourquoi ce regain de tension ?

L'escalade a commencé samedi à l'initiative de l'influent leader Moqtada al-Sadr. Des milliers de partisans du dignitaire chiite très populaire ont investi le siège du Parlement, dans la zone verte ultra-sécurisée de Bagdad, pour la deuxième fois en une semaine. Ils ont prolongé leur sit-in, cette fois en installant des matelas et se faisant servir des repas par des volontaires et fumant même des chichas dans le bâtiment climatisé. Ils protestent contre la nomination au poste de Premier ministre de Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, proposé par leurs adversaires du «Cadre de coordination». Ce rassemblement de milices et de partis pro-iraniens, dont la formation de l'ex-Premier ministre Nouri al-Maliki, est uni



Des partisans de Moqtada al-Sadr occupent le Parlement irakien à Bagdad, lundi. (Ahmad Al-Rubaye/AFP)

essentiellement par le rejet d'Al-Sadr.

### Les raisons du blocage politique ?

Depuis les législatives d'octobre 2021, la paralysie politique est totale. Des mois de tractations entre les grands partis n'ont pas permis d'élire un nouveau président de la République ou un nouveau chef du gouvernement. Premier bloc au Parlement avec 73 élus sur 329 députés, le groupe de Moqtada al-Sadr a tenté sans succès pendant des mois de former un gouvernement avec ses partenaires sunnite et kurde. Incapable de rassembler la majorité nécessaire pour désigner un Premier ministre, le courant d'Al-Sadr a finalement fait démissionner en juin ses 73 députés, laissant au Cadre de coordination la tâche de former un gouvernement. Un recul tactique avant son coup de force populaire de ces derniers jours pour bloquer le choix de ses adversaires.

### Qui gouverne l'Irak en attendant ?

En place depuis avril 2020 comme Premier ministre de compromis, Moustafa al-Kazimi reste à la tête d'un gouvernement chargé d'expédier les affaires courantes depuis les élections d'octobre 2021. Il observe un silence de neutralité remarquable depuis le début du bras de fer entre les deux formations chiites, y compris lors de la prise du Parlement ces derniers jours. Les Irakiens le soupçonnent d'un accord tacite avec Moqtada al-Sadr auquel il doit sa nomination. «En réalité, Kazhimi cherche à gagner chaque jour de plus au gouvernement même si l'Irak brûle», estime Montadhar Nasser, du site d'information indépendant Al-Alam **Al-Jadeed**.

### Quelle issue possible à la crise ?

Si une confrontation violente entre formations opposées,

armées toutes deux, n'est pas à exclure, elle n'est pas probable pour le moment. Chacun des partis irakiens accuse l'autre de chercher la confrontation mais tout en appelant à faire prévaloir la raison et la paix dans le pays. Des appels relayés aussi à l'international, notamment par le secrétaire général de l'ONU. António Guterres a invité les partis irakiens à «la désescalade pour surmonter leurs désaccords et former un gouvernement national efficace, par le dialogue pacifique et inclusif». Un compromis pourrait intervenir au cas où la coalition hétérogène formée par le Cadre de coordination se divise, permettant à Moqtada al-Sadr de reprendre la main en désignant un Premier ministre de compromis. Et si l'impasse devait durer, le plus vraisemblable, est que le gouvernement de Kazhimi continue d'expédier les affaires courantes pour une période indéterminée.

## «L'Irak pourrait basculer dans une guerre civile»

INTERVIEW «Une nouvelle fracture est apparue au sein de la communauté chiite à l'issue des législatives du 10 octobre 2021»

Le Premier ministre par intérim, Mustafa al-Kazimi, multiplie les appels au dialogue alors que les partisans du leader religieux chiite, Moqtada al-Sadr occupent le Parlement pour s'opposer au candidat au poste de Premier ministre d'un bloc rival soutenu par Téhéran. Esmail Qaani, le commandant de la Force Al-Qods du Corps des gardiens de la révolution islamique iranien est arrivé à Bagdad lundi pour des pourparlers avec les acteurs politiques.

Sociologue franco-irakien, directeur à Paris du Centre français de recherche sur l'Irak, [Adel Bakawan](#), est auteur de « [L'Irak, un siècle de faillite](#) » (Tallandier, 2021).

### Comment est-on arrivé à la situation actuelle en Irak ?

De 2013 à 2021, la fracture était communautaire entre les sunnites, les chiites et les Kurdes, les trois grandes composantes de la nation irakienne. Une nouvelle fracture intracommunautaire est apparue à l'issue des législatives du 10 octobre 2021. La communauté chiite se divise désormais en trois grands groupes : le bloc nationaliste irakien représenté par [Moqtada al-Sadr](#), le bloc pro-iranien composé de quinze forces et le mouvement de contestation. Cette fracture empêche la nomination d'un Premier ministre et d'un gouvernement. Il y a aussi des divisions au sein du mouvement kurde. La nomination d'un chef de gouvernement doit recevoir l'aval du président de la République issu de cette communauté. Or, celle-ci est divisée entre le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) de Massoud Barzani et l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK) fondée par



Le leader chiite Moqtada al-Sadr.DR

Jalal Talabani. Ces deux formations n'arrivent plus à dégager un consensus pour nommer le chef de l'Etat. Les tensions se sont accrues la semaine dernière après qu'une coalition de partis chiites, le Cadre de coordination, a nommé Mohamed al-Soudani, vétéran de la politique aligné avec l'ancien Premier ministre Nouri al-Maliki, pour diriger le prochain gouvernement.

« Nous avons trois catégories de forces armées et paramilitaires qui répondent chacune à un acteur de référence »

### Moqtada al-Sadr a envoyé ses partisans pour occuper le Parlement dans la Zone verte ultrasécurisée de Bagdad. Que cherche-t-il ?

En 2021, Moqtada al-Sadr a obtenu une majorité de 73 sièges au parlement. Fort de ce résultat, il voulait changer le système politique reposant jusqu'à présent sur la mise en place d'un gouvernement d'union nationale. Son souhait était de former une coalition majoritaire avec le PDK de Barzani et les sunnites de Mohammed Halbousi de la pro-

vince d'Anbar. Dans ce schéma, le reste des députés devaient siéger dans l'opposition. Cette proposition a été catégoriquement rejetée par les autres partis communautaires. Conséquence : Moqtada al-Sadr a retiré ses 73 députés. Ces derniers ont été remplacés par le Cadre de coordination, qui a placé ses propres députés arrivés en seconde position aux législatives. Ils forment aujourd'hui la majorité, veulent former un gouvernement, et ont proposé la nomination comme Premier ministre de Mohamed Chia al-Soudani, un ancien ministre de 52 ans. Or, ce dernier est perçu comme pro-iranien. Moqtada al-Sadr a donc demandé à ses partisans d'envahir l'assemblée nationale pour bloquer les nominations. En réaction, les dirigeants du Cadre de coordination menacent aussi d'envoyer leurs partisans pour envahir la Zone verte. Le risque de confrontation est majeur et l'Irak pourrait basculer dans une guerre civile. Député de l'Alliance irakienne unifiée et dirigeant de l'organisation politico-militaire chiite Badr, Hadi al-Ameri demande à Moq-

tada Al-Sadr de revenir à la table des négociations tout comme Nechrivan Barzani, écouté par les deux parties, qui a invité toutes les forces politiques à venir à Erbil pour reprendre le dialogue afin de sortir de cette impasse.

### Quel est le rapport de force militaire ?

Nous avons trois catégories de forces armées et paramilitaires qui répondent chacune à un acteur de référence. Il y a les Hachd al-Chaabi, coalition paramilitaire composée de 80 milices en majorité chiites formée en 2014 pendant la seconde guerre civile irakienne. On évalue cette coalition, armée et financée par l'Iran, à environ 160 000 combattants, présents de Bassora à Kirkouk. Son référent politique est le Cadre de coordination. Ces combattants ne sont pas tous opérationnels et bien formés mais ils constituent une force de mobilisation importante. Ensuite, il y a les milices fidèles à Moqtada al-Sadr, environ 17 000 hommes très idéologisés, bien formés, aguerris et lourdement armés. Ils ont une cause à dé-

fendre et sont dans la sacralisation de leur leader religieux. Il y a aussi l'armée irakienne et ses forces anti-terroriste évaluées entre 15 000 et 20 000 combattants bien entraînés par les Etats-Unis et la France. Ces soldats sont loyaux au Premier ministre par intérim, Mustafa al-Kazemi. Enfin, la présence militaire américaine est estimée à plus de 5 000 soldats.

« Si l'Iran s'implique, en réaction, les Etats-Unis, la Turquie et les pays du Golfe ne devraient pas rester les bras croisés »

#### Une force peut-elle prendre le dessus sur une autre?

S'il y a affrontement, le pays devrait s'enfoncer dans une longue guerre civile sans réel vainqueur car aucun acteur militaire n'est

suffisamment puissant pour s'imposer aux autres. Et si l'Iran s'implique, en réaction, les Etats-Unis, la Turquie et les pays du Golfe ne devraient pas rester les bras croisés.

#### De quel côté penchent les progressistes, les sunnites et les Kurdes?

La jeunesse irakienne, qui a lancé les manifestations en 2019, rêvait d'avoir un véritable Etat, une identité nationale. Ce mouvement civil démocratique non armé a des marges de manœuvre limitées au regard des forces militaires existantes. Il se pose aujourd'hui la question de l'utilité ou non de s'engager au côté de Moqtada al-Sadr. Le pari est risqué et le mouvement de contestation ne veut pas perdre

sa neutralité. Les sunnites et les Kurdes observent le jeu des acteurs. Ils ne veulent ni être pris entre deux feux, ni tenus responsables du délitement de la situation. Ils ont d'ailleurs reçu des menaces des responsables pro-iraniens.

#### Quels sont les facilitateurs étrangers qui peuvent aider à résoudre cette crise?

L'Iran reste un acteur clé qui dispose de leviers pour assurer une médiation entre les forces antagonistes. Le général iranien Esmail Qaani, commandant de la Force Al-Qods du Corps des gardiens de la révolution islamique, fait régulièrement la navette entre Téhéran et Bagdad pour accélérer la formation du

prochain gouvernement. Il est de retour depuis lundi en Irak et devrait s'entretenir avec Moqtada al-Sadr. Ce dernier vend l'idée à Téhéran qu'il est le seul acteur légitime dans la communauté chiite pour négocier un partenariat avec la République islamique. Il cherche à convaincre les dirigeants iraniens qu'il peut être leur interlocuteur unique comme le chef du Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, au Liban. Mais Téhéran ne souhaite pas en faire son seul partenaire. De leur côté, les Etats-Unis ont encore des moyens importants et sont influents auprès du Premier ministre intérimaire. Mais Moqtada al-Sadr et les dirigeants du Cadre de coordination considèrent toujours les Washington comme une force d'occupation.



August 1, 2022  
By Lazghine Ya'qoube

## What drives Turkey's recent increased attacks on Syrian Kurds?

Rumors said that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ambitions of launching a new military operation against Syrian Kurds were put down during his visit to Tehran, but the reality on the ground shows otherwise.

While Russia and Iran remain staunch supporters of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, both countries urged Turkey against conducting further military campaigns in northern Syria during their trilateral summit last month.

Turkey has recently renewed threats to carry out a new military operation against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northern Syria's Manbij and Tal Rifaat towns in a bid to complete the 30 kilometer "safe zone" it began creating along its southern borders in recent



US army vehicles supporting the SDF in Deir ez-Zor. File photo AFP

years. However, reports emerging from the summit claim that Russia has pledged to remove Kurdish fighters from the Aleppo-Hasaka highway, also known as M4, and to hand them over to the Syrian regime forces.

M4 is seen as the de-facto

border between the Syrian regime forces and the SDF on one hand and the Turkish armed forces backed by Syrian proxies on another. With variances at different points, it categorically corresponds to Erdogan's 30 km security zone.

However, an unprecedented number of airstrikes and drone attacks targeted Syrian Kurds following the summit. The life of a senior Kurdish commander was claimed in a Turkish airstrike, making July the deadliest month for the Kurdish fighters in 2022. Ankara seems to have been granted the green light to use the airspace.

Turkey is said to have struck a conciliatory deal with Tehran.

'Iran made a deal with Turkey at the Tehran conference. The deal is that Turkey can conduct unlimited airstrikes against the PYD [the ruling Kurdish party in Rojava]. In exchange, Turkey will not invade Aleppo,' US Middle East researcher Nicholas Heras said via WhatsApp.

'Iran is willing to trade the PYD to further its war with Israel,' Heras added.

Previously used in Nagorno-Karabakh, Libya, Ukraine, and recently - notably intensively - in northeast Syria (Rojava), Turkey's strategy of drone strikes against the Kurdish forces is lethal.

The highly advanced airspace technology of Bayraktar TB 2 results in heinous damage on the ground.

Drone strikes seem to be an alternative for Ankara which is still longing for the green light from Tehran and Moscow to launch its full-scale invasion. Undeniably, the impact made by the armed drones in Rojava is substantial.

On 20 July, a Turkish drone struck a car some 40 km deep in Syrian territory. Earlier in the day, two SDF members were killed by Zor Maghar in western Kobane in a similar act.

Another attack in eastern Qamishli on July 22 killed three members of the Women's Protection Units (YPJ), an SDF-affiliated force. The strike was resounding for a set of reasons.

First, one of the **targeted** YPJ members was high-profile field commander Salwa Yusuf. She was a deputy commander of the SDF and played a major role in leading the force in the fight against the Islamic State

(ISIS) since 2017. While the Global Coalition offered condolences, failing to mention the perpetrator, the SDF in a statement pledged retaliation.

Second, Qamishli's airspace is protected by Russia or believed to be. Third, the attack occurred at the eastern entrance of the city which was namely excluded from the joint Turkish-Russian patrols enshrined in the Sochi agreement of 2019. The attack came just after the three fighters exited a meeting held in the city.

Back in Kobane, where the US-led Global Coalition and the Kurdish partnership was first forged, Sahin Tekintangac, a local commander of the People's Protection Units (YPG), was reported "neutralized" by the Turkish Intelligence Services (MIT), on July 23.

On the same day, 19 villages **underwent** Turkish bombardment in Tal Tamr.

Three members of the Assyrian Khabur Guards were **reported** injured.

On Monday, an SDF commander was reported killed in Ain Issa. On the following day, a Turkish drone in northern Raqqa killed another soldier marking the third death in less than 24 hours.

Two Turkish soldiers were **re-**

**ported** killed by Kurdish fighters in Euphrates Shield zones on Wednesday. Seven people were injured on a separate occasion in Tal Rifaat.

On the following day, four members of the internal security forces (Asayish) were **killed** near Tal al-Semin camp in northern Raqqa.

From another point of view, recent escalation seems to be used as a pressing card by Russia against the Kurdish forces to acquiesce.

This has a foundation to build upon in the sense that the Turkish threat has pushed the Syrian Kurds to the lap of the Syrian regime. This, ironically, plays into the hands of the parts involved in the Astana talks.

Recently, Syrian regime forces were heavily deployed to posts held for years by the SDF. The Syrian army has been deployed to Tal Rifaat, Manbij, Kobane, and Ain Issa.

The US **expressed** its deep concerns, called for immediate de-escalation, and urged all parts to respect the ceasefire agreement.

This being the case, the Kurds seem to possess few options that could entail making painful concessions.

It was in May when Erdogan announced his country would carry out a military incursion against the Kurdish fighters.

Erdogan seeks to push the SDF some 30 kilometers deep in Syrian territory to create a 'security zone.' However, the latter, maintains that any Turkish operation will undermine the fight against ISIS.

Turkish officials **say** they do not need permission from any country to carry out its military incursion that "could start any minute."

Strikingly, Russian military police **patrolled** eastern Qamishli areas for the very first time with a depth of 30 km.

Amid this uncertainty of the affair, Erdogan is scheduled to meet Russia's Vladimir Putin in the city resort of Sochi on August 5 with northern Syria expected to put forth on the table of discussion.

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*The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of Rudaw.*



2 August, 2022

## July 2022: Human rights violations in Iranian Kurdistan

Investigations carried out by the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) show that many Kurdish civilians and activists from Iran have become victims of human rights violations in July 2022.

The followings are the detailed information collected by the KHRN statistics and documentation centre regarding these violations. Executions

In July, Iran executed at least

eight prisoners in Sari, Mazandaran province; Yazd, Yazd province; Sanandaj, Kurdistan province; Orumiyeh, West Azerbaijan province; and Kermanshah.

These included six prisoners

who were executed for "premeditated murder" and two over drug-related charges. These are the cases on which the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) has been informed through its sources. But the number of

those executed is likely to be higher.

### Femicide

Throughout the past month, two women were killed by their husbands and one by her brother-in-law.

### Kolbars and tradesmen

In July, Iranian border forces killed at least two kolbars and injure 30 in the country's western border areas. These include 10 kolbars who were injured after they were chased and either fell from bor-

der heights or got caught in the barbed wire.

### Landmine explosions

In the past month, three civilians, including one kolbar, were injured by landmine blasts and another civilian was killed after an unexploded shell went off in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

### Detentions and arrests

Throughout July, Iranian forces detained at least 49 people in Iranian Kurdistan, including four members of the

Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan and three children.

At least four of these people were jailed to serve prison sentences.

### Prison sentences

In July, Iranian courts sentenced three people to prison sentences varying from two years to five years.

While two of these people were charged with "acting against national security through membership of the

KDPI", another was charged with "propaganda against the state".

### Killings of civilians

On 29 July, Iranian police killed a 20 years old Kurdish man from Kamyaran, Kurdistan province, named Sina Zafari near Ahvaz, Khuzestan province, southwestern Iran. On 31 July, Iranian police killed two children named Mehdi Rashedimanesh and Matin Rashedimanesh in Khorramabad, Lorestan province, western Iran.

### Executions

Name	From	Charged with	Execution date	Execution Location	Explanation
1 Rasoul Morad-Gholi	Harsin	Drug-related charges	12 July	Sari Prison	Executed after 3 years in prison
2 Amir Ojaghi	Kermanshah	Drug-related charges	21 July	Yazd Prison	Executed after 10 years in prison
3 Soheila Abedi	Sanandaj	Premeditated murder	27 July	Sanandaj Central Prison	Executed after 7 years in prison
4 Faranak Beheshti	Takab	Premeditated murder	27 July	Orumiyeh Central Prison	Executed after 5 years in prison
5 Abdollah Rahimi	Dehgolan	Premeditated murder	27 July	Sanandaj Central Prison	Executed after 14 years in prison, 70 years old
6 Hiva Ahmadi	Bisaran village	Premeditated murder	27 July	Sanandaj Central Prison	Was sentenced to retribution in kind in joint case with Payam Yazdani
7 Payam Yazdani	Kaklik Abad village	Premeditated murder	27 July	Sanandaj Central Prison	Was sentenced to retribution in kind in joint case with Hiva Ahmadi
8 Ayoub Mirzaei	Sarab village	Premeditated murder	30 July	Dizel Abad prison	Executed after 2 years in prison of Kermanshah

### Femicide

Name	Location	Date	Explanation
1 Mohaddese Malekian	Darreh Shahr, Ilam	2 July	Killed by husband, 30 years old
2 Kimia Malekian	Darreh Shahr, Ilam	2 July	Killed by sister's husband, 16 years old
3 Goljamine Najafi	Bani Bid village of Dalahu	10 July	Killed by husband, 50 years old, mother of three

### Kolbars and tradesmen

Name	From	Incident location	Incident date	Dead /injured	Explanation
1 Kamal Ebrahimzadeh	Divalan village of Sardasht	Baneh border	2 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
2 Arsalan Ahmadpanah	Baneh	Barvish Kani border of Baneh	4 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
3 Mohammad Khodayar	Sardasht	Baneh border	4 July	Injured	46-year-old, father of three, Caught in the barbed wire as a result of being chased by border forces
4 Iraj Mahdavi	Kalash Lulem village of Javanrud	Nowsud border	5 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
5 Ayoub Javanpour	Saqqez	Kileh border of Baneh	10 July	Injured	Fell from border heights after being chased by border forces
6 Ako Talaei	Markhoz village of Saqqez	Kileh border of Baneh	10 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
7 Saadi	Tamugheh village of Saqqez	Hangeh-ye Zhal border of Baneh	11 July	Injured	Shot by border force
8 Rashid Jamkhaneh	Gavileh village of Marivan	Sartazen border of Baneh	11 July	Injured	Fell from border heights after being chased by border forces
9 Bahram Shah-Mohammadi	Doreh Qala village of Saqqez	Kileh border of Baneh	12 July	Injured	40-year-old, father of two, shot by border forces
10 Hemin Morovvati	Javanrud	Nowsud border	15 July	Injured	18-year-old, shot by border forces
11 Mehdi Khadam Masjedi	Sefid Kamareh village of Baneh	Barvish Kani border of Baneh	19 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
12 Akbar Khoda-Moradi	Banisakan village of Salas-e Babajani	Nowsud border	21 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
13 Saadollah Younesi	Gelah Sur village	Malateh border of Baneh	23 July	Killed	Shot by border forces
14 Ali Younesi	Gelah Sur village	Malateh border of Baneh	23 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
15 Bahram Mahmoudi	Baneh	Hangeh-ye Zhal border of Baneh	23 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
16 Jalil Karimi	Sharekan village	Nowsud border	26 July	Injured	Shot by border forces

17	Sherko Chavshini	Baneh	Barvish Kani border of Baneh	27 July	Killed	35-year-old, shot by border forces
18	Rizgar	Baneh	Barvish Kani border of Baneh	27 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
19	Mohammad	Saqqez	Barvish Kani border of Baneh	27 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
20	Behzad Amini	Marivan	Barvish Kani border of Baneh	27 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
21	Dana Shabani	Baneh	Barvish Kani border of Baneh	27 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
22	Ali Bahrami	Village of Tin	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
23	Kosar Khosravi	Village of Tin	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
24	Heidar Khodkameh	Paveh	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
25	Delavar Faramarzi	Village of Tin	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Shot by border forces
26	Layegh Esmailpour	Paveh	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Fell from border heights after being chased by border forces
27	Nirna Heidari	Village of Tin	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Fell from border heights after being chased by border forces
28	Javad Faramarzi	Paveh	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Fell from border heights after being chased by border forces
29	Saeid Mehrbani	Village of Tin	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Fell from border heights after being chased by border forces
30	Abdol Abdi	village of Nuryab	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Fell from border heights after being chased by border forces
31	Shayan Zahmatkesh	Village of Tin	Mileh border of Nowsud	29 July	Injured	Fell from border heights after being chased by border forces
32	Ata Hassanzadeh	Village of Tin	Mileh border of Nowsud	30 July	Injured	Fell from border heights after being chased by border forces

#### Landmine explosions

	Name	Location of Incident	Date of incident	Status	Explanation
1	Maryam Azizvand	Kuran village of Orumiyeh	12 July	Injured	Landmine explosion
2	Ronahi Khodaei	Kuran village of Orumiyeh	12 July	Injured	Landmine explosion
3	Amir Salehi	Kurdistan Region of Iraq	22 July	Killed	Explosion of unexploded shell while grazing livestock
4	Ata Hassanzad	Hangeh-ye Zhal border of Baneh	30 July	Lost body part	Kolbar

#### Detentions and arrests

	Name	Detention location	Detention date	Activity	Detention location and latest status
1	Soleyman Salek	Mohabad	1 July	Civilian	Unknown
2	Mahdi Rasaie	Sardush village of Marivan	3 July	Civilian	Summoned & detained by Ministry of Intelligence in Marivan
3	Ghane' Khateri	Sanandaj	3 July	Activist of Zhiyanawa Kurdistan campaign	Detained and taken to Sanandaj prison to serve 18-month prison sentence
4	Osman Delsouz	Zivke village of Piranshahr	5 July	Civilian	Unknown
5	Abdolrahim Delsouz	Zivke village of Piranshahr	5 July	Civilian	Unknown
6	Akam Khezrzadeh	Kani Bodagh village of Piranshahr	5 July	Civilian	Unknown
7	Salaheddin Ahmadi	Sengan village of Oshnavieh	7 July	Civilian	Unknown
8	Mamosta Younes Nokhah	Piranshar	7 July	Teacher of religion	Taken to security detention centre in Orumiyeh
9	Omid Moradi	Nalus Oshnavieh	8 July	Civilian	Unknown
10	Jafar Zarifi	Baneh	11 July	Civilian	Released on bail
11	Zana Mehri	Baneh	11 July	Civilian	Released on bail
12	Mohammad Ghosi	Baneh	11 July	Civilian	Unknown
13	Mohammad Mahmoudzadeh	Baneh	11 July	Civilian	Unknown
14	Aram Salehpour	Baneh	11 July	Civilian	Unknown
15	Rahman Salehpour	Baneh	11 July	Civilian	Unknown
16	Hadi Mahmoudi	Baneh	11 July	Civilian	Unknown
17	Mahdi Nowrouzi	Baneh	11 July	Civilian	Unknown
18	Khoshnav Eyni	Sengan village of Oshnavieh	13 July	Civilian	Taken to security detention centre in Orumiyeh
19	Molla Mohammad Tahazadeh	Bimzortah village of Oshnavieh	13 July	Imam of the village mosque	Unknown
20	For'an Ebrahimi	Bimzortah village of Oshnavieh	13 July	Member of the village council	Unknown
21	Abdolrahman Sadeghi	Bimzortah village of Oshnavieh	13 July	Head of rural municipality	Unknown
22	Farhang Karamat	Sengan village of Oshnavieh	13 July	Civilian	Unknown
23	Siamand Karamat	Sengan village of Oshnavieh	13 July	Civilian	Unknown
24	Pirut Tabnak	Sengan village of Oshnavieh	13 July	Civilian	Released on bail
25	Yousef Rahmani	Oshnavieh	13 July	Civilian	Unknown
26	Mo'ayyan Abubakri	Piranshar	13 July	Civilian	Unknown
27	Taher Katani	Laj village of Mahabad	16 July	Civilian	Unknown
28	Amir Baboli	Laj village of Mahabad	16 July	Civilian	Unknown
29	Eghbal Dousti	Sanandaj	19 July	Civilian	Unknown
30	Sobhan Mowloudi	Tangi sar village of Sanandaj	21 July	Civilian	Detained at the Marivan border of Bashmaq after returning from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq
31	Bakhtyar Mostafapour	Piranshar	21 July	Civilian	Taken to Naqadeh prison
32	Shadi Dargahi	Marivan	21 July	Civil activist	Summoned & detained by Ministry of Intelligence in Marivan
33	Mohsen Mazloumi	Orumiyeh	23 July	Member of Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan	Unknown



34	Pezhman Fatehi	Orumiyeh	23 July	Member of Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan	Unknown
35	Hezhir Faramarzi	Orumiyeh	23 July	Member of Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan	Unknown
36	Vafa Azarbar	Orumiyeh	23 July	Member of Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan	Unknown
37	Kaveh Soleimanpour	Mahabad	24 July	Civilian	Taken to Mahabad prison to serve 6-month prison sentence
38	Hojjat Shirdel	Mehran	24 July	Civilian	From Malekshahi Ilam
39	Soma Alizadeh		25 July	Civilian	Taken to an unknown location
40	Loghman Germai	Marivan	26 July	Civilian	Summoned & detained by Ministry of Intelligence in Marivan
41	Mohyeddin Karimi	Divandarreh	26 July	Teacher	Released on bail
42	As'ad Alavi	Divandarreh	26 July	Teacher	Released on bail
43	Kurosh Babamoradi	Divandarreh	26 July	Teacher	Released on bail
44	Hoseib Hosseinzadeh	Oshnavieh	28 July	Juvenile	Released
45	Saman Hassanzadeh	Oshnavieh	28 July	Child	Released
46	Zanyar Hassanzadeh	Oshnavieh	28 July	Child	Released
47	Pishva Shadab	Oshnavieh	28 July	Child	Released
48	Mohammad Khaled Hamzapour	Oshnavieh	31 July	Civilian	Taken to Naqadeh prison to serve 5-year prison sentence
49	Rahman Yousefi	Oshnavieh	31 July	Civilian	Taken to Naqadeh prison to serve 5-year prison sentence

#### Prison sentences

Name	Resident of	Charged with	Date sentenced	Issuing court	Sentence	Explanation
1 Mohammad Khaled Hamzehpour	Oshnavieh	Acting against national security through membership of the KDPI	Early July	Court of Appeals of Orumiyeh	5 years in prison	Court of Appeals upheld Revolutionary Court's ruling
2 Rebwar Abdollahi	Sanandaj	Propaganda against the state	26 July	Branch 1 of Islamic Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj	2 years suspended prison sentence	Released on bail
3 Sina Minaei	Sujeh village of Oshnavieh	Acting against national security through membership of the KDPI	31 July	Islamic Revolutionary Court of Oshnavieh	3 years in prison and 3 years suspended prison sentence	Released on bail

Tags: Human Rights Violations, Monthly Report

## Police Shot Dead Two Children near Khorramabad

**O**n July 31, 2022, two minors were killed by the police's unruly shooting toward a vehicle on a road leading to Khorramabad. The police arrested the children's injured parents and transferred them to an unidentified location.

According to HRANA, the news agency of Human Rights Activists, quoting Kurdpa, at a checkpoint in Firoozabad, the police shot at a vehicle, killing two children.

The victims have been identi-



fied as two brothers, Mehdi and Matin Rashedi Manesh, ages 9

and 13, from a village in Marivan County.

According to an informed source, no warning was given to stop the vehicle when the police fired at the vehicle. The two adults are severely injured and in critical condition.

According to HRANA's annual report, in 2021, 242 citizens were targeted by unruly shootings by regime military forces, of which 94 were killed. This includes 23 kolbars (cross-border carriers) and 31 sukhtbars (cross-border fuel porters). 148 people have been injured, including 81 kolbars and 51 sukhtbars.

August 2, 2022

## WKI Kurdistan's Weekly Brief August 2, 2022

### Iran

The Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan accused Iran's Ministry of Intelligence (VAJA) of disseminating false propaganda after four Komala Peshmerga were arrested outside Urmia two weeks ago. VAJA claimed the arrested Peshmerga were affiliated with the Mossad. "The Komala Party strongly rejects these claims and accusations of the Islamic Republic of Iran and considers this project an excuse for further repression in Kurdistan," read Komala's [press release](#). The exiled Cooperation Center for Iranian Kurdistan's Political Parties (CCIKP) also [accused](#) the Iranian regime of "slandering and defaming the Kurdistan movement." Komala previously said the arrested Peshmerga, Mohsen Maroofi, Pezhman Fatehi, Hazhir Faramarzi, and Wafa Azarbar, were deployed to Iran for "[organizational activity](#)."

An Islamic Revolutionary Court sentenced a Kurdish labor activist named Rebwar Abdullahi to two years in prison for membership of a banned Kurdish party. Moreover, Iranian security forces detained two activists, Shadi Dargahai and Logman Grami, in Marivan. Iranian security forces also killed two children inside a vehicle at a checkpoint in Kermanshah and [arrested their parents](#).

Iranian border guards wounded 15 Kurdish border porters (kolbars) in Nowsud and Ban-Concurrently, Iranian authorities killed a Kolbar named Sena Mozafari near Ahvaz on Wednesday. The Hengaw Organization for Human Rights reported three kolbars were kil-

led, and 34 were wounded in July.

### Iraq

Thousands of Muqtada al Sadr's [supporters stormed](#) Iraq's parliament and staged a sit-in after the Iranian-backed parliamentary coalition known as the Coordination Framework formally nominated Mohammed Shi'a al Sudani for the post of prime minister. Al Sadr's supporters camped inside the parliament building for five days and rejected al Sudani's nomination. [Al Sadr described](#) the protest as a "spontaneous, peaceful revolution that liberated the Green Zone as a first stage." Al Sadr also called for additional protests across Iraq, but supporters of the Coordination Framework launched a counter demonstration on Monday. Coordination Framework supporters then tried to advance on al Sadr's supporters inside the parliament building but were stopped by Iraqi security forces. President of Kurdistan Region Nechirvan Barzani called for the "concerned Iraqi parties" to go to "their second capital, Erbil, and start an open and inclusive dialogue to reach an understanding and agreement based on the country's higher interests." Furthermore, an Iranian-backed militia named Ashab al Kahaf (Companions of the Cave) [threatened](#) to attack American and British bases in Iraq and Syria for plotting against Iraq's Shi'ites. The militia also threatened Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE and advised its "mobile missile detachments" to begin targeting their bases.

Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs

Fuad Hussien demanded the "full withdrawal" of Turkish forces from Iraq during an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council last Tuesday. The Security Council convened in response to the Turkish artillery attack that killed nine tourists in Zakho on July 20. That said, Turkey's envoy vowed the Turkish military would continue to target "terrorists" in Iraq. On Monday, a Turkish drone struck a vehicle between Ranya and Chwarqorna, killing one occupant and wounding the other.

### Syria

A Turkish drone strike killed four Internal Security Forces (ISF) personnel, including [three women](#), in Ain Essa on July 28. On Sunday, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced [airstrikes and Turkish proxies](#) killed four SDF personnel. The SDF also revealed it [launched](#) a security operation targeting Turkish agents within its ranks called "Operation Oath." According to the SDF, 36 Turkish collaborators have been arrested so far.

Turkish-backed groups in the occupied Afrin sentenced a Kurdish man, father of three daughters, to [death](#) for "working with the former administration" and membership of "The peoples' Defense Forces (YPG). Turkish-backed groups also arrested three other Kurds in Afrin; 's Rajo district. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said the arrest was to collect ransom, a repeated act by the Turkish proxies.

### Turkey

Turkish police arrested several

members of the Pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), including twelve in Istanbul, on Friday and four in Antalya on Thursday. Among the detainees were several from the HDP's Youth Council. Separately, the HDP is planning a rally on August 6 in Diyarbakir (Amed), demanding peace against the government's wars on Kurds.

The Turkish opposition failed to achieve a quorum to hold a Turkish Grand Assembly session discussing "violence against health workers." The HDP did not participate since they were not invited by the opposition, except for a general call for opposition blocs to join. The Turkish opposition, mainly the Republican People's Party (CHP), is yet to include the HDP in the opposition group. The HDP lawmaker, [Saruhan Oluç, said](#), "Opening a general debate in the parliament does not mean that a law will be passed." Meanwhile, another party lawmaker, Meral Daniş, said her party's position is evident on the issue, but CHP's call was "without etiquette."

[Four Alevi belief](#) centers in Ankara were attacked Saturday during a religious ceremony. The HDP [condemned](#) the attack, which wounded a woman. Attacks on Alevis and Alevi institutions are triggered by the discourses of the ruling camp targeting Alevis. These attacks are directly related to the political power's marginalization of Alevis," read the DHP statement. In recent years, dozens of hate crimes have targeted minorities in Turkey, mainly Kurds.

4 août 2022

Par Parisa Hafezi

## Nucléaire: Iran et USA mesurés sur les perspectives des discussions

Les pourparlers indirects entre l'Iran et les États-Unis ont repris à Vienne avec une rencontre entre le négociateur iranien en chef sur le nucléaire et l'émissaire spécial de l'Union européenne, lequel coordonne les efforts visant à raviver l'accord de 2015, a rapporté jeudi la presse officielle iranienne.

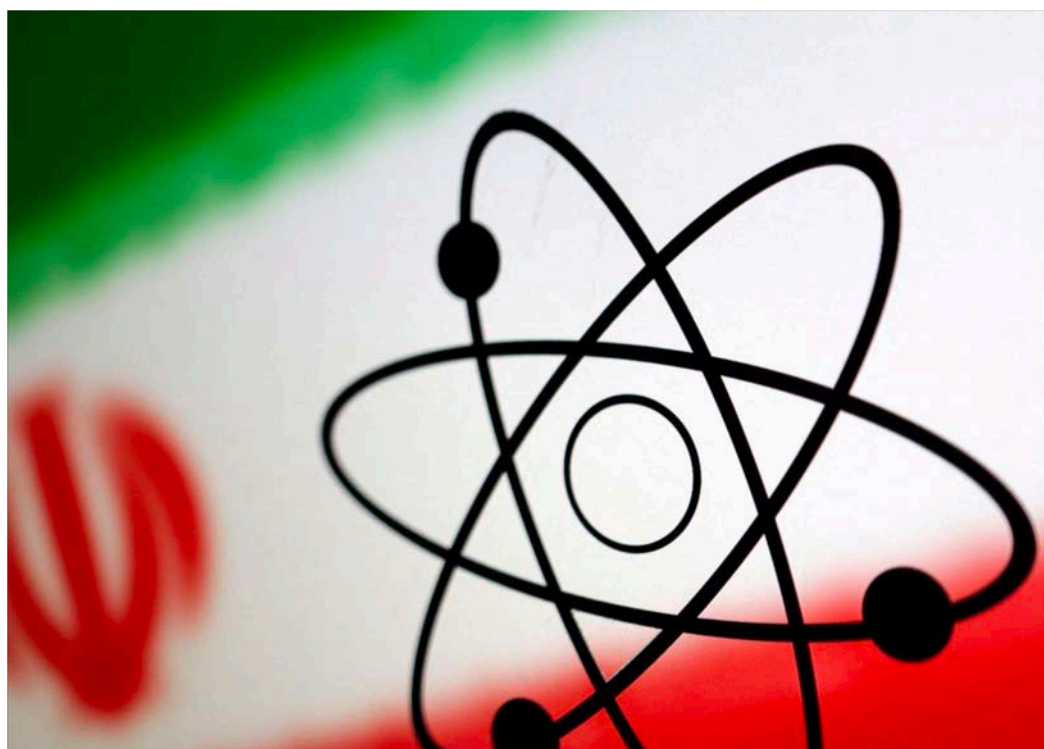
Téhéran et Washington ont tous deux minimisé l'hypothèse d'une avancée majeure durant ce cycle de discussions, tandis que le chef de la diplomatie européenne Josep Borrell a prévenu qu'il n'y avait plus de marge de manoeuvre pour effectuer d'importants compromis supplémentaires.

L'émissaire spécial de l'UE, Enrique Mora, va faire la navette entre le négociateur iranien en chef, Ali Bagheri Kani, et l'envoyé spécial des États-Unis pour l'Iran, Rob Malley, qui a indiqué mercredi via qu'il se rendait à Vienne avec des attentes mesurées.

Symbole du peu de flexibilité dont Téhéran est prêt à faire preuve, Ali Bagheri Kani a suggéré qu'il appartenait à Washington de procéder à des concessions, déclarant avant son départ pour Vienne que les États-Unis devaient «montrer de la maturité et agir de manière responsable».

A Washington, le porte-parole du conseil de sécurité nationale de la Maison blanche a déclaré que les négociations étaient «presque terminées».

«Nous n'allons pas attendre éternellement que l'Iran accepte l'accord», a dit jeudi



Les pourparlers indirects entre l'Iran et les États-Unis ont repris à Vienne avec une rencontre entre le négociateur iranien en chef sur le nucléaire et l'émissaire spécial de l'Union européenne, lequel coordonne les efforts visant à raviver l'accord de 2015, a rapporté jeudi la presse officielle iranienne. //Illustration diffusée le 21 juillet 2022/REUTERS/Dado Ruvic

John Kirby devant les journalistes. «Il y a un accord sur la table. A eux de l'accepter. Le temps diminue pour parvenir à un accord».

Le Plan d'action global commun (PAGC, ou JCPOA en anglais), signé à Vienne en 2015, a volé en éclats depuis que l'ancien président américain Donald Trump a retiré les États-Unis de l'accord en 2018 et rétabli les sanctions contre l'Iran.

Téhéran s'est depuis lors affranchi par étapes des termes de l'accord, notamment en matière d'enrichissement de l'uranium.

Alors que les grandes lignes

d'un nouvel accord ont été approuvées en mars dernier, à l'issue de onze mois de négociations à Vienne, les pourparlers sont tombés dans l'impasse, les États-Unis refusant de retirer les Gardiens de la révolution iranienne de la liste des groupes terroristes, comme le demande l'Iran.

Pour tenter de sortir de l'impasse, Josep Borrell a proposé en juillet un nouveau projet de texte, dont deux responsables iraniens ont déclaré que Téhéran n'en était «pas satisfait».

«L'Iran a fait preuve de suffisamment de flexibilité. C'est maintenant (au président américain Joe Biden) de prendre une décision. Nous avons nos

propres suggestions qui seront discutées lors des pourparlers de Vienne, comme la levée progressive des sanctions contre les Gardiens», a déclaré à Reuters un haut responsable iranien.

Téhéran souhaite par ailleurs que Washington s'engage à ne plus sortir de l'accord sur le nucléaire à l'avenir, une promesse que l'administration Biden dit ne pas pouvoir effectuer d'un point de vue légal.

(Reportage Parisa Hafezi, avec Heather Timmons et Michelle Nichols; version française Augustin Turpin, édité par Jean Terzian)

## Turquie : l'accord céréalier, un succès diplomatique pour le président Erdogan

**P**arti d'Odessa lundi matin, le Razoni, un cargo chargé de 26 000 tonnes de maïs, a été inspecté dans la matinée de mercredi 3 août, à l'entrée du Bosphore, par une équipe d'experts ukrainiens, russes, turcs et des Nations unies, coiffés de casques orange. Une fois l'inspection terminée, le Razoni a fait retentir sa sirène avant de s'engager dans l'entrée nord du Bosphore et de poursuivre sa route à destination du port libanais de Tripoli.

L'opération s'est déroulée sans anicroche. Les couloirs sécurisés ouverts en mer Noire ont fonctionné, l'inspection n'a pas duré plus d'une heure et, pour la première fois depuis le début de l'invasion russe, l'Ukraine a pu faire sortir un premier chargement de céréales.

L'opération consacre le succès des accords signés séparément par Moscou et Kiev, le 22 juillet, à Istanbul, sous l'égide de la Turquie et des Nations unies. Une petite partie des céréales bloquées en Ukraine depuis le début de l'invasion russe, le 24 février, a pu sortir via la mer Noire et être exportée. L'arrivée d'autres navires est espérée depuis Odessa, mais aussi depuis Tchornomorsk et Ioujne, les deux autres ports ukrainiens mentionnés dans l'accord.

« C'est une situation très agréable et dont nous sommes fiers », a déclaré Hulusi Akar, le ministre turc de la défense à l'agence de presse officielle Anadolu. A cette occasion, il a rappelé les efforts diplomatiques intenses déployés par son pays qui ont permis la signature de l'accord sur les exportations de céréales.

Selon la partie turque, d'autres navires devraient emprunter les couloirs maritimes sécurisés dans les prochains jours. D'après Kiev, dix-sept cargos chargés d'environ 600 000 tonnes de denrées agricoles sont prêts à partir. Pourtant, excepté le Razoni, aucun autre navire n'a quitté l'Ukraine ces dernières quarante-huit heures.

« Nous espérons que le processus se poursuivra sans interruption ni problème », a tweeté le ministre turc des Affaires étrangères, Mevlüt Çavusoglu, après le départ du Razoni. Résolument optimiste, il a souhaité que l'accord contribue à renforcer la confiance entre Moscou et Kiev, au point d'amener les belligérants « à un cessez-le-feu et à une paix durable ».

Le succès de l'accord d'Istanbul rehausse l'image du président Recep Tayyip Erdogan sur la scène internationale, redonnant à la Turquie sa centralité géopolitique, renforçant sa position de médiateur impartial entre Kiev, à qui elle fournit des drones de combat, et Moscou, dont elle dépend pour sa sécurité énergétique et alimentaire.

Quarante-cinq pour cent de l'énergie consommée en Turquie vient de Russie, et 70 % du blé importé par Ankara est russe. A partir de ce blé, la Turquie produit de la farine et des produits alimentaires qu'elle exporte ensuite vers tout le Moyen-Orient.

### Deux « maîtres » de la mer Noire

Fort de ce « succès diplomatique », le président Erdogan a

« de bonnes cartes en poche » à la veille de sa rencontre avec Vladimir Poutine, son homologue russe, a estimé Nagehan Alçi, l'éditorialiste vedette du quotidien pro-gouvernemental Daily Sabah, dans l'édition du 1er août.

Vendredi 5 août, M. Erdogan se rendra à Sotchi pour s'entretenir avec Vladimir Poutine. C'est là que les deux « maîtres » de la mer Noire, Erdogan, qui verrouille les détroits, et Poutine, qui empêche les flux commerciaux grâce à son blocus naval, vont « se coordonner au sujet de l'efficacité de ce mécanisme d'exportation de céréales depuis les ports ukrainiens », a déclaré mardi Dmitri Peskov, le porte-parole du Kremlin.

Les deux dirigeants discuteront de l'Ukraine et également de la situation en Syrie, où le numéro un turc veut intervenir militairement pour chasser les Kurdes syriens des YPG (unités de protection du peuple), alliés des Occidentaux dans la lutte contre l'Etat islamique, qu'il accuse d'être des « terroristes » affiliés au Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, autonomiste).

La bénédiction du Kremlin est indispensable au président turc qui envisage d'attaquer les villes de Tall Rifaat et de Manbij, situées à l'ouest de l'Euphrate et contrôlées par les YPG. L'espace aérien étant sous le contrôle de la Russie, la Turquie doit obtenir le feu vert du maître du Kremlin avant d'intervenir.

Lire aussi : Article réservé à nos abonnés La guerre en Ukraine, sujet de discussion au sommet entre la Russie, la Turquie et l'Iran à propos de la Syrie

Aurolé de son succès sur l'accord céréalier, lequel bénéficie largement à la Russie, M. Erdogan aborde ce rendez-vous en confiance. Grâce à la médiation turque, Moscou a reçu la garantie de pouvoir exporter elle aussi ses céréales et ses engrais, malgré les sanctions occidentales. Certaines banques russes, dont la banque Rossia, étroitement liée à Vladimir Poutine, vont ainsi pouvoir utiliser certains de leurs actifs gelés par l'Union européenne dès lors que ces fonds serviront à des transactions alimentaires.

Les producteurs agricoles russes sont désormais assurés que leurs avoirs ne seront pas gelés. L'accord favorise l'entourage du chef de l'Etat russe car le marché des céréales est dominé par de grandes exploitations agricoles proches du pouvoir. Le développement du secteur céréalier est ainsi supervisé par le ministre Dmitri Patrouchev, le fils aîné du secrétaire du Conseil de sécurité de Russie, Nikolai Patrouchev.

Les propriétaires de Demetra Holding, le deuxième exportateur de céréales russes, sont la banque VTB et l'entreprise Marathon Group, d'Alexandre Vinokourov, le gendre du ministre des affaires étrangères, Sergueï Lavrov.

« Bien que ces dérogations concernent strictement les produits agricoles, elles pourraient également débloquent une partie des actifs des banques liées au cercle restreint de Poutine et au complexe militaro-industriel russe », constate l'ONG Crisis Group dans une récente analyse.

## Three Iran strategies that are guaranteed to backfire

**T**he Islamic Republic of Iran poses a grave challenge to both the United States and the region.

Two decades after exposure of Iran's then-covert nuclear enrichment program, Tehran is close to a nuclear weapon, even by its own admission. Its Revolutionary Guards prop up the Syrian regime, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and various Iraqi militias. The regime openly engages in hostage diplomacy. Meanwhile, U.S. Iran policy has become a political football, with partisanship trumping any honest assessment of what works and what does not.

But there are three strategies, sometimes openly embraced and sometimes percolating just below the surface in internal policy debates and think tanks, guaranteed to fail. If the U.S. truly cares about checking the Islamic Republic's growing threat and enabling the Iranian people to embrace a moderate future, then it is time for consensus about what not to do.

First, it is time to retire any support for the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, also known as the MEK. At best, the group is a creepy cult; at worst, it is a terrorist group. What it is not and has never been is popular or democratic. Maryam Rajavi, leader of the group and "president-elect" of its political front, is the closest thing Iranians have to the late American conspiracy theorist and huckster Lyndon LaRouche. Iranians living inside Iran might not agree on much,



In this picture released by an official website of the office of the Iranian supreme leader, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaks at a meeting in Tehran, Iran, Saturday, April 14, 2018. Khamenei said that the U.S.-led attack on Syria is a "crime" and said the countries behind it will gain nothing. The Iranian Foreign Ministry strongly condemned the strikes and warned of unspecified consequences. (Office of the Iranian Supreme Leader via AP) (Office of the Iranian Supreme Leader via AP)

but they do despise the MEK based on its terrorism and past alliances with first Ayatollah Khomeini and then, after falling out with him, Saddam Hussein. That the group sometimes reveals intelligence is no metric of its influence or infiltration within the Iranian system. First, its intelligence is often wrong. Second, even when right, it simply represents how the Israelis, Saudis, or perhaps even the CIA use the group to launder information to the public so that the real fingerprints of those who gathered it are not exposed. Any endorsement or embrace of the MEK is a gift to the Islamic Republic, as it allows the regime to rally an otherwise apathetic public around the flag.

Second, forget any division of

Iran along ethnic lines. Iran is an ethnically diverse country: Persians, Azeris, Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis, Lors, and others. But it does not mean that it is an artificial state pulling apart at the seams. Whereas many states arose against the backdrop of ethnonationalism in the 19th or 20th centuries, the identity of Persian statehood predates that by millennia. Attempts to spark ethnic separatism in Iran by the Soviets after World War II or Iraq in 1979 failed, but in each case, the backlash resulted in a stronger Iranian dictatorship. True, some Azeris might chant slogans at soccer matches and Arabs rally against regime corruption, but in each case, the broader motivation is antipathy toward a corrupt regime rather than a desire for independence. Con-

sider Tabriz: It may be ethnically Azeri, but it is also a former capital of Iran, the traditional seat of the crown prince, and the epicenter of Iran's constitutional movement. To bring Iran into the international community means winning over Iranians of all ethnicities and sects, not signaling to them that the goal is the destruction of Iran.

The final strategy guaranteed to backfire is endless diplomacy.

Partisans are wrong to say "Maximum Pressure" did not work. Such a claim, though, is not evidence that resourcing Iran's regime is wise. Because of the Revolutionary Guard's stranglehold over the economy, any windfall from sanctions relief strengthens the most reactionary elements of the regime. More importantly, engagement for its own sake ignores the Islamic Republic's motivations: both ideological and tactical. For the White House, diplomacy might be about the search for a win-win solution. For Iran, it is an asymmetric warfare strategy to distract the opponent while centrifuges spin and terrorist groups arm.

There is no magic formula to resolve disputes with Iran, nor are there shortcuts. It will take bipartisan solidarity, a credible military threat, maximum pressure, and a strategy to break the Revolutionary Guard's ironclad grip on society. But first, it is important to drop the strategies that do more harm than good.

## Un nouveau rapport sur l'utilisation d'armes chimiques par la Turquie

**L**e Comité contre l'utilisation d'armes chimiques au Sud-Kurdistan a publié un nouveau rapport sur l'usage de ces armes par la Turquie.

Le Comité contre l'utilisation d'armes chimiques au Sud-Kurdistan a publié un nouveau rapport qui dénonce l'usage continu d'armes chimiques par la Turquie dans ses incursions militaires au Kurdistan irakien. Le rapport déplore en outre l'inaction de l'Organisation internationale contre les Armes chimiques (OIAC) malgré les allégations graves formulées par différentes organisations kurdes.

Les nombreuses allégations concernant l'utilisation d'armes chimiques par l'armée turque dans ses opérations au Sud-Kurdistan n'ont suscité aucune réaction au niveau des organisations internationales telles que l'OIAC. Selon le rapport, cette inaction a permis à la Turquie de poursuivre et d'amplifier ses crimes de guerre dans le Sud-Kurdistan. Se disant consterné par le silence et l'inertie de la communauté internationale face aux allégations précoc-



cupantes concernant l'usage d'armes prohibées par l'armée turque, le Comité exhorte les organisations internationales compétentes à prendre des mesures et à lancer des procédures d'enquête « pour montrer à la Turquie qu'elle ne peut pas continuer à commettre des crimes de guerre en toute impunité ».

### Danger du silence international et des concessions

Dans un chapitre intitulé « Danger du silence international et des concessions », le rapport indique : « Ces dernières années, la communauté internationale a prouvé à maintes reprises qu'elle se souciait grandement des allé-

gations concernant l'utilisation d'armes chimiques. Dans le cas de la guerre en Syrie qui fait rage depuis plus de 10 ans, mais aussi au cours de la guerre plus récente en Ukraine, les informations sur l'utilisation possible d'armes chimiques ont suscité une large attention médiatique et des enquêtes internationales. La même attitude est nécessaire en ce qui concerne les attaques de la Turquie contre le Kurdistan du Sud. Des délégations d'experts en armes chimiques doivent se rendre d'urgence dans les zones touchées et des enquêtes internationales doivent être lancées. Si la communauté internationale continue de ne pas être à la hauteur de ses responsabilités et

ne fait pas usage de son expertise, en particulier celle de l'OIAC, elle encouragera la Turquie à commettre davantage de crimes de guerre contre la population civile du Kurdistan du Sud et les forces de guérilla basées dans la région.

La récente [attaque de la Turquie contre le village de Parkh](#) dans la région de Zaxo, au cours de laquelle 9 civils ont été tués et 23 blessés, montre clairement que la Turquie est encouragée par le silence de la communauté internationale et qu'elle s'arroge le droit de commettre des crimes de guerre en toute impunité. Le résultat malheureux de ce silence sera la complicité dans les crimes de guerre de la Turquie. Au lieu de céder aux pressions turques comme ce fut le cas avec l'admission de la Finlande et de la Suède à l'OTAN, la communauté internationale doit prendre au sérieux les allégations d'utilisation d'armes chimiques, faire examiner la question par des experts et faire pression sur la Turquie pour qu'elle cesse de commettre des crimes de guerre au Kurdistan du Sud. »

## Iran nuclear talks restart, with US urging Tehran to take deal

**N**egotiators kicked off a fresh round of talks over Iran's nuclear programme in Vienna on Thursday, seeking to salvage the agreement on Tehran's atomic ambitions.

Officials from world powers and Iran were meeting in the Austrian capital for the first time since March, when negotiations, which began in 2021 to reintegrate the United States into the agreement, stalled.

A senior EU official said progress was being made on some of the remaining obstacles, including guarantees that the United States would not scupper the deal by going back on its word in the future.

«We have now quite substantial guarantees,» the official said. «It's my understanding that Iran is happy and feels satisfied with what is in the text.»

A demand by Tehran that the

United States remove the country's powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps from the State Department's official blacklist of «foreign terrorist organizations» has been dropped from the discussions, the official added. It will instead be handled «in the future» - after the deal.

Tehran and Washington still have to agree on «issues related to sanctions lifting and a couple of nuclear questions that did not exist in March as the Iranians advanced their programme», the official said.

«We are a bit exhausted, I cannot imagine myself here in four weeks,» the EU source said. «This is not another round, we are here to finalise the text».

«I think there is a real possibility but it's not going to be easy».

US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters on Thursday there was «a deal on the table» and Iran «ought to take it».

«You've heard the president say we're not going to wait forever for Iran to take this deal,» Kirby said, adding that «clearly time does appear to be getting very short in terms of being able to get to a deal».

In late June, Qatar hosted indirect talks between Tehran and Washington in the hope of getting the process back on track - but those talks failed to make a breakthrough.

In a last-ditch effort, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell submitted a compromise proposal last month and called on the parties to accept it to avoid a «dangerous nuclear crisis».

Borrell said the draft text includes «hard-won compromises by all sides» and «addresses, in precise detail,



An Iranian woman walks in a street in Tehran, Iran, 26 April 2022. The nuclear talks between Iran and world have restarted in Vienna this week. EPA-EFE/ABEDIN TAHERKENAREH

the sanctions lifting as well as the nuclear steps needed to restore» the 2015 pact.

Bilateral talks began earlier on Thursday at Vienna's luxury Palais Coburg hotel under the auspices of the European Union's representative Enrique Mora.

The Iranian and Russian delegations, which have traditionally been close in the negotiations, held a separate meeting.

Britain, China, France, Germany, Iran, Russia and the United States signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, in July 2015. Delegations from all parties were set to partake in Thursday's talks, but officials from the US and Iran are not expected to meet face to face.

The JCPOA aims to guarantee the civilian nature of Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for a gradual lifting of sanctions.

But following the unilateral withdrawal of the United States in 2018 under former president

Donald Trump and the re-imposition of US sanctions, Tehran has backtracked on its obligations.

Iran subsequently exceeded the JCPOA's uranium enrichment rate of 3.67 percent, rising to 20 percent in early 2021. It then crossed an unprecedented 60-percent threshold, getting closer to the 90 percent needed to make a bomb.

The head of the UN nuclear watchdog, Rafael Grossi, on Tuesday warned Iran's programme was «moving ahead very, very fast» and «growing in ambition and capacity».

#### - Cautious optimism -

Ahead of Thursday's talks, officials expressed cautious optimism, while cautioning that the parties remained far apart on key issues.

These include sanctions, Iranian demands for guarantees and the end of a probe by the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The head of the US delegation, Rob Malley, and the head of Tehran's representatives, Ali Bagheri, said on Twitter ahead of the talks that they were coming in good faith but put the onus on each other.

Analysts said reviving the JCPOA remained the best option.

«The last thing the United States needs is a nuclear crisis with Iran that could easily escalate to a broader regional conflict,» Suzanne DiMaggio, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said in a statement.

Ellie Geranmayeh, an analyst at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), said that «at the end of the day, Tehran and Washington know the alternatives to a JCPOA collapse are terrible».

«This is unlikely to be a meeting that resolves the outstanding issues», but «it could create the breakthrough necessary to push the talks towards a finishing line rather than a collapse», she said.

The New York Times

August 5, 2022  
By Farnaz Fassihi

# Iran Targets Its Baha'i Community With Arrests and Home Demolitions

Representatives of the religious minority said that the crackdown was the latest chapter in a long history of persecution. The authorities accused those detained of being spies with links to Israel.

Iran has begun a sweeping crackdown on its Baha'i community, a long-persecuted religious minority, arresting dozens of people and destroying property belonging to members of the group, according to accounts this week from the government, residents and rights groups.

The Iranian Intelligence Ministry said in a statement on Monday that an unspecified number of people from the Baha'i community had been arrested, accusing them of being spies with links to Israel and of propagating the Baha'i faith by "infiltrating various educational sectors across the country, including kindergartens."

Bani Dugal, the United Nations representative of the [Baha'i International Community](#), which advocates on behalf of the group worldwide, said that Iran had arrested 52 Baha'is in July, raiding dozens of homes, closing businesses and demolishing properties. She said that the reasons behind the timing of the actions were still unclear.

"We don't know why," Ms. Dugal said. "They are rolling out crackdowns and we are concerned that this is a new chapter in the persecution of Baha'is because the nature of the current attacks have been very systematic and cruel and violent."

The community has long faced persecution and discrimination in Iran because the government does not recognize the faith.

The Baha'i belief that there was another prophet after Muhammad is anathema to Islam, and the fact that the headquarters of the Baha'i people is in Haifa, Israel, even though its roots are in what is today Iran, adds to the distrust Tehran has for the group.

On Tuesday, about 200 security and intelligence officers descended on the tiny village of Roshankouh, in northern Iran, where Baha'is have lived for more than a century, according to interviews with a resident, relatives of residents and rights groups. They closed off an access road, fired gunshots in the air and sprayed pepper gas at villagers, according to the accounts.

Bulldozers followed. Their target: [Six houses](#) and farmland belonging to Baha'i members.

A few days earlier, security agents [arrested 13 Baha'is](#) from four cities across Iran, including three prominent community leaders, [Mahvash Sabet](#), Afif Naimi and [Fariba Kamalabadi](#), who had all previously served 10-year prison sentences, according to Ms. Dugal, the Baha'i representative.

The attacks on the Baha'i follow [a recent wave of wider repression in Iran](#) that has included the arrests of prominent film directors, politicians from the reformist faction, activists and women challenging the mandatory hijab rule in public.

One family's home was reduced to rubble, their furniture, clothes, toys and carpets thrown on the side of the road, according to witnesses. A farmer's land was seized and declared public property, the witnesses said, adding that an older man who

had protested had been beaten up and that several residents who had raised their voices had been pepper sprayed, handcuffed and briefly detained.

Cellphones were confiscated to prevent documentation of the raid, one 58-year-old resident of Roshankouh said.

"They want to isolate our community, to choke us economically and disrupt our peace," the resident said in a telephone interview, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of retribution. He added that he had won a court case to save his house but that some of his farmland had been confiscated on Tuesday.

The village has a total population of about 52 people, according to state television. Residents said that there were about 70 houses belonging to Baha'i families, with most being seasonal residents. There were less than a handful of houses belonging to Muslim families, residents added.

Local officials from Mazandaran, the province that includes Roshankouh, walked around the village flanked by security guards this week and [gave interviews to state television](#) on Tuesday in which they defended the actions as protecting the environment. They said that the demolished houses infringed on forests and that land had been illegally cultivated.

"The orders issued have nothing to do with a sect or a belief," said Mohamad Sadegh Akbari, a cleric who is chief prosecutor for Mazandaran, according to official news outlets.

Baha'i community members said that the government's ac-

tions amounted to collective punishment because of a legal battle over property rights that has simmered since 2016, when Roshankouh was mapped and officials ruled that parts of it were within forests owned and protected by the state.

Last August, the government demolished three small shacks in Roshankouh, saying that they had been built on protected land, according to residents and local news reports.

The State Department's Office for International Religious Freedom [posted on social media](#) that "the U.S. urges Iran to halt its ongoing oppression of the Baha'i community and honor its international obligations to respect the right of all Iranians to freedom of religion or belief."

Baha'is face widespread discrimination in Iran and are effectively barred from government employment and higher education. Sectors of the service industry involving food, hospitality and medicine, are also off limits to members of the group, according to Ms. Dugal and interviews with members of the faith inside and outside Iran.

"We have nearly 150 years of history in Roshankouh from the earliest days of the Baha'i faith," said Badi Daemi, a 64-year-old Iranian Baha'i who has relatives living in the village. Mr. Daemi was speaking via telephone from Andorra, the European country where he now lives.

"There are development violations all over Iran," he added, "so why are they bulldozing this tiny village in the mountains?"

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The New York Times

August 5, 2022  
By Neil MacFarquhar

## Putin and Erdogan find more room to cooperate at a meeting in Sochi, Russia.

President [Vladimir V. Putin of Russia](#) and his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, held marathon talks on a range of complementary and clashing interests on Friday, pledging to strengthen economic ties at a time when Turkey is emerging as a main trade bridge for Moscow to the rest of the world.

In a joint communiqué issued after four hours of talks in the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi, the leaders stressed the importance of grain exports through the Black Sea. Turkey proved instrumental in mediating a recent, hard-won deal enabling Ukraine to [resume its grain exports this week](#) for the first time since Russia invaded in late February. The deal was accompanied by Western assurances that Russia's agricultural exports were not subject to sanctions.

The monthslong absence of Ukrainian grain on world markets sent prices soaring and threatened to spread famine in Africa and the Middle East.

The two also agreed to continue cooperating on energy, which Russia supplies in volume to Turkey. Mr. Putin praised the TurkStream pipeline as a main conduit for Russian gas that is still flowing to Europe. Russian officials said that Turkey had also agreed to settle some of its substantial annual energy bill in rubles — something many Western countries have refused to do because it would blunt their stiff sanctions, some of which are



A photo released by the Turkish Presidential Press Service showed Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart, President Vladimir V. Putin, in Sochi, Russia, on Friday. Credit... Turkish Presidential Press Service, via Getty Images

aimed at weakening Russia's currency.

Russia, constantly probing for ways to evade those sanctions, sees cooperation with Turkey as a key to easing its economic and political isolation.

The talks, coming less than three weeks after the leaders met in Iran, solidified Turkey's role as an important mediator between Ukraine and Russia, as well as between Russia and NATO, of which Turkey is a member. But it did not resolve some of the friction points between them, including security in the Middle East, or the possibility of Mr. Putin using relations with Turkey to try to find or create chinks in Western unity against Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Mr. Erdogan is treading a fine line to retain the ability to talk

to both Russia, NATO's foe, and to Western members of the alliance. Turkey has held to its refusal to join Western sanctions against Russia, irking its NATO allies, but Mr. Erdogan also, in a crucial move, eased his initial objections to Sweden's and Finland's joining the alliance as a bulwark against Russian aggression.

In helping Russia to export gas and grain, analysts said, Turkey is providing a useful outlet for goods that Western capitals want to see traded. And the trade with Russia is helping address Turkey's own substantial economic woes. However, Ankara has shied away from providing the Kremlin so much help that it provokes Western capitals.

For his part, Mr. Putin's meetings with Turkey is telling the West "that he intends to keep up with the economic relations

that provide a breathing channel to Russia vis-à-vis the sanctions," said Ahmet Kasım Han, a professor of international relations and economy at Istanbul Aydin University in Turkey.

Mr. Putin has tried to exploit differences between Turkey and its NATO allies in years past, by selling Turkey advanced anti-aircraft systems.

"Putin is still working from the same playbook," said Mr. Han. "He is trying to keep Turkey a little apart from its Western partners."

The joint communiqué said the two sides had agreed on working together in Syria and Libya, conflict areas where they have backed opposing sides. However, it did not specify how, and there was no indication that Mr. Putin, who has backed the Syrian government through its long civil war, had given a green light for Mr. Erdogan to attack Kurdish groups that Turkey considers terrorists, based just across its southern border with Syria.

Although Dmitri S. Peskov, Russia's presidential press secretary, had suggested before the meeting that it would include military-technical cooperation, there was no mention of that in the communiqué. Low-cost Turkish drones sold to Ukraine have been used to devastating effect against Russian forces.

Safak Timur contributed reporting.



August 5, 2022

## Iran nuclear talks restart, with US urging Tehran to take deal

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A senior EU official said progress was being made on some of the remaining obstacles, including guarantees that the United States would not scupper the deal by going back on its word in the future.

"We have now quite substantial guarantees," the official said. "It's my understanding that Iran is happy and feels satisfied with what is in the text".

A demand by Tehran that the United States remove the country's powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps from the State Department's official black-list of "foreign terrorist organizations" has been dropped from the discussions, the official added. It will instead be handled "in the future" - after the deal.

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"I think there is a real possibility but it's not going to be easy".

US National Security Council



Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Bahgeri Kani (right) arriving at the venue of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in Vienna on August 4, 2022.

spokesman John Kirby told reporters on Thursday there was "a deal on the table" and Iran "ought to take it".

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"The last thing the United States needs is a nuclear crisis with Iran that could easily escalate to a broader regional conflict," Suzanne DiMaggio, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said in a statement.

Ellie Geranmayeh, an analyst at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), said that "at the end of the day, Tehran and Washington know the alternatives to a JCPOA collapse are terrible".

"This is unlikely to be a meeting that resolves the outstanding issues", but "it could create the breakthrough necessary to push the talks towards a finishing line rather than a collapse", she said.

## A Sotchi, Poutine et Erdogan renforcent leur coopération économique et énergétique

Le chef de l'Etat russe, qui recevait son homologue turc, s'est félicité de l'accord sur les livraisons de céréales ukrainiennes, également avantageux pour Moscou, et a salué le rôle d'Ankara dans le transit du gaz russe vers l'Europe.

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C'est dans la résidence d'été du chef de l'Etat russe, sur les bords de la mer Noire, que le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, et son homologue Vladimir Poutine se sont entretenus en tête à tête pendant près de quatre heures, vendredi 5 août. « *Aujourd'hui, bien sûr, les yeux du monde entier sont tournés vers Sotchi* », s'est réjoui le dirigeant turc, auréolé de son statut de médiateur incontournable entre Moscou et Kiev.

Dès le début des entretiens, le chef du Kremlin a remercié son hôte d'avoir négocié et mis en œuvre l'accord céréalier, supervisé depuis Istanbul par des responsables d'Ukraine, de Russie, de Turquie et des Nations unies. « *Grâce à votre participation directe et à la médiation du secrétariat de l'ONU, le problème lié aux exportations de céréales ukrainiennes en provenance des ports de la mer Noire a été résolu. Les livraisons ont déjà commencé et je voulais vous en remercier* », a déclaré M. Poutine.

Le même jour, trois bateaux transportant des milliers de tonnes de maïs ont pu quitter les ports ukrainiens. Un pre-



Le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, et son homologue russe, Vladimir Poutine, à Sotchi, en Russie, le 5 août 2022 (photo prise et diffusée par le service de presse présidentiel turc). MURAT KULA / SERVICE DE PRESSE DE LA PRÉSIDENTIE TURC/ AFP

mier navire était sorti, lundi 1<sup>er</sup> août, du port ukrainien d'Odessa, situé à 800 kilomètres à l'ouest de Sotchi. L'accord céréalier est avantageux pour la Russie, qui va pouvoir exporter ses céréales et ses engrais, malgré les sanctions financières occidentales, légèrement assouplies grâce aux bons offices d'Ankara. Dans le communiqué commun publié après les pourparlers, les deux dirigeants ont souligné « *la nécessité d'une réalisation complète de l'accord global conclu à Istanbul, y compris l'exportation sans entraves de céréales et d'engrais russes* ».

Les discussions se sont tenues sous le sceau de la confidentialité. Il n'y a pas eu de conférence de presse après la réunion et M. Erdogan, venu en voisin pour l'après-midi, a rapidement quitté la Russie une fois celle-ci terminée.

Outre les exportations de céréales et la situation dans le nord de la Syrie, où l'armée turque prépare une nouvelle incursion contre les Kurdes syriens alliés des Occidentaux, il a surtout été question d'énergie. Vladimir Poutine a insisté sur le rôle joué par Ankara dans l'acheminement du gaz russe vers les foyers européens à travers le gazoduc

TurkStream, qui traverse la mer Noire. « *Les consommateurs européens devraient être reconnaissants envers la Turquie pour ce flux ininterrompu de gaz naturel* », a-t-il souligné.

Dépendante de la Russie pour sa consommation de gaz et de pétrole, la Turquie, actuellement confrontée à une inflation galopante (80 % en moyenne annuelle, selon les chiffres officiels), espère pouvoir maintenir des prix abordables pour l'énergie qu'elle consomme. En un an, le prix du litre d'essence à la pompe a augmenté de 300 %, suscitant une vague de mécontentement parmi la population. Tenter de limiter

l'envolée des prix de l'énergie est une priorité pour le président Erdogan, dont la popularité s'essouffle à moins d'un an des élections présidentielle et législatives, prévues en juin 2023.

#### Bénéfice mutuel

Isolée sur la scène internationale, affaiblie par les sanctions, la Russie cherche pour sa part à renforcer son partenariat économique avec le voisin turc. Selon le vice-premier ministre russe Alexandre Novak, présent à Sotchi aux côtés du ministre turc de l'énergie, Fatih Dönmez, la Turquie va désormais pouvoir payer en roubles ses approvisionnements en gaz. De « grands accords » ont été conclus pour faciliter les flux financiers. « Des décisions très

importantes ont été prises lors des pourparlers, qui porteront nos liens économiques et commerciaux à un nouveau niveau dans pratiquement tous les domaines », a-t-il déclaré à l'agence russe Tass.

Comme ses partenaires de l'OTAN, la Turquie a condamné l'invasion russe de l'Ukraine, fournissant au gouvernement de Kiev des drones de combat pour contrer l'armée de Poutine. Pour autant, elle n'applique pas les sanctions occidentales contre Moscou, dont elle dépend pour le blé, le métal, le tourisme et l'énergie. Une neutralité qui fait d'elle « un partenaire-clé de la Russie, aux côtés de la Chine, pour tenter d'atténuer les effets des sanctions », expliquait, le 3 août, le rédacteur en chef de *Nezavissimaïa Gazeta*, Kons-

tantin Remtchoukov, dans les colonnes de son quotidien.

Le bénéfice est mutuel. En allant au secours du gouvernement turc, la Russie a fourni à la Turquie des liquidités en devises en transférant, la semaine passée, des milliards de dollars à une filiale turque de Rosatom, l'entreprise publique russe du nucléaire – non sanctionnée –, qui construit actuellement la première centrale nucléaire du pays à Mersin, sur la côte méditerranéenne. Une fois achevée, en 2023 pour les deux premiers réacteurs, la centrale sera opérée exclusivement par la partie russe.

Vendredi, l'agence Bloomberg a indiqué que Rosatom avait décidé de transférer au total 15 milliards de dollars (14,7 milliards d'euros) à sa fi-

liale turque, un premier montant de 5 milliards de dollars ayant déjà été versé. Officiellement, ces fonds doivent servir à la finalisation du chantier, ralenti par des problèmes de sécurité, d'assurances et de flambée des prix des matériaux de construction.

Détail intéressant, le mémorandum signé dans le cadre de ce transfert de fonds prévoit qu'une partie de l'argent sera temporairement placée dans l'achat d'obligations en dollars du ministère turc du trésor et des finances. Cet apport constitue une petite bouée de sauvetage pour la Banque centrale de la République de Turquie, dont les réserves en devises sont au plus bas, ainsi qu'un coup de pouce pour le président Erdogan, qui brigue sa réélection en 2023.

Le Monde

6 août 2022  
Pat Hélène Sallon

## En Irak, le mouvement des sadristes prend de l'ampleur

La forte mobilisation des partisans de Moqtada Al-Sadr, vendredi, à Bagdad, est une nouvelle démonstration de force du chef populiste.

La lumière crue du soleil de midi écrase la place des Célébrations, au cœur de la zone verte de Bagdad. Le thermomètre affiche 49 °C, la chaleur est étouffante. Sous les deux arches monumentales, représentant des épées, des dizaines de milliers d'Irakiens sont venus témoigner leur ferveur et leur vénération à Moqtada Al-Sadr, le temps de la prière hebdomadaire, vendredi 5 août. Dans une nouvelle démonstration de force à l'adresse de ses rivaux chiites, le chef populiste a convoqué l'esprit de sacrifice de ses partisans pour soutenir en masse la « révolution » qu'il appelle de ses vœux pour mettre fin à l'impasse

politique née des élections législatives d'octobre 2021.

« Les partis liés à l'étranger ont plongé l'Irak dans la corruption et la pauvreté. (...) Ceux qui ne soutiennent pas les réformes subiront les milices, les kidnappings, la contrebande, la normalisation [avec Israël] et les meurtres », avertit l'imam dans son sermon, écourté du fait de la chaleur. Des personnes se sont évanouies. Encore vaillants, des groupes de jeunes repartent en chantant les louanges de leur chef et en conspuant ses rivaux. « Regardez cette foule ! Tous les Irakiens sont en train de devenir sadristes. Nouri Al-Maliki devrait trouver un trou

où se cacher », s'égosille un homme qui se présente sous le surnom d'« Abou Samir Al-Sadri », en menaçant l'ancien premier ministre, bête noire de M. Al-Sadr.

« On est venu dire à l'Iran et aux autres pays que l'on défendra notre pays contre leurs complots, ajoute-t-il, alors qu'il s'apprête à rentrer à Nadjaf, comme il en a reçu l'ordre de la direction sadriste. On reviendra dès qu'il nous demandera de le faire. Nous le suivons aveuglément. » D'autres partisans regagnent le Parlement, où ils campent depuis une semaine, à tour de rôle, pour protester contre la décision du cadre de coordination –

une coalition qui regroupe des partis milices chiites proches de l'Iran et le parti Dawa de M. Maliki – de nommer premier ministre Mohammed Shia Al-Soudani, qu'ils perçoivent comme « l'ombre de Maliki ».

#### « Politiciens corrompus »

Nombreux n'étaient jamais entrés à l'Assemblée auparavant, « l'antre des baleines » – les corrompus – comme ils le désignent, ni même dans la zone verte, le quartier ultra-protégé qui abrite les institutions, si ce n'est en 2016, lors d'une précédente manifestation sadriste. « Les politiciens corrompus vivent dans une autre dimen-

sion. Au Parlement, il y a l'air conditionné partout, même dans les toilettes », s'esclaffe Abbas Fadhel, un sympathisant de Kerbala, où il reçoit, au mieux, six heures d'électricité publique par jour et une facture salée à payer pour le générateur privé. Vendredi, après la prière, ils ont trouvé les portes de l'Assemblée closes, gardées par des membres de la milice sadriste des « compagnies de la paix » (Saraya Salam).

Moqtada Al-Sadr a ordonné que le sit-in se poursuive à l'extérieur du bâtiment, dans les jardins, où des tentes ont été installées. Dans une allocution télévisée depuis Al-Hanana, son QG dans la ville sainte de Najaf, le chef populiste a, pour la première fois mercredi, détaillé ses exigences. M. Sadr a appelé à « un processus démocratique révolutionnaire pacifique, puis à des élections démocratiques anticipées après la dissolution du Parlement actuel ». Il a rejeté l'idée d'un dialogue, auquel ont appelé plusieurs figures du cadre de coordination, ainsi que le premier ministre Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, chargé des affaires courantes. « Il a présenté son plan de façon claire et le met en œuvre, pas à pas. Le cadre de coordination va devoir faire des compromis », estime Dhia Al-Asadi, un cadre sadriste, qui assure que les lettres de soutien se multiplient de la part de chefs sunnites, de chefs de tribus et même de sympathisants du cadre de coordination et du mouvement de contestation antipouvoir d'octobre 2019.

Partisan du dialogue avec M. Sadr, Hadi Al-Ameri, le chef de l'organisation Badr, a immédiatement soutenu l'appel



Des partisans de Moqtada Sadr se rassemblent dans la zone verte de haute sécurité de Bagdad, la capitale irakienne, le 5 août 2022. AHMAD AL-RUBAYE / AFP

à de nouvelles élections, rejoint par d'autres chefs de l'alliance chiite. Incarnant la ligne dure avec Qaïs Al-Khazali, le chef du parti milice de la Ligue des vertueux, M. Maliki a, lui, accepté l'idée d'un dialogue à condition de « respecter la Constitution et ses institutions », à savoir l'évacuation du sit-in et la reprise des sessions parlementaires. Cette ligne s'est imposée dans le communiqué commun du cadre de coordination, jeudi soir. La direction sadriste y oppose une fin de non-recevoir.

#### Amener Al-Sadr à des concessions

« Le cadre de coordination est divisé entre deux opinions différentes. Il faut davantage de dialogue au sein du cadre pour rallier MM. Maliki et Khazali à notre position », reconnaît Mohind Al-Kadhimi, un cadre de l'organisation Badr. Hadi Al-Ameri s'est imposé comme médiateur entre M. Al-Sadr et l'alliance chiite mais M. Maliki y reste incontournable. « M. Ameri pourrait quitter le cadre s'il y va de l'intérêt national », suggère

M. Kadhimi. Il ne partage pas l'insistance de ses alliés à imposer la candidature de M. Soudani au gouvernement. « On doit être plus flexibles, ça a été une erreur d'imposer sa candidature sans consulter Moqtada Al-Sadr, mais le gouvernement ne peut plus, en revanche, être mené par Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. Il y a eu trop d'interférences de sa part », précise le cadre de Badr.

Le parti chiite est convaincu de pouvoir amener M. Al-Sadr à des concessions, notamment sur un gouvernement de transition et l'élaboration d'une nouvelle loi électorale. Mais ce conflit de leadership fait le jeu de Moqtada Al-Sadr. Il lui manque encore le soutien, indispensable, des partis kurdes, après avoir reçu celui du président du Parlement, le sunnite Mohammed Al-Halboussi. Son initiative est aussi bien accueillie au sein du gouvernement, bien que Mustafa Al-Kadhimi joue les médiateurs entre factions rivales dans le cadre du dialogue national.

« Le processus enclenché

par M. Al-Sadr est nécessaire : depuis 2003, le système politique a échoué à fournir des services et des emplois aux Irakiens. Une majorité veut restaurer la citoyenneté irakienne dans l'esprit de Tishreen [la contestation d'octobre 2019] et un Etat fort. Si son initiative échoue, on s'oriente vers un nouveau Tishreen », dit une source gouvernementale. Dans son entourage, on plaide pour que M. Kadhimi assure la transition jusqu'aux nouvelles élections. « Il incarne cette identité nationale irakienne, il a réussi à renouer les liens avec les pays du Golfe et à équilibrer les relations avec l'Iran et la Turquie », ajoute cette source, convaincue que M. Kadhimi a le soutien de Moqtada Al-Sadr et de l'Iran, qui cherche à tout prix à maintenir l'unité dans le camp chiite et éviter une confrontation armée.

L'idée d'un compromis avec les « corrompus », les chefs du cadre de coordination, est rejetée par les manifestants au Parlement. Les célébrations de l'Achoura, mardi 9 août, qui marquent le martyre de l'imam chiite Hussein à Kerbala en 680, renforcent leur détermination. « Chaque terre est Kerbala, et chaque jour est Achoura, clame Arek Hamid, un fonctionnaire de Bagdad. Nous marchons dans les pas de l'imam Hussein, qui a mené la révolution. » « On fait confiance à Moqtada Al-Sadr, la décision revient au leadership et même s'il accepte un accord, il ne va pas brader nos demandes et nos objectifs, tranche Sadek Jaafar, 50 ans, employé au ministère de l'électricité. Comme l'imam Hussein, nous n'accepterons pas l'humiliation mais le courage ».

## «J'ai vu tout mon peuple, par terre, impuissant et souffrant», une conversation avec Nagham Nawzat

Nagham Nawzat, gynécologue du Kurdistan irakien milite depuis 2014 pour la défense des survivantes yézidiées. Depuis la libération des femmes réduites en esclavage par Daesh, elle œuvre à leur reconstruction personnelle. Dans une région marquée par la poursuite des combats entre la Turquie et du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), Nagham Nawzat nous alerte sur l'état des conditions de vie dans les camps de réfugiés et les conditions de vie des survivants de la minorité yézidie.

**Nous aimerions commencer par en apprendre plus sur vous. Pourriez-vous revenir sur votre parcours professionnel, ce qui vous a conduit à devenir gynécologue, et sur vos origines, sociales et familiales ?**

Je m'appelle Nagham Hassan Nawzat et suis originaire du Kurdistan irakien<sup>1</sup>. Je fais partie de la communauté yézidie. Je suis devenue médecin par vocation, en raison d'un désir très profond d'aider les autres. Dès l'âge de six ans, je jouais au docteur avec les enfants et leur faisais des prescriptions.

Ma famille m'a toujours encouragée et soutenue dans ce projet. Je dois préciser ici que je viens d'une famille instruite. Mon père est professeur. Parmi mes frères, l'un est notaire, l'autre avocat et le dernier diplômé de l'école d'administration. Ma petite sœur est médecin, elle aussi diplômée de la faculté de médecine.

Les Yézidis vivent principalement dans trois régions en Irak, pour une population totale d'environ 700 000 personnes. Certains Yézidis se trouvent également dans d'autres pays comme l'Arménie, la Géorgie, la Syrie et la Turquie. Il y en a aussi dans les pays occidentaux, principalement en Allemagne, mais aussi en France, en Australie, au Canada et aux États-Unis. En Irak, 70 % de la communauté yézidie vit dans le



Sinjar et ses environs, 20 % dans le Shekhan et 10 % les dix dans les alentours de Bashiqa. Je suis pour ma part originaire de Bashiqa, où 95 % de la population est yézidie.

**Pourriez-vous revenir sur les épisodes qui vous ont conduit à vous engager pour les femmes yézidiées, dans le contexte de la mise en place d'un Etat islamique en Irak et des crimes que Daesh a perpétré à l'encontre des yézidis ?**

Le 3 août 2014, Daesh a envahi le Sinjar. Une partie de la population yézidie a réussi à s'échapper dans la montagne du Sinjar tandis que les autres ont été capturés et emprisonnés. Daesh a forcé la population

à se convertir à l'Islam, tué ceux qui refusaient de le faire, et emmené ceux qui s'étaient convertis dans la zone contrôlée par Daesh. En deux jours, environ six mille hommes et femmes ont été tués parce qu'ils avaient refusé de se convertir. Ensuite, ils ont emmené les femmes et les enfants dans d'autres zones contrôlées par Daesh, comme Mossoul et ses environs dans le nord de l'Irak, ou en Syrie, notamment à Raqqa. Ils y ont transformé les femmes yézidiées en esclaves sexuelles, en biens d'échange entre combattants, les ont torturées, en les violant, en les électrocutant et en les brûlant.

À Bashiqa, lorsque nous avons appris que Daesh arrivait, nous nous sommes enfuis vers le

Nord de l'Irak. En quelques heures, Bashiqa s'est complètement vidée de ses habitants. Toutes les personnes fuyant Bashiqa et Shekhan sont allées au Kurdistan. Je travaillais alors comme gynécologue dans un hôpital de Shekhan. Ma famille m'a appelée pour me demander de tout quitter et de les rejoindre, craignant que si Daesh attaquait Shekhan, ils me tueraient ou me réduiraient en esclavage. Je les ai donc rejoints le lendemain au Kurdistan.

Après y avoir passé deux jours, j'ai décidé de me rendre dans la zone où se trouvaient les personnes déplacées. Des centaines de milliers de personnes étaient dans la rue, sous les arbres, en train de pleurer, sans chaussures et sous une chaleur infernale, puisqu'il fait environ 50 degrés en août en Irak. J'ai vu tout mon peuple, par terre, impuissant et souffrant. J'ai donc décidé de les aider, avec les nombreuses ONG internationales qui sont venues leur fournir nourriture et vêtements. Pendant une dizaine de jours, du matin au soir, j'allais d'une zone à l'autre avec mon stéthoscope autour du cou. Certains d'entre eux souffraient d'hypertension sévère, d'autres s'évanouissaient, et tous étaient dans un piètre état psychologique.

J'ai vu tout mon peuple, par terre, impuissant et souffrant.

*Nagham Nawzat*

Un mois plus tard, j'ai rendu visite à deux femmes qui avaient survécu à la captivité, dans la zone contrôlée par Daesh, pour comprendre comment elles s'étaient échappées, ce qu'on leur avait fait, et quel était leur état psychologique. Elles avaient peur de moi, n'avaient confiance en personne. J'ai essayé de les rassurer en leur disant que j'étais comme eux, une yézidie, et une gynécologue. Au bout de deux jours, elles m'ont fait confiance et ont commencé à parler de ce qui s'était passé en captivité. Je leur rendais souvent visite et puis progressivement j'ai entendu parler de l'arrivée d'autres survivantes.

### **Pourriez-vous nous décrire votre travail, à partir de là ?**

Les visites sont devenues une habitude, au point que je donnais à ces femmes mon numéro pour qu'elles m'appellent en cas de besoin et qu'elles me viennent directement lorsqu'une autre survivante arrivait. C'est ainsi que, depuis 2014, j'ai consacré ma vie à écouter le récit des femmes qui ont échappé à Daesh. En six ans, j'ai rencontré environ 1200 femmes.

En 2015, le gouvernement allemand a accepté d'emmener 1000 survivantes et leurs familles en Allemagne et m'a choisi comme médecin porteur du projet. J'ai donc travaillé avec le gouvernement allemand pendant un an dans ce cadre.

Néanmoins, mon principal travail était de porter la voix des survivantes. Pendant de nombreuses années, j'ai raconté leurs souffrances à la communauté internationale pour l'encourager à aider les survivantes yézidies. J'ai dit à l'une des patientes, Nadia Murad, d'aller en Allemagne dans le cadre du programme que j'ai mentionné. L'une des patientes à qui j'ai dit d'aller en Allemagne était Nadia Murad.

*Nagham Nawzat*

Alors, certains militants, voyant

que je réussissais à sensibiliser les gens, m'ont demandé de créer une ONG. En effet, bien qu'il existe un soutien international pour les survivantes, il n'était pas suffisant, compte tenu de ce qui s'était passé. Nous avons donc créé une organisation appelée Hope Makers, pour les femmes, en 2018. Malheureusement, à cause du Covid et des confinements successifs, notre action a été mise à l'arrêt et nous n'avons rien pu faire à part quelques rares visites aux survivantes.

Voilà brièvement ce que j'ai fait pour les survivantes depuis 2014. Depuis, nous avons ouvert deux centres, un au Sinjar et un autre à Sinouni. Nous avons également entendu qu'il y avait de nombreux cas de suicides, alors nous avons commencé à nous concentrer sur cette question car personne ne l'a fait jusqu'ici.

### **Quels liens avez-vous avec ces femmes ? Êtes-vous encore en relation avec elles ?**

J'ai réussi à gagner la confiance des survivantes pour trois raisons principales. Premièrement, puisque nous sommes de la même communauté, elles me font plus confiance qu'aux autres. Deuxièmement, je suis une femme, comme elles, et c'était très important car dans notre communauté les femmes peuvent avoir honte de parler de certains sujets sensibles avec des hommes. Troisièmement, et c'est le plus important, je suis gynécologue et médecin, ce qui me permet de les soigner. Même lorsque les survivantes sont parties dans d'autres pays, comme l'Allemagne, la France, l'Australie, le Canada et, dans certains cas, les États-Unis, elles m'appellent en cas de problème, si elles ont un problème avec leur famille ou leur mari.

Quand j'entends leurs histoires, il m'arrive parfois de m'effondrer. Nous sommes au XXIe siècle et malgré cela, il y a encore des gens qui en réduisent d'autres en esclavage et tuent ceux qui ne sont pas de la même religion ou ethnique. Comment est-il possible que

des femmes du XXIe siècle soient torturées, électrocutées, brûlées ?

Comment est-il possible que des femmes du XXIe siècle soient torturées, électrocutées, brûlées ?

*Nagham Nawzat*

L'une des femmes que j'ai rencontrée a essayé de s'échapper, avant d'être rattrapée. Ils ont alors décapité son mari sous ses yeux et l'ont vendue entre les combattants Daesh une trentaine de fois. Elle a tenté une nouvelle fois de s'échapper avec une autre femme, mais elles ont également été attrapées. Ils ont décidé de couper la tête de son amie, qu'elle a vu mourir devant elle. Aujourd'hui, cette femme à qui je rends parfois visite est complètement détruite. Elle pleure beaucoup, et rit parfois sans raison.

L'une d'entre elles est venue me voir en pleurant, me demandant de la regarder et de lui dire si je voyais en elle un être humain ou un animal. Je lui ai répondu qu'elle était une femme courageuse et que j'étais fière d'elle, que je n'aurais pas eu le courage de m'échapper comme elle l'a fait.

J'ai également soigné une fille d'environ neuf ans. C'était très difficile pour moi de soigner des enfants, car il est encore plus difficile d'obtenir leur confiance et de les faire parler. Après un certain temps, je pouvais dire, d'après le comportement d'un enfant, si elle avait été violée ou pas. J'ai compris que certaines petites filles étaient données à des hommes d'âge mûr, qui les appelaient leurs filles, puis leur disaient de dormir avec eux avant de les violer. Comment peut-on imaginer cela ? Comment s'en relever après ?

### **Est-ce que toutes les femmes yézidies capturées par Daesh ont désormais été libérées ?**

Le génocide yézidi est toujours en cours. Quand Daesh est arrivé, ils ont capturé plus de 6000

femmes et enfants. Aujourd'hui, trois mille de ces femmes et enfants sont toujours portés disparus malgré le processus de libération entamé en 2017 des zones contrôlées par Daesh en Irak. Depuis, j'ai contacté des personnes travaillant sur cette question et j'ai appris que beaucoup de femmes yézidies avaient été emprisonnées à Mossoul. Mais après la libération de Mossoul, seulement une vingtaine sont sorties de la ville. Sachant qu'il y avait plus de femmes là-bas, je pense qu'elles ont été emmenées dans d'autres régions.

Depuis 2019, seules quelques-unes sont revenues et à cause du Covid-19, tout a été verrouillé. Aujourd'hui, nous avons donc entre 2700 et 3000 Yézidis toujours portés disparus, malgré la libération de toutes les zones irakiennes et syriennes sous contrôle de Daesh. Nous ne savons rien d'eux et ne pouvons pas répondre à la question des familles traumatisées.

Le génocide yézidi est toujours en cours.

*Nagham Nawzat*

### **Comment les survivantes que vous avez suivies ont-elles évolué ? Quelles sont les conditions de leur rétablissement ?**

Premièrement, l'implication des familles est très importante. Souvent, c'était la famille qui amenait leur fille ou leur soeur et s'assurait qu'elle vienne ensuite aux rendez-vous. Je travaille souvent avec les maris, les pères, les frères. La plupart d'entre eux sont nerveux, car ils connaissaient les différentes formes de torture perpétrées par les combattants de Daesh. Le rôle de la famille a donc été très important pour moi, car chaque fois que nous avons établi une bonne relation, cela a beaucoup aidé.

Quand elles n'ont plus de famille, c'est extrêmement compliqué. Je me souviens d'une femme, qui avait 45 ans et avait cinq fils. Avant 2014, elle travail-

lait à tisser des objets pour aider les gens à aller à l'école. Les combattants de Daesh ont tué son mari devant ses yeux et ont pris tous ses fils, sauf le dernier, qui avait six ans. Il est resté avec elle tandis qu'ils la vendaient comme esclave à des combattants de Daesh. Enfin, ils ont pris son fils pour lui enseigner la loi islamique, et les ont donc séparés. Aujourd'hui, à chaque fois que je lui rends visite, elle est assise dans un coin de la tente et pleure. J'ai essayé d'apaiser sa souffrance, mais je ne pouvais pas vraiment dire grand chose pour la consoler. Elle me demandait : comment puis-je avoir de l'espoir ? Où est mon mari ? Où est ma famille ?

La deuxième chose à prendre en compte est que lorsqu'une fille sort de la captivité, elle est traumatisée une deuxième fois lorsqu'elle arrive au camp. On l'emmène vivre dans une petite tente, d'environ deux mètres sur deux, avec certains membres de sa famille, parfois avec des parents du troisième ou quatrième degré. Ils vivent là dans une grande pauvreté. Comment traiter les survivantes dans une telle situation ? Certaines ONG apportent un soutien psychosocial aux survivantes, certes. Je leur ai toujours dit, en tant que médecin et en tant que témoin, que le soutien psychologique est très important, mais qu'il y a d'autres problèmes basiques à résoudre. Quel est l'intérêt de séances psychologiques où nous essayons de leur donner de l'espoir, alors que leur réalité actuelle est si terrible ?

**Comment est-ce que les femmes que vous avez suivies, lorsqu'elles reviennent de captivité, sont réintégrées à la communauté yézidie ?**

La religion yézidie est une religion à laquelle on ne peut pas se convertir. Pour être Yézidi, il faut être issu de deux parents yézidis. Les combattants de Daesh savent que si un Yézidi se convertit à une autre religion, il ne pourra plus faire partie de sa communauté. J'ai rencontré un haut responsable religieux de la communauté yézidie, ap-

pelé Bâbâ Cheikh<sup>2</sup>, à qui nous avons expliqué qu'il faudrait faire une exception pour ceux et celles qui ont été forcés de se convertir. À la suite de cette rencontre, il a pris une décision, une sorte de fatwa, qui décrète que toute femme, tout homme ou tout enfant converti de force sera accueilli parmi les Yézidis.

**Vous avez mentionné les bombardements de la Turquie et du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK). Il y a quelques jours, le président de la Turquie a déclaré qu'il allait envoyer plus de soldats dans cette région du Kurdistan. Les combattants du PKK se trouvent donc dans la même région que le peuple yézidi ?**

Non seulement ils sont aussi dans les régions des montagnes du Kurdistan, mais ils sont surtout dans le Sinjar. Par conséquent, ce qui les affecte nous affecte aussi. Un de mes centres était proche de cette zone. J'ai donc dit à mes collègues de ne pas s'y rendre parce qu'ils risquaient d'être bombardés. Les yézidis ne sont coupables de rien et nous ne devrions donc pas faire partie de ce problème.

Le problème est qu'aujourd'hui, nous ne pouvons pas être sûrs qu'il n'y a pas de combattants de Daesh dans des cellules dormantes. S'ils décidaient de nous attaquer de nouveau, nous n'aurions aucun moyen de nous défendre. Nous ne pouvons pas compter sur la bonne volonté des gens que nous connaissons, car après des violences aussi terribles, comment pouvons-nous savoir ce qu'il y a dans le cœur de quelqu'un ? Donc, en réalité, ce que nous demandons, c'est une protection.

Nous ne pouvons pas être sûrs qu'il n'y a pas de combattants de Daesh dans des cellules dormantes. S'ils décidaient de nous attaquer de nouveau, nous n'aurions aucun moyen de nous défendre.

*Naghm Nawzat*

**Où en est le jugement des combattants de Daesh actuellement en prison en Irak ?**

Ils ne sont pas tenus responsables des crimes qu'ils ont commis, car il n'y a pas de paragraphe dans la loi irakienne qui traite de cette question. Nous demandons l'aide de la communauté internationale pour soutenir la communauté yézidie et faire en sorte que les combattants de Daesh soient jugés pour leurs crimes.

Nous avons essayé à plusieurs reprises de changer la loi irakienne car, selon moi, la loi de tout pays doit être laïque. Je le dis aussi en tant que Yézidie. Si des Yézidis venaient nous dire que nous devrions utiliser la loi yézidie, je serais la première à le refuser car l'Irak regroupe des peuples différents, de différentes ethnies, de différentes religions. En Irak, il n'y a pas de musulman pur, pas de yézidi pur, pas de chrétien pur. C'est pourquoi la loi devrait être laïque et accorder des droits à tous les gens de la même manière. Malheureusement, la loi irakienne est la charia. Nous sommes tous Irakiens. Il ne devrait pas y avoir de différenciation entre les chrétiens, les yézidis et les musulmans. Non, nous devrions éliminer ces noms. Nous devrions nous respecter mutuellement en tant qu'êtres humains.

**Le Parlement européen vous a remis le prix de la Rose d'Argent en 2016. Estimez-vous recevoir suffisamment de soutien de la part des institutions internationales ?**

Je suis reconnaissante pour ces prix car ils m'ont encouragée à travailler et à faire entendre la voix des survivantes. J'en ai reçu beaucoup. Le premier, le 29 mars 2016 en tant que "femme internationale de courage" par le Département d'État des États-Unis. En 2017, j'ai été récompensée par Physicians for Human Rights, organisation de défense des droits de l'homme, qui se trouve à New York. C'est une organisation qui travaille sur la collecte de

preuves pour documenter cliniquement les crimes. J'ai également été récompensée par l'United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) en Turquie. En 2020, j'ai reçu le Prix franco-allemand des droits de l'homme et de l'Etat de droit, décerné par le ministère français des affaires étrangères et le ministère allemand des affaires étrangères. Ces prix sont des symboles importants qui me donnent le courage de m'occuper de la communauté yézidie.

Sans le soutien de la communauté internationale, je ne pourrais rien faire car je suis un être humain, comme les autres. Après avoir entendu les témoignages des survivantes, il m'arrivait de rentrer à la maison et de rester dans ma chambre pendant un ou deux jours, incapable de dormir, pleurant, désespérant de comprendre les causes de notre malheur. Pourquoi nous tuent-ils, pourquoi nous asservissent-ils, pourquoi nous brûlent-ils, pourquoi nous électrocutent-ils ? En quoi le fait d'être Yézidie est-il un problème ? Je ne suis pas comme avant 2014. Ces épreuves ont fait de moi une femme plus forte. Avant, j'étais très calme, et je rêvais avant tout de progresser dans mon travail. Après 2014, tout a changé. Je n'avais plus de rêves personnels. Mon seul rêve était d'aider les survivantes à vivre en paix. J'ai oublié mon travail de gynécologue. Aujourd'hui, il est vrai que j'ai été directrice d'un hôpital, mais je pense tout le temps au génocide. Je ne suis pas heureuse comme je pouvais l'être auparavant.

Après 2014, tout a changé. Je n'avais plus de rêves personnels. Mon seul rêve était d'aider les survivantes à vivre en paix.

*Naghm Nawzat*

**Récemment, un tribunal allemand a condamné un membre de Daesh pour sa participation au génocide des Yézidis. Voyez-vous en Europe la possibilité d'une action décisive sur le plan juridique ?**



Il est très important que la plupart des pays européens reconnaissent que ce qui est arrivé à la communauté yézidie est un génocide. Nous sommes vraiment reconnaissants que le gouvernement français ait reconnu que ce qui est arrivé à la communauté yézidie est un génocide. En acceptant des survivantes en France, pour les soigner et pour les aider, le gouvernement français nous a beaucoup aidé. Nous leur en sommes très reconnaissants. Je suis également reconnaissant pour le programme Marianne. Nous avons dans ce cadre rendu visite au président Macron lors de la Journée internationale des femmes, le 8 mars. Il connaît la communauté yézidie, il défend la qualification de ces crimes comme un génocide et a promis de faire beaucoup d'efforts pour nous soutenir.

Nous espérons que la France conduira devant la justice un grand nombre de combattants de Daesh originaires de France. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de sauver la communauté yézidie, mais de montrer à la communauté internationale du monde entier que toute personne qui tente d'en tuer une autre en raison de son ethnique ou de sa religion viole les droits de l'homme et peut être condamnée.

#### **Les pays européens acceptent-ils encore des réfugiés yézidis ?**

Malheureusement, non. La plupart des survivantes veulent quitter l'Irak car leur vie là-bas est insupportable. Celles qui sont parties me disent que leurs droits sont respectés, qu'elles peuvent aller à l'école, avoir une assurance médicale, une maison. Ces pays traitent les survivantes comme leurs propres citoyens. En Irak, la vie dans les camps est une vie de souffrance, à cause de la précarité économique et de la peur qui les ronge qu'un nouveau conflit éclate dans la région. Ils veulent tous immigrer pour survivre. Ils pensent que leur avenir ne pourra commencer qu'une fois

qu'ils auront fui ces conflits.

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*Nagham Nawzat*

#### **Les réfugiés yézidis qui sont allés en Europe se sont-ils intégrés facilement dans les sociétés européennes ?**

Avant que les Yézidies arrivent en Allemagne, le gouvernement allemand leur a expliqué à quoi pourrait ressembler leur vie là-bas. Elles sont donc allées en Allemagne en connaissance de cause. J'ai vu leur évolution, dans leur apparence, dans leur façon de parler. Elles ont pu aller à l'école. Elles sont devenues des personnes plus fortes. Certaines d'entre elles, avant de partir, étaient des personnes brisées : elles ne pouvaient pas parler, elles avaient peur de tout. Une fois dans un autre pays, elles ont pris confiance. Comme Nadia Murad, certaines d'entre elles sont devenues des militantes. Si elles ne peuvent pas oublier ce qu'elles ont subi pendant leur captivité, elles sentent qu'elles ont un avenir ici.

#### **Pouvez-vous nous en dire plus sur les différents programmes d'accueil des réfugiés yézidis en Europe ?**

Le premier programme d'accueil des réfugiés a été mis en place en Allemagne. Il proposait 1000 places pour les survivantes et leur famille. C'était un excellent programme, mais nous avons rencontré une difficulté. Lorsqu'une survivante avait moins de 18 ans, elle pouvait emmener sa mère avec elle, et ses frères et sœurs s'ils avaient moins de 18 ans. Cependant, les hommes n'étaient pas acceptés. Ainsi, nous nous sommes retrouvés avec une

trentaine d'hommes qui ne pouvaient pas venir avec leurs familles. Le gouvernement allemand a dit que ces hommes pouvaient faire une demande après deux ans, mais aujourd'hui, six ans après l'arrivée de tous ces survivantes en Allemagne, les hommes sont toujours en Irak.

Nous espérons donc que le gouvernement allemand nous aidera à faire venir leur famille avec eux. Ce projet est un projet de traitement psychologique pour les survivantes. Mais comment pouvons-nous les traiter psychologiquement si chaque membre de la famille vit dans un endroit différent ?

#### **Quelles sont les ONG les plus utiles et les organisations les plus importantes pour le soutien aux yézidis ?**

Je ne les connais pas toutes, mais l'UNFPA a joué un grand rôle dans le soutien aux survivantes. Le Haut-Commissariat aux Réfugiés donne des tentes et ouvre des camps. Mais maintenant ces tentes sont détruites, et nous espérons en recevoir d'autres. D'autres ONG internationales donnent de la nourriture et aident les survivantes. Nous avons beaucoup d'ONG internationales. Le UNFPA et le HCR ont mis en place un programme avec le gouvernement canadien pour emmener 800 survivantes au Canada afin qu'elles y soient soignées. Certaines ONG françaises travaillent également à la construction d'hôpitaux, comme "la Chaîne de l'Espoir", dans le Sinjar.

Après 2017 et le début du processus de libération, nous avons constaté une diminution du soutien des ONG aux Yézidis.

*Nagham Nawzat*

Cependant, après 2017 et le début du processus de libération, nous avons constaté une diminution du soutien des ONG aux Yézidis. Les ONG nous ont dit que le gouvernement irakien essayait d'encourager les gens

à retourner chez eux. Mais s'il n'y a pas de protection, pas de sécurité, nous ne pouvons pas les encourager à revenir, d'autant plus s'ils sont souvent blessés. Il y a seulement un mois, il y a eu des combats entre les armées irakiennes et les troupes kurdes dans une région de peuplement yézidi. Nous demandons donc à la communauté internationale de trouver une solution et de protéger de plus en plus les Yézidis, car ce n'est pas une vie. Nous ne voulons pas faire partie d'un conflit politique. Nous sommes des gens pacifiques.

#### **Vous avez évoqué le fait que le Covid-19 a arrêté l'activité de votre association. Plus généralement, quel impact la pandémie a-t-elle eu sur votre lutte pour la reconnaissance du génocide des Yézidis ?**

Au moment où la pandémie a commencé, je travaillais à l'hôpital. La situation était très difficile, comme partout dans le monde. En Irak, le pays a été mis en en confinement, mais pour ceux qui vivent dans les camps, il n'y a pas de confinement possible en raison de la promiscuité. Je dois avouer que je n'ai pas visité les camps parce que je travaillais avec des patients atteints du Covid à l'hôpital, et j'avais peur de propager le virus dans les camps, ce qui aurait été désastreux. Je leur ai donc dit de venir à l'hôpital pour tout problème.

J'essaie également de faire entendre la voix des Yézidis sur la scène internationale une fois de plus car, pendant deux ans et demi, nous n'avons pu voyager dans aucun pays. La dernière fois que j'ai voyagé, c'était en mars 2020. J'avais une conférence ici à Paris à cette époque. Après mon retour en Irak, au bout de trois jours, ils ont fermé tous les aéroports pendant un an. Personne ne pouvait aller en Irak. Depuis six mois, nous avons repris nos activités, en faisant entendre la voix des survivantes auprès de la communauté internationale.



AFP  
2022/08/07

## Pro-Kurdish Politician To Stay In Turkish Jail Despite Dementia Claims

A Turkish court has ordered the continued detention of a pro-Kurdish Turkish politician despite reports that she has dementia, her lawyer said on Saturday.

Aysel Tugluk, now 57, was the deputy co-chair of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) before her arrest in 2016.

She was sentenced in 2018 to 10 years in prison for "belonging to a terrorist organisation".

Although it was decided to release her as part of another

case, an Ankara court on Friday ruled she should stay in prison over the 2018 conviction despite not being "aware of what is happening around her", her lawyer Serdar Celebi told AFP.

"The judges saw with their own eyes that Ms Tugluk did not understand the questions put to her and was not able to present a defence," he said.

"But they refused to consider the reports we submitted and transfer her to a hospital."

Tugluk was arrested for her activities with the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), an



Aysel Tugluk, now 57, was the deputy co-chair of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) before her arrest in 2016 (Photo: Medya Tava)

organisation considered by the Turkish authorities to be linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is classified as a

"terrorist" organisation by Ankara and its Western allies.

**bianet**  
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

08-08-2022

## Preventing prison visits violates Constitution, top court rules

The Constitutional Court has ruled that the prevention of a prisoner's visitation rights violated "right to privacy."

Mahmud Siddık Ecevit, the applicant who is kept at İstanbul's Silivri No. 7 Type-L Prison, will be paid 5,000 lira for immaterial damages, according to the ruling.

On July 16, 2019, Ecevit filed an application with the prison administration regarding his right to determine a three-per-

son visitor list other than his family.

The administration rejected the application a day later, stating that the 60-day period to determine the visitors had expired.

Ecevit then filed an appeal with the Silivri 3rd Judgeship of Enforcement, which accepted his request on September 13, 2019.

**"Communication with the outside world"**

The Bakırköy Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, however, appealed against the judge-ship's decision. The Silivri Heavy Penal Court on October 15 ruled that the prison administration's decision was in compliance with the procedures and laws and overturned the judgeship's verdict.

The prisoner then filed an individual application with the Constitutional Court. Examining the application on July 4, the high court ruled that the regulation

about the visitor list was a rights-regulating one and should not be considered a regulation to forfeit rights.

In such a case, the prisoner would be prevented from communicating with the outside world and socializing, the court said, concluding that his right to privacy was violated.

The court also ruled that the case should be retried in order to eliminate the consequences of the right violation. (AS/VK)



08-08-2022

## European missions concerned over politicians, journalists arrested in Kurdistan Region protests

### ERBIL, Kurdistan Region -

The Netherlands expressed concern over the arrests of politicians and journalists across the Kurdistan Region after a Kurdish opposition party called for anti-government protests in the region, a Dutch diplomat said Sunday, echoing similar remarks by representatives from Germany and the UK.

Diplomats representing the countries in Erbil took to Twitter to voice concern over the arrests. Maaïke Keizer, the Deputy Consul General of the Netherlands, urged authorities in the Kurdistan Region to respect the protestors' freedom of expression.

Supporters of the New Generation political party [took to the streets](#) in Sulaimani on Saturday following previous calls by party leader Shaswar Abdulwahid for anti-government protests.



Security forces deploy during a rally by supporters of the New Generation in the Kurdistan Region's city of Sulaimani on August 6, 2022. Photo: Shwan Mohammed/AFP

The protests resulted in the arrests of dozens of politicians, journalists, and MPs, after security forces used tear gas to crush the protests. The New Generation party claimed that over 40 of its members were arrested, including seven of its parliamentarians.

Jamie Hamill, the Deputy

Consul General of the UK, also [expressed concern](#) about the arrests on Sunday and said "freedom of expression, media and association are a crucial part of the democratic process."

The German consulate to Erbil on Sunday also [called](#) on authorities to respect freedom

of expression in the Region, calling it a "crucial" part of the democratic process.

A media outlet close to the party said Sunday that more than 600 people were arrested during the Saturday protests.

Metro Center for Journalists Rights and Advocacy, a local media watchdog, on Saturday said that eleven journalists had been arrested by security forces across the Kurdistan Region in the 24 hours ahead of the protests.

However, Sulaimani's security directorate denied the arrests on Thursday, claiming that "no MPs or journalists have been arrested."

Abdulwahid has called for protests in the Kurdistan Region numerous times, which often turn violent following clashes with security forces.



With Reuter  
Augusts 09, 2022

## Analysis: Erdogan plays up diplomatic gains with eye on elections

A series of diplomatic wins, capped by the deal to resume Ukraine's grain exports, provides some respite for President Tayyip Erdogan from Turkey's economic strife and offers a blueprint of his campaign strategy for elections due next year.

As he prepares for what is shaping up to be the biggest electoral challenge of his nearly 20-year rule, the president is playing up his achievements on the global stage.

"Turkey is going through its strongest period politically, mili-

tarly and diplomatically," he told a crowd of thousands of people in northwest Turkey at the weekend, a day after holding talks in Russia with President Vladimir Putin.

Progress internationally contrasts with a grim economic picture at home, with inflation

soaring to 79% and the lira languishing near record lows it hit during the most recent currency crisis in December.

Opponents blame Erdogan's unorthodox economic policies, including a series of interest rate cuts despite high inflation and the sacking of three cen-

tral bank governors since 2019, that have left the country running large current account deficits and reliant on external financing to support the economy.

Erdogan said the fruits of the government's economic policies - prioritising exports, production and investment - would become clearer in the first quarter of 2023.

## INTERNATIONAL STANDING

In the meantime, government officials and senior members of his ruling AK Party portray the president as a statesman standing against electoral rivals who are nowhere near matching his international credentials.

"Whether you like him or not, Erdogan is a leader," a senior Turkish official said, arguing that no other international figure had the same level of contact with top global players. "There is no leader in Turkey who can replace him."

The accord to restart exports from Ukraine, cut off since Russia's February invasion, could ease grain shortages which have left millions of people vulnerable to hunger and driven up global prices. [read more](#)

Brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, it came after Erdogan secured concessions from NATO over the accession of Nordic countries and initiated a rapprochement with rival powers in the Middle East. [read more](#)

Erdogan also won a pledge in June from U.S. President Joe Biden that he would support the sale of F-16 fighters jets to Turkey, after Washington blocked Ankara from buying more advanced F-35 jets because of its purchase of Russian weaponry. [read more](#)



Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomes Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan during a meeting in Sochi, Russia August 5, 2022. Sputnik/Vyacheslav Prokofyev/Pool via REUTERS

## ELECTION TEST

The longest-serving ruler and most-dominant political figure since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded modern Turkey nearly a century ago, Erdogan faces parliamentary and presidential elections that must be held by June 2023.

A survey by pollster Metropoll last week found a slight rise in support for his AK Party to 33.8%, still comfortably the most for any single party. But he faces a loose alliance of opposition parties, and polls show him trailing opposition presidential candidates.

Topping voter concerns are the state of the economy, and the presence of 3.6 million Syrian refugees, welcomed by Turkey at the start of Syria's conflict but increasingly seen by Turks as competitors for jobs and services.

"The government is using foreign policy as material to cover up the economic disaster it has dragged the country into, telling tales of 'diplomatic victory' at home," said Erdogan To-

prak, a lawmaker from the main opposition CHP and senior adviser to its leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu.

Toprak said that even on the diplomatic front, Erdogan was making concessions that "damage the dignity of our country and drag it into weakness".

## REPAIRING REGIONAL TIES

Erdogan, who survived huge anti-government protests in 2013 and a coup attempt in 2016, has sought to repair strained ties with other Middle Eastern powers, partly in the hope of attracting badly needed foreign funds.

The United Arab Emirates, Turkey's rival in Libya's civil war and a Gulf dispute over Qatar, has joined China, Qatar and South Korea in currency swap deals with Ankara worth a total of \$28 billion. Turkey is also hoping for a deal with Saudi Arabia, and has made moves to improve relations with Egypt and Israel.

"Voters are aware of the benefits of diplomacy. At times they will complain about the economy or

refugees, but they will vote for Erdogan for the continuation of an effective Turkey," an AK Party official said.

Key to Erdogan's diplomacy in the Middle East and beyond is what he called his "joint understanding, based on mutual trust and respect" with Putin - a relationship causing growing concern among Turkey's NATO partners since Russia invaded Ukraine.

Russia says it is waging a "special military operation" to rid Ukraine of nationalists and protect Russian-speaking communities.

Turkey has sought to strike a balance by criticising the Russian invasion and providing Ukraine with arms, while refusing to join the West in imposing sanctions on Russia - a stance it says has helped its mediation efforts reap results.

"By securing the opening of the grain corridor we confirmed again Turkey's key role in solving global problems," Erdogan said on Saturday. (6 August)



## Kurdistan's Weekly Brief August 9, 2022

### Iran

The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) and Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDP-I) concluded two years of reunification talks by [meeting on August 2](#) and discussing "the final stages" of the process. During the meeting, which was chaired by PDKI head Mustafa Hijri and KDP-I leader Khalid Azizi, it was decided Hijri and Azizi will co-lead a reunited PDKI until the next party congress. The KDP-I is the largest political party in Iranian Kurdistan and split from the PDKI in 2006.

[Nine Iranian human rights organizations](#) accused the Iranian regime of disseminating disinformation by accusing four detained members of the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan of working for [the Mossad](#). The nine organizations demanded Iranian authorities reveal the locations and conditions of the detainees and called for the intervention of international human rights organizations. The fate of Mohsen Maroofi, Pezhman Fatehi, Hazineh Faramarzi, and Wafa Azarbar has remained unknown since their arrest last month.

Iranian security forces arrested several Kurdish activists last week, including Omed Shadikha and Kazem Tabenak in Shinno, Navid Koneposhi and Star Arjzanki in Marivan, and Aram Afazli in Sanandaj (Sena). [According to the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights](#), Iranian authorities arrested 600 Kurds and executed 64, including political prisoners [Haider Qurbai](#), and [Fairoz Mosalao](#), during Iranian

President Ebrahim Raisi's first year in office.

### Iraq

Muqtada al Sadr's supporters demonstrated in Baghdad's Green Zone for the second week in a row. Al Sadr asked his supporters to leave the parliament building and shifted his demands towards "[solving](#)" Iraq's governing crisis and holding new elections. Iraq's current prime minister, Mustafa al Kadhimi, attempted to solve the ongoing impasse by initiating a [national dialogue](#), but al Sadr reaffirmed his demands on Saturday. Concurrently, the Iranian-backed bloc known as the Coordination Framework outlined its [conditions](#) for early elections, which include "respecting the constitutional institutions and not disrupting their work." In addition, leaders from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) [agreed](#) to "work for a unified position of Kurdish political parties in light of the challenges facing Iraq and the Kurdistan Region."

Yazidi spiritual leader Mir Hazem commemorated the eighth anniversary of the Yazidi genocide on August 3. "Kurdistan and the Yazidis are one and will never be separated," [said Hazem](#). Simultaneously, the Committee for the Investigation of Yazidi Abductees in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) released a report featuring updated statistics regarding the Yazidi genocide's victims. According to the report, the fate of 2717 kidnapped Yazidis, 1444 males and 1273 females, remains unknown. 146 were confirmed

deceased. Additionally, 3,554 abducted Yazidis, including 1207 women, 339 men, and 1051 children, have been rescued.

US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Barbara Leaf accused a Chinese company of selling Iran the drones wielded by Iranian-backed militias [during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing](#) on August 4. "They're [drones] not provided by the state, but the state does not attempt to curtail that flow," said Leaf. Iranian proxies in Iraq have launched dozens of drone attacks since 2019, including several that targeted [US facilities in Erbil](#).

### Syria

On Saturday, a Turkish drone strike in Qamishli's industrial quarter killed four people, including two children, a civilian, and a [member](#) of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Moreover, Turkish proxies conducted several indirect fire attacks in Ain Essa that killed an SDF member named Hewa Baran last Tuesday and wounded a civilian on [Thursday](#). Additional indirect fire attacks targeted Tal Rifaat, Tal Tamer, and the towns of Amuda and Zarkan. On August 5, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Sochi and discussed several issues, most notably Syria. Erdogan claimed the meeting was "[fruitful](#)" and will "[open a very different page in Russian-Turkish relations](#)." Erdogan and Putin previously participated in a meeting with Iranian leaders in Tehran three weeks ago,

where Iran and Russia voiced opposition to a new Turkish incursion into Syria. That said, it is unclear if increased [economic cooperation](#) between Russia and Turkey will lead Moscow to support a new Turkish operation targeting Syrian Kurds.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), disagreements over smuggling revenues sparked infightings between two scouts of the Turkish-backed Sultan Murad faction in the occupied Afrin. The SOHR reported that the group is involved in human trafficking and smuggling. Dozens of battles have occurred between Turkish proxies since the occupation of Afrin in 2018.

### Turkey

The Pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) held massive rallies in Diyarbakir (Amed) and Istanbul, calling for peace under the slogan "We are the solution. No to Wars and Exploitation." Thousands of supporters participated as the HDP co-leader Parvin Buldan [delivered remarks](#), accusing the government of "attacks" on her party. "The HDP, which has a strong voice and a power to solve every problem of Turkey, is a party that struggles in this country," said Buldan. Separately, the co-chair of the HDP, Mithat Sancar, met with the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey (KDP-T), discussing the "Democratic Alliance" for 2023 elections, led by the HDP with other Kurdish and left parties. "We want to make it an alliance that will include other Kurdish parties," said Sancar.

## Kurdish diva brokenhearted but resolute in face of language discrimination in Turkey

The suppression of Kurdish identity in Turkey has claimed yet another victim. Pervin Chakar, a globally acclaimed Kurdish soprano, says she is brokenhearted after a university in her native city of Mardin decided to cancel a concert because she had included a Kurdish-language piece in her repertoire. Never mind that Artuklu was the first-ever Turkish university to launch education in the Kurdish language in 2011, its current administrators apparently reckoned that letting Chakar perform in her mother tongue would be a step too far.

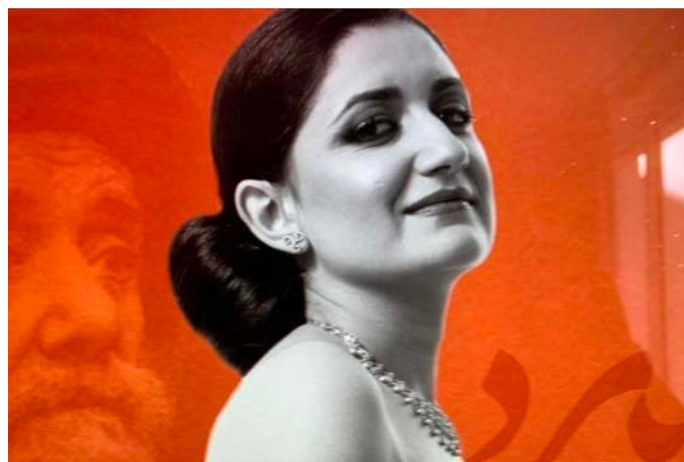
The 37-year-old, who has performed in Milan's Teatro Alla Scala and Vienna's Theater an Der Wien, among multiple other premier venues, took to Twitter to pour out her emotions. In a [July 30 post](#), she said, "I am experiencing the sorrow of not being able to perform in my city. One cannot question an artist about which languages are part of their repertoire. This is a crime against humanity."

In an interview with Al-Monitor, the first she gave since going public with her story, Chakar said she had not been "surprised" but rather "saddened" by the university's decision. The salon in which she was scheduled to perform on May 28 was initially available. But once the university examined her repertoire, it changed its tune, claiming the salon was no longer free.

Aynur Dogan, another world-famous Kurdish singer, faced a similar situation when a

municipality run by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the town of Derince in western Turkey canceled her concert that was meant to take place on May 20.

Kurdish folk performer Mem Ararat was unable to take the stage in the city of Bursa on May 29 after the governor's office canceled his concert on the grounds that it would threaten "public safety." Ararat's manager, Zik Music, noted in a statement, "We are deeply saddened and alarmed by the cancellations of concerts in recent days. We shall continue to sing our



- Courtesy of Pervin Chakar

songs in all languages, to grow our love through art and music and embrace one another with love."

Chakar said she did not know whether the concert was blocked as a result of "state policy." Regardless, Chakar said she finds it "wrong" that "the Kurds' basic rights and their freedom to express themselves in their own language should be granted on the basis of political considerations."

For decades, quashing, oftentimes brutally, even the slightest display of Kurdishness was state policy. "Kurdish music and cultural production, like every aspect of [Kurdish culture](#) and life, have been criminalized and stigmatized so that institutional racism and discrimination [against them] are sustained," said Mehmet Kurt, a Kurdish academic and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow at the London School of Economics.

Musa Anter, a prominent Kurdish intellectual and

January 1991 when the government lifted bans on speaking and performing in the [Kurdish language](#).

The current government went further than any when it came to power in 2002. It embarked on a series of reforms aimed at democratizing Turkey and carrying it to full membership in the European Union. These included the establishment of a state-run Kurdish-language television channel, allowing education in the Kurdish language and holding direct peace talks with the [PKK](#) for the first time. However, starting in 2015, the AKP made a massive U-turn, ditching the talks. A two-year-long cease-fire with the rebels collapsed.

Turkey's President Recep Erdogan has since, with his far-right nationalist allies, been overseeing the most ferocious campaign against the PKK and the Kurdish political movement in recent years, one that extends beyond Turkey to Western Europe, Syria and Iraq. Symbols of Kurdish identity are once again being criminalized. Names of streets in the Kurdish-heavy southeast region are being Turkified; statues of Kurdish figures are being torn down.

[Kurdish wedding singers](#) are being hauled in for questioning once again for performing "terrorist songs."

In a 2021 report on rights violations against Kurdish musicians, the Ismail Besikci Foundation, founded by the eponymous sociologist who is among Turkey's foremost experts on the Kurds, interviewed multiple Kurdish artists. They described the

founder of Turkey's first Kurdish Cultural Society, was regarded as a symbol of the struggle to overturn bans on Kurdish language and culture. His first spell in jail was for "whistling in Kurdish" when he was a teenager. Anter was murdered in 1992, the victim of a series of "mystery killings" of Kurdish dissidents that were believed to be perpetrated by Turkish security forces and have yet to be illuminated.

The pressure began to ease in

challenges they face on condition that their identities not be revealed.

One said, "You're applying for the festival. They want a repertoire from you. You send it. They just absolutely don't accept the Kurdish repertoire. They say 'Sing in Turkish too.' Especially if it is a festival in the Aegean and Black Sea regions, they definitely do not accept the Kurdish song. Kurdish is not seen as Turkey's language. That limits the number of venues."

Another explained, "The word 'Kurdish' itself is perceived as a crime against the country and the state. Even in secular places where alcohol is served, this is the case. They force you to sing in Turkish. It

is a cause of crisis if you do not sing or do not know. ... We were singing in Kurdish in such a place, and some of the audience stood up and asked for the song 'I Would Die for You, My Turkey.'"

Abdurrahman Kurt, a former AKP lawmaker who is on the party's executive board, insists that the scotching of Kurdish concerts is not government policy and that he was personally opposed to the moves. Chakar acknowledged that Kurt tried to reverse Artuklu University's decision but failed. "He opposed the irrational actions of the university and its rector," she said. "But the problem was not resolved."

Kurt told Al-Monitor "I am at the

center of this issue and it has nothing to do with state policy."

Rather, he said, it had to do with the fact that Ibrahim Ozcosar, the rector of the university and an ethnic Kurd, was "scared of losing his seat" because "certain people accused him of discriminating in favor of Kurds" and that the rector had "acted timorously" as a result.

Kurt did not specify who the people targeting Ozcosar were. But his comments reflect the degree to which Erdogan's executive presidential system, introduced in 2017 and which concentrates all power in his hand, has paradoxically given officials operating at the local level the power to use their own initiative and cut out lawmakers as advocates for

the people from the chain of command. In this nebulous environment, and even with laws decriminalizing Kurdish language still in place, pressure on its use has resumed. The wave of nationalist hysteria gripping the country in the midst of rising anti-refugee sentiments is making things worse. In April, a man who sang in Kurdish was stopped on the street in the eastern city of Van, handcuffed and beaten by police.

All of this has left Chakar feeling like an exile in her own land. "It's my country, it's my land and you are brazenly forbidding it," she said of the government. "You only like that language (Kurdish) when it's used to shower you with praise."

Kurdistan au féminin

10-08-2022

## TURQUIE. Une écrivaine kurde libérée après 30 ans passés en prison

L'écrivaine kurde, Mizgin Ronak qui a passé 30 ans en prison, a dédié sa liberté à celles et ceux qui luttent. Elle avait 19 quand elle fut emprisonnée.

Mizgin Ronak (Aydın), détenue à la prison fermée pour femmes de Gebze, a été libérée après 30 ans de captivité. Mizgin, qui a été jugée par la Cour de sûreté de l'État (DGM) à Diyarbakir (Amed) en 1992 alors qu'elle n'avait que 19 ans, a été condamnée à la réclusion à perpétuité pour avoir prétendument été « *membre d'une organisation terroriste [PKK]* ».

**Atteinte d'un cancer du sein**  
Mizgin, qui a séjourné à Batman, Sivas, Mardin, Elbistan,



Bingöl et enfin à Gebze, a participé à de nombreuses grèves de la faim pendant cette période. Mizgin, qui souffre d'hypertension artérielle, d'une maladie rénale et a subi une intervention chirurgicale pour un goitre, est actuellement soignée pour un cancer du sein.

**Accueillie par des applaudissements et des fleurs**

Mizgin a été accueillie à la porte de la prison par sa famille ainsi que par des membres de l'Association Marmara pour la solidarité avec les familles des prisonniers (MATUHAY-DER), l'Initiative des mères pour la

paix et les proches des prisonniers à Istanbul.

**Dédié sa liberté à ceux qui ont perdu la vie dans la lutte**

Mizgin, qui a prononcé un bref discours devant la prison, a dédié sa liberté à ceux qui ont perdu la vie dans la lutte pour la liberté et la démocratie. Mizgin a déclaré qu'il avait l'espoir de liberté pour tous ceux qui se battaient pour la liberté et a déclaré: « *Tant qu'un seul de nos amis est en prison, la liberté n'est pas la liberté. Nous voulons que tous nos amis soient libérés.* »

Mizgin, qui a quitté la prison avec sa famille, se rendra demain dans sa ville natale d'Amed. (Jinnews)

By: Dr. Saman Shali  
August 10, 2022

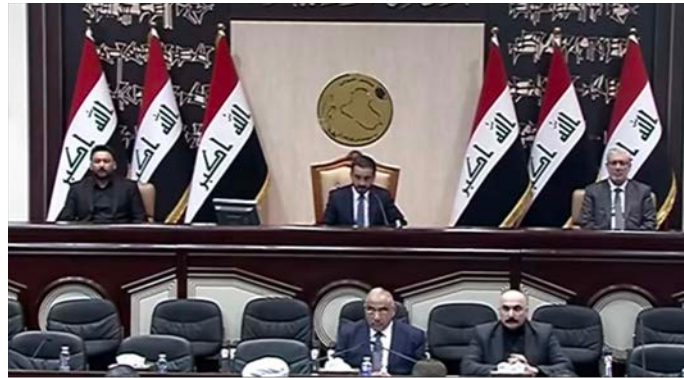
## The Iraqi Constitution: A Scapegoat for Corruption

The fall of the al Ba'ath regime and its dictator Saddam Hussein provided the opportunity for Iraq to rebuild itself as a new state. A hopeful notion for most of its people, including the Kurds.

Iraq faced many challenges, mainly security, but politically the Shia, the Kurds, and some Sunni reached a consensus and drafted a constitution that was later [approved in 2005 by 79%](#) of constituents. The constitution is not perfect by any means; it has several issues and vague articles. However, it was the best product that could be reached at the time to converge the decades of disagreements among the regions diverse ethnic and religious groups and overcome the complications of al Ba'ath regime's rulings.

Since the most recent Iraqi elections, held on October 10, 2021, the country has been faced with turmoil as two major coalitions are duel to form a government. The first coalition led by the Shia Cleric Muqtada al Sadr, allied with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and a Sunni party led by Speaker Mohammed al Halbousi. However, al Sadr withdrew from the parliament after failing to form a majority government: a condition he did not concede to his rivals in the Coordination Framework, an Iranian-backed coalition consisting of the Shia parties.

Unable to form his majority government, and despite enjoying 73 seats in the parliament alongside nearly 80 seats by his Kurdish and Sunni allies, al Sadr withdrew his lawmakers from the process. Indeed, the massive resignation



by Sadrist lawmakers resulted in a gain for the Coordination Framework, which did not hesitate to nominate a prime minister and launch negotiations with Kurds and Sunni to form a government. As the Coordination Framework nominated Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani, al Sadr declared a "revolution," and his supporters took the street across the country, occupying the parliament building, preventing the formation of the new government led by the Coordination Framework.

In a recent appearance, Al Sadrst called for reforms, the demolition of the current parliament, and snap elections. However, alongside al Sadr's calls are odd voices, especially among the "Imtidad" bloc, calling for the "system change" and demolition of the constitution.

Since 2003, corruption has been a real issue Iraqis have struggled with, and many of the younger generation lawmakers blame the way the constitution is allocating power. For example, several lawmakers of the independent bloc are calling for the return to a presidential system, which other criticize as a recipe for creating a new dictatorship.

### Baghdad-Erbil disputes – I'll see you in court

The disputed territories remain a major point of contention between Erbil and Baghdad. Baghdad lacks the ability to implement article 140 of Iraq's constitution, which calls for the normalization of the areas fusing Arabization under the Ba'ath regime. Moreover, the federal government in Baghdad has not yet allocated a budget for the Peshmerga forces, which is a clear violation of the constitution. Likewise, the political parties failed to adopt an oil and gas law to end the deadlock regarding its production in the Kurdistan Region. Instead, the government in Baghdad took advantage of the international courts to target energy companies working in the Kurdistan Region.

Since 2021, political parties in Iraq began referring more and more to the Supreme Court, to settle disputes. The court has issued several rulings, including the "illegality" of the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) oil production and sale. However, the Supreme Court itself has not yet established by legislation as article 92 of the constitution calls for it. The existing court is from the [transitional](#)

[period](#) from June 2004 to October 15, 2005. In other words, the current Supreme Court is unconstitutional.

Another way the Iraqi government and the political parties overcome their disputes with the KRG is the creation of a "federation council" to represent regions and provinces in Baghdad. Article 65 of the constitution class two-thirds of the parliament voted to pass the law. However, since 2005 no government or party has pushed for it.

The federal government also neglected to compensate the victims of the massacres and genocides by the former regime against the Kurds, alongside support for victims of more recent massacres at the hands of ISIS (Da'esh) including Yazidi, Christians, and other minority groups. The inability to implement already agreed to relief efforts, such as those outlined in the passing of the [Yazidi Female Survivors Law](#), have ignored a good opportunity for Baghdad to revitalize confidence in their government. The number of diverse civil society organizations working together in calling for humanitarian support is indeed unheard of in the region and a wise government would seize this opportunity to build unity.

The Iraqis should have supported the thousands of Kurdish families who have long suffered the atrocities by the former regime, including mass displacement and destruction of their villages and towns. In contrast, the Iraqi government continued its Arabization policies in the disputed territories" and undermined the Kurdish rights.



Iraq is facing a profound problem imposed by militias of the political parties. The creation of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) was mainly to fight ISIS terrorism when Iraq's military deteriorated. However, Iraq currently has dozens of armed groups backed by regional powers, used to launch attacks and become a tool for destabilization and civil war. The Iraqi constitution forbids militias as [article 9 reads](#), "The formation of military militias outside the framework of the armed forces is prohibited." In contrast, the Iraqi government did not legislate a law, making the PMUs an official entity outside the

Iraqi armed forces.

Additionally, the Iraqi government has stalled in adopting a law for article 80, which calls for approval for top military officials and diplomatic positions in the parliament. Likewise, article 84 clearly defines the "duties and authorities of the security institutions and the National Intelligence Service."

The core issue in Iraq is the inability or unwillingness to implement the constitution, not the constitution itself. Since 2005, consecutive cabinets have failed to implement the articles of the constitution. On the contrary,

they delayed the issues and accepted the status quo, which deepened the disagreements to a dangerous level that could spark a civil war.

So, what's the take-away? Iraq has the scaffolding it needs to build a stable, unique society, inclusive to all its parts. The constitution should not be tossed aside. The solution in Iraq is to implement the constitution and all the good legislation that is passed under its governing spirit. If the next government takes practical steps to implement the articles, especially those that address Baghdad-Erbil disputes, containing

militias, reconciliation to non-Arab groups and peaceful transitions of power, Iraq will overcome its issues. Indeed, the first Iraqi Government to do so will have the eyes of the world upon it – for the better.

Finally, Iraq is desperate for peace with all countries in the region without exception to ask for their help to build Iraq again. Peace in Iraq will bring stability and security to the region.

*Disclaimer: The views expressed here represent those of the author and not necessarily those of the WKI.*

AL-MONITOR 

Ali Dadpay  
11-08-2022

## Unprecedented inflation hammers Iran

Iran's official inflation rate is reaching new highs. The [Statistical Center of Iran \(SCI\)](#) – the country's main statistics agency – reported a monthly inflation rate of 12.2% and a point-to-point rate of 52.5% for the Iranian month ending June 21. Both are record numbers.

The monthly inflation rate reports the changes in the consumer price index – based on a set basket of commodities – within the 30 days from May 22 to June 21. An average Iranian family lost 10% of its shopping power within this 30-day period. Iranian consumers are paying 50% more for the same products compared to spring 2021. The loss of real income and purchasing power for many Iranian families is significant and irreversible.

Alarmingly, inflation does not demonstrate any sign of slowing down. The Iranian calendar's monthly inflation rate has quadrupled in the last month of spring compared to the previous month. The yearly average stands at 39.4%, and it is

expected to reach 50% before the end of the Iranian year, or by April 1, 2023. Iranian families are preparing for difficult months to come. Social networks are filled with updates on the prices of rice, dairy, bread and other essential items.

Why is Iran's economy experiencing such high inflation?

Some analysts blame US sanctions. Others cite the Iranian government's decision to drop an official currency exchange rate of 42,000 Iranian rials (IRR) to one US dollar (USD) to set the price of necessities and food items. These observers believe President Ebrahim Raisi's administration's decision to adopt a market approach has finally released an inflationary wave. They hope prices stabilize within the Iranian calendar year. However, the truth is somewhat complicated, and the currency exchange rate does not explain such a high inflation rate.

In the free market, the ex-

change rate [stands at 281,000 IRR/USD](#) and is almost seven times higher than the official exchange rate. Another website, [Bonbast](#), reports it at 315,000 IRR/USD, almost eight times more than the official exchange rate. The increasing spread in exchange rates signals a significant increase in the volatility and risk involved in currency exchange in Iran.

However, it is not the new government policy in the currency market that has increased the prices. As always, inflation remains a monetary issue. The Iranian government has been increasing the money supply to compensate for the loss of oil revenues and economic activities. The Raisi administration claims it has solved a budget deficit of 4,800 trillion IRR (the equivalent of 17.5 billion USD) without borrowing from the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) or increasing the money supply. However, the CBI has not yet published its monetary data for the winter of 2022.

But there are other culprits as

well. No Iranian administration has ever dealt with the gaps and inefficiencies of Iran's distribution networks and supply chains. The Iranian government's habitual intrusions in the market have created government-controlled networks, rivaling those of the private sector or eliminating them. The outcome has been higher cost of distribution of commodities and ripe opportunities for corruption and black markets across the country. Recent SCI reports put the annual inflation rate in the rural areas at 58.2%, compared to 51.4% for urban areas. As the government revises its approach to pricing the consumption basket, one wonders if it has any plan to overhaul Iran's inefficient distribution network. If such programs exist, they are yet to be announced publicly.

Also, as Iran's oil revenues lag behind increasing public expenditures, policymakers rely increasingly on tax revenues, reducing the profit margins for the private sector. Many Iranian businesses cannot pay the increased taxes while they

are required to increase nominal wages following the government's edicts.

To all of these, one must add a growing sense of gloom. Iranians hoped for a speedy return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

as the hard-liners captured all branches of the government. Unfortunately, such hopes do not exist anymore. If anything, all the signals they receive point at potential increases in the cost of raw material, machinery and labor. And as the

cost of production increases, many expect a decline in the aggregate supply of products and services, reducing the quantities of available products while pushing prices even higher.

Experience has taught gener-

ations of Iranian consumers how to survive increasing prices. However, as the demand for labor declines and Iranian households experience falling real income, one wonders if Iranian consumers can hold on much longer.

Le Monde

11-08-2022

Marie Jégo

## La Turquie, destination privilégiée des Russes pour échapper aux sanctions

Les investisseurs comme les simples particuliers bénéficient de nouveaux accords pour réaliser leurs transactions en roubles.

**A**gent immobilier à Harbiye, un quartier de la rive européenne d'Istanbul, Mustafa Sert se frotte les mains. « *Ces derniers temps, je vois pas mal de clients russes qui veulent acheter des biens. Comme ils ne peuvent ni voyager ni investir en Europe à cause des sanctions, ils cherchent des opportunités en Turquie. Je leur dis qu'ils sont les bienvenus* », explique-t-il.

Depuis le début de l'invasion russe en Ukraine, la Turquie attire de plus en plus de Russes en quête d'investissements. Ceux-ci sont actuellement les premiers acquéreurs étrangers de biens immobiliers dans le pays. Selon l'agence des statistiques, entre février et juin 2022, près de 5 000 Russes ont acquis des propriétés dans tout le pays, dont 1 275 pour le seul mois de juin.

Cette ruée s'explique par le fait que tout étranger qui investit ou achète une propriété d'un montant supérieur à 400 000 dollars (388 000 euros) se voit en retour attribuer la nationalité turque. Une facilité qui devrait permettre aux investisseurs de déplacer leurs activités financières de la Russie, lourde-

ment sanctionnée, vers la Turquie, parfaitement connectée au système financier mondial et aux chaînes de valeur occidentales. « *Certains achètent des biens pour obtenir le passeport turc, dans le but de créer ensuite leur entreprise en Turquie et de commercer avec la Russie* », confirme Mustafa Sert, qui ne voit « *que du bon* » dans cette arrivée de capitaux.

Contrairement à ses alliés occidentaux, Ankara n'applique pas les sanctions imposées à Moscou, dont il dépend notamment pour ses fournitures d'énergie. Les échanges commerciaux se poursuivent et le gaz circule dans les deux gazoducs, TurkStream et Blue Stream, connectés à la Russie. La compagnie Turkish Airlines assure de nombreux vols depuis la Fédération de Russie et plusieurs oligarques ont leurs yachts au mouillage dans des ports de la Méditerranée.

### Succès diplomatique

Parmi eux, [Roman Abramovitch, réputé proche de Vladimir Poutine](#), semble avoir pris ses quartiers à Istanbul après avoir participé, côté russe, aux négociations sur le blé qui s'y sont tenues le 22 juillet. Sa

présence confirme l'intérêt croissant manifesté par les hommes d'affaires proches du Kremlin envers la Turquie, son industrie, ses banques, sa logistique. D'ores et déjà, « *une augmentation des expéditions de transit vers la Russie est constatée non seulement par la mer mais aussi par les voies terrestre, aérienne et ferroviaire* », note le quotidien *Dünya* dans son édition en ligne du 4 août.

Alors que les géants mondiaux du transport par conteneurs ont interrompu leurs expéditions vers ce pays, les sociétés turques ont pris le relais. Les conteneurs venus d'Asie ou d'Europe arrivent à Istanbul, à Mersin ou à Izmir et sont ensuite réacheminés vers le port russe de Novorossiïsk, en mer Noire, par le biais de compagnies de transport turques (Medkon, Akkon, Fesco).

Ankara, qui se positionne en médiateur entre Moscou et Kiev, a marqué un point en parvenant à négocier, avec le soutien des Nations unies, l'accord du 22 juillet, qui a permis, après cinq mois de guerre et un blocage des ports sur la mer Noire, la reprise des exportations de céréales ukrainiennes.

Ce succès diplomatique a valu au président Recep Tayyip Erdogan les félicitations de son homologue russe, Vladimir Poutine, lorsque ce dernier l'a reçu, le 5 août, dans sa résidence d'été à Sochi sur les bords de la mer Noire. Le tout assorti de la promesse faite aux Turcs de pouvoir payer une partie de leurs achats de gaz en roubles. Les deux dirigeants se sont également dits prêts à accroître leurs échanges commerciaux, à permettre à des entreprises russes de s'implanter dans des zones de libre-échange turques, à autoriser des banques turques à travailler avec le système russe de paiement connu sous le nom de Mir.

Dorénavant, les touristes russes qui séjournent en Turquie pourront payer leurs achats et leurs notes d'hôtel en roubles avec la carte Mir, a confirmé M. Erdogan à son retour de Sochi. Ce rapprochement économique survient au moment où la Russie apparaît durement touchée par les sanctions tandis que la Turquie [est confrontée à une crise monétaire d'ampleur](#). L'inflation (79,6 % en moyenne annuelle en juillet) a atteint son plus

haut niveau depuis 1998, la livre turque a perdu plus de 30 % de sa valeur par rapport au dollar depuis janvier et les réserves en devises de la banque centrale sont au plus bas.

#### Risque de « sanctions secondaires »

Volant au secours du gouvernement d'Ankara, Moscou l'a alimenté en devises, transférant récemment des milliards

de dollars à une filiale turque de Rosatom, le géant russe du nucléaire chargé de construire la première centrale nucléaire du pays dans la province de Mersin, sur la côte sud. Selon l'accord signé, une partie de ces fonds sera investie dans des obligations en dollars émises par le ministère turc du trésor et des finances. Pour l'heure, les versements de Rosatom ont permis d'augmenter les réserves de change, pas-

sées de 98,9 milliards de dollars le 26 juillet à 108 milliards de dollars le 4 août, « par le biais de dépôts de fonds russes à la banque centrale », souligne, dans une chronique publiée le 8 août sur le site d'information *T-24*, Uğur Gürses, un ancien fonctionnaire de l'institution.

A vouloir pousser trop loin le flirt avec le partenaire russe, Ankara s'expose toutefois à

des « sanctions secondaires ». C'est ce qu'a expliqué le secrétaire adjoint américain au Trésor, Wally Adeyemo, aux banquiers turcs lors de sa visite à Ankara, en juin. Neuf mois plus tôt, le Groupe d'action financière avait placé la Turquie sur sa liste grise, citant ses manquements dans la lutte contre le blanchiment d'argent.

Marie Jégo (Istanbul, correspondante)

The New York Times

Steven Erlanger  
Aug. 11, 2022

## Erdogan and Putin: Complicated Relations With Mutual Benefits

Turkey needs Russian cash, gas and business as Erdogan looks to a dicey election and a new incursion in Syria, while Moscow needs friends to try to evade Western sanctions.

BRUSSELS — Turkey's mercurial president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is in political difficulty before elections next year, with his economy imploding, a central bank nearly out of foreign exchange and volcanic inflation running at about 80 percent annually.

President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has his own troubles, with the war in Ukraine bogging down and tough economic sanctions hitting Russia's industry and broader economy.

The mutual challenges have pushed the two men closer together than ever. They have met twice in the last three weeks, [most recently last weekend in Sochi](#), Russia, hoping to lessen their vulnerabilities by expanding their partnership and agreeing, Mr. Erdogan said, on economic cooperation that he hoped would total \$100 billion.

It is a relationship that raises the hackles of Mr. Erdogan's NATO allies, as he provides Mr.



President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey in Sochi, Russia, last week. Credit... Murat Kula/Turkish Presidential Press Service via Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Putin a sizable hole in the dam of sanctions the West has tried hard to build in its effort to stymie Mr. Putin's war in Ukraine. Some wonder [where Mr. Erdogan's real loyalties lie](#), beyond his own self-interest.

There is little doubt that, for now, the bond is proving to be mutually beneficial, as details of their negotiations emerge in the aftermath. For Mr. Putin,

the benefits include energy and arms sales, investment and a close connection to a member of NATO, which is trying to isolate him and help Ukraine defeat his invading army.

Turkey, which is not a member of the European Union, has refused to apply Western sanctions against Russia. It is exploring ways to work with otherwise sanctioned Russian

banks and accept payments through Russian credit cards. Russian gas flows unimpeded through the TurkStream pipeline. There are also reports that Russia is seeking Turkish help in providing "subsystems" for its weapons, which can no longer source Western components directly.

For Mr. Erdogan, the benefits involve cash infusions into the central bank, cheap energy, global importance, a large export market, renewed Russian tourism and, crucially, apparent Russian acquiescence to his politically popular efforts to crush Kurdish separatism in Syria, where Russia supports the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad.

But the two leaders remain first-order frenemies, each a prickly strongman who has gathered up extraordinary powers to himself and keeps his own counsel. When they met in Tehran last month, Mr. Erdogan left Mr. Putin standing alone for nearly a minute, as the Russian leader, notorious



Mr. Erdogan and his foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, speaking with Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands and President Biden at the NATO summit meeting in Madrid in June. Credit... Pool photo by Susan Walsh

himself for the waiting-game trick, shifted uncomfortably in front of whirring cameras.

The move was interpreted as a subtle reminder of the altering power balance between the them — Mr. Putin had kept Mr. Erdogan waiting before — as they work together, even while trying to maintain the upper hand. Increasingly, relations between the two countries come down to relations between the two men. The discussions between the two autocrats are also closely held, with the Turkish Foreign Ministry, let alone the public, largely kept in the dark.

“Turkish foreign policy has en-



Destruction from the war on the outskirts of Sloviansk in eastern Ukraine. Credit... Mauricio Lima for The New York Times

tered a very dangerous period,” said Ilhan Uzgel, a political scientist who taught international relations at Ankara University before being fired by

presidential decree. “The two leaders come together and make a negotiation. But only the two leaders sitting in the palace alongside a few other people, a very small group, know the content of these negotiations.”

Mr. Erdogan has bought sophisticated Russian antiaircraft missiles that undermine NATO security and single-handedly moved to block NATO membership for Sweden and Finland, [lifting his objections for now](#), but with the expectation that there will be more drama to come before the Turkish Parliament votes on whether to ratify their accession sometime this autumn.

The obstructionism could only delight Mr. Putin, who has long warned against the Nordic states joining the alliance.

Washington is watching carefully, [stating officially](#) that “we have urged Turkey to not become a safe haven for illicit Russian assets or transactions,” and urging Turkey to reduce its energy dependence on Russia. The statement also noted that Turkey supports Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and that Mr. Erdogan has called the Russian invasion “unacceptable.”

Indeed, Turkey has opposed the Russian invasion of Ukraine, blocked Russian warships from entering the Black Sea and sold weapons to Kyiv, including sophisticated drones

is key to his own security.”

Having a NATO ally with good lines of communication to Mr. Putin is a good thing, Mr. Daalder added, “so long as he’s saying the right things, trying to resolve issues coherent with the goals of the alliance and not undermining it.”

Mr. Erdogan’s main goal, Turkish analysts agree, is his own re-election, and he is looking for help with both the economy and his effort to fight what he considers to be Kurdish terrorism in Syria and at home.

“The objective of the Erdogan



Syrians burned tires in 2020 in protest ahead of joint Turkish and Russian military patrols in northern Syria agreed to as part of a security corridor. Credit... Omar Haj Kadour/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

that have helped kill Russian soldiers.

For the West, Mr. Erdogan’s ability to deal with Mr. Putin has not been all bad. Turkey has kept close diplomatic ties to Moscow and is acting as the main mediator between Russia and Ukraine for grain deliveries and possible peace talks. Mr. Erdogan or his top aides speak to Mr. Putin and President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine several times a week

“Erdogan is keeping all his options open, which is what countries tend to do when they think only of their own self-interest, which is not what allies do,” said Ivo Daalder, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO. “He’s figured out a way to play his game, but he’s doing it at the expense of an alliance which

government isn’t to relieve Putin, it’s to create the right conditions for itself on the way to the elections,” Professor Uzgel said.

“Erdogan has three worries,” he said. “One, to tell the West that he can do business with Putin. Second, he’s expecting the cash coming in from Russia to temporarily relieve the currency rates. Third, he wants to be on the same page with Russia for a possible incursion he wants to carry out inside Syria.”

Mr. Erdogan is doing badly in opinion polls with elections due by June next year. His major vulnerabilities stem from the ruinous economy and from popular exhaustion and resentment with the millions of refugees it hosts.

“On both issues Putin holds enormous leverage over Erdogan,” said Asli Aydintasbas of the European Council on Foreign Relations. Russia is a source of hard currency, cheap energy and jobs, she said, while it would take only a few Russian bombing runs over northern Syria to flood another two million refugees across the border into Turkey.

Regional security threats, which include a tentative peace settlement in the fight over Nagorno-Karabakh — Turkey supports Azerbaijan, while Russia intervened to save Armenia — mean that any Turkish government would want a balanced working relationship

with Russia, said Sinan Ulgen, director of EDAM, a Turkish research institution.

“Turkey needs a diplomatic partnership with Russia in our neighborhood, given crisis areas like Syria or Nagorno-Karabakh, so it doesn’t have the luxury of isolating Russia,” Mr. Ulgen said.

Mr. Erdogan’s ability to bring Russian and Ukrainian foreign ministers together and to mediate the deal to get Ukrainian (and Russian) grain out of the blockaded Black Sea “validates Turkey’s balanced approach to Russia,” Mr. Ulgen said. “Turkey has been pro-Ukraine without being anti-Russia.”

Turkish officials, he said, “are also aware of the thin line between not implementing sanctions and giving the perception or acting as the country that helps Russia evade sanctions.”

The Putin-Erdogan relationship is a strange one, with both countries “openly cooperating but also fighting proxy wars” in Syria and Libya, while Turkey needs Russian acquiescence to go after Syrian Kurds and preserve the tenuous ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan, said Ms. Aydintasbas.

“No one in Ankara is happy that Russia is controlling parts of Turkey’s northern flank on the Black Sea and parts of its

southern flank with Syria, but they understand they have to negotiate a relationship with Russia and establish a modus vivendi,” she said. “The only alternative is fighting.”

Returning Friday from his meeting with Mr. Putin in Sochi, Mr. Erdogan told reporters: “Mr. Putin holds a fair attitude toward Turkey.”

He added: “The mutual understanding we have built with Mr. Putin on trust and respect assures our relations.”

Reporting was contributed by Carlotta Gall in Kyiv, Ukraine, and Nimet Kirac in Istanbul.



Aug 11, 2022

## Sadrism Movement calls for country-wide protests

The Sadrism Movement called for country-wide protests to be held on Friday to demand reform and the dissolution of the Iraqi parliament after leader Muqtada al-Sadr called for its dissolution within ten days.

"Lovers of reform should prepare (to support reform) by gathering in their provinces at 5 pm tomorrow, Friday," read a tweet on Thursday from Salih Mohammed al-Iraqi, a figure who is close to Sadr, adding that the demonstrators "will be

rewarded with the best reward." Sadr on Wednesday called on Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council to dissolve the parliament "by the end of next week" and tasked the Iraqi president with setting early elections. His statement came amid a crippling political deadlock shrouding Iraq's future with uncertainty.

The Sadrism Movement asked its supporters to "fill out the legal forms to be submitted to the judiciary" to demand the dissolution of the parliament and reiterated its calls for the

sit-ins inside Baghdad's fortified Green Zone to continue.

Thousands of the top cleric's supporters took to the streets in recent days and staged a sit-in at the Iraqi parliament building in opposition to rivals of the pro-Iran Coordination Framework's nominee for prime minister, who they accused of being "corrupt" and having close ties to former PM Nouri al-Maliki. The Sadrism Movement later ordered them to leave the legislative building but continue their activities in its vicinity.

On Sunday, Sadr stated that there were "no alternatives" to the dissolution of parliament as it has become a popular, national, and political demand and has received "positive responses" from Iraq's various components.

Iraq held early elections in October 2021, but has failed to form a government and has been grasped with a suffocating political deadlock, with the country currently experiencing a record ten months without a permanent cabinet.



11-08-2022

## Turkish drone strike kills three in Qamishli: SDF

Two members of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and a civilian were killed in a suspected Turkish drone strike that targeted their vehicle in northeast Syria (Rojava) on Wednesday.

The SDF in a statement said a "Turkish drone" hit the car in Qamishli at around 5:00 pm on Wednesday, killing two members of the force and one civilian. It vowed to avenge their deaths.

Turkish attacks have seen an increase in Rojava as Ankara insists on launching a military operation in northern Syria to create a 30 kilometer "safe zone" along its southern border. The offense is likely



A woman mourns during the funeral of an SDF fighter in northeast Syria's Qamishli on August 10, 2022. Photo: Delil Souleiman

aimed at pushing back Kurdish fighters from the area.

Drones targeted Qamishli on two separate occasions on

Tuesday. One of the offenses resulted in the killing of four SDF fighters.

The spike in offenses also fol-

lows a Friday meeting between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Erdogan told reporters that Putin called for cooperation between Turkey and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime "in the fight against terrorism," referring to the Kurdish armed forces.

Turkey has launched two offensives against Kurdish fighters in Syria since 2018. It alleges that the fighters are allied with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), an armed group fighting for the increased rights of Kurds in Turkey and is viewed as a terrorist organization by Ankara.



Aug 12 2022

## Turkey is the biggest swing player in the Russia-Ukraine war

Turkey has used its unique position during the war in Ukraine -- both as a friend of Russia and a leading member of NATO -- to forge a landmark deal for the export of Ukrainian grain to world markets.

While the United States and the European Union have pursued a strategy towards Russia focused on sanctions and other punitive measures -- Russia has responded with its own energy cutoffs and other pressure tactics -- constructive

engagement along the lines of Turkey's approach could be more effective in dealing with Moscow and ending the war, Eugene Chausovsky, a senior analyst at the Newlines Institute, said in an article for Foreign Policy on Thursday.

"This is something the United States and EU can learn from and adapt to their own connectivity strategies, if only to mitigate against the most disruptive elements of the war and build the grounds for

peace," said Chausovsky, who previously worked as a Eurasia analyst at Stratfor for more than a decade.

A full version of the analysis follows below:

As the Russia-Ukraine conflict heads for the six-month mark, Turkey has emerged as a major swing player in the protracted war. Ankara is involved in the conflict on a number of fronts, from security cooperation with Ukraine to energy

cooperation with Russia to serving as a diplomatic mediator between Kyiv and Moscow. It was Turkey's diplomacy that facilitated the grain shipments from Ukraine's ports on Aug. 1, the first since the start of the war. This increasingly proactive approach to the conflict has presented both substantial opportunities and significant challenges for Ankara while offering important lessons for the West on how to most effectively deal with Russia.

Ankara has long sought to leverage its strategic position at the intercontinental crossroads between Europe and Asia as well as emphasise the concept of connectivity. Functionally, Turkey serves as a vital transit corridor for key resources like energy and food supplies, and this corridor has become all the more important given the economic and trade disruptions of Russia's war in Ukraine. Institutionally, Turkey is a vital member of the NATO security bloc but one that operates independently -- and sometimes counter to -- the position of its American and European partners, including in its relationship with Western adversaries like Russia and Iran.

Under the leadership of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Ankara has leveraged both forms of connectivity to enhance its position as a regional power, one that does not fit neatly into either the pro-Western or pro-Russian camp. Turkey provides substantial amounts of weaponry to Ukraine, including Bayraktar TB2 drones, which have proven instrumental in helping Ukrainian forces attack Russian positions.

At the same time, Ankara did not join the West's sanctions against Russia in response to the Ukraine invasion, and Erdogan discussed expanding Turkish-Russian energy cooperation in a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi, Russia, on Aug 5. Even still, Turkey serves as a conduit for non-Russian energy supplies to Europe via the Southern Gas Corridor, which the European Union is seeking to expand to diversify away from Russian natural gas.

Yet while avoiding joining sanctions, Turkey has broadly supported NATO's position on providing security support for Ukraine -- even as Ankara held up the expansion of the military bloc to Sweden and Finland for months over issues related to

the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the harbouring of other Kurdish elements that the Turkish government deems security threats in these countries. Although the dispute has been tentatively resolved, it demonstrates Turkey's propensity to prioritise its own national interests as well as its willingness to challenge what is otherwise unanimous NATO support of fast-tracking Finnish and Swedish membership into the trans-Atlantic military bloc. Such an approach could potentially compromise the perceived dependability of Turkey within NATO in the future, but for now, Ankara remains an indispensable member of the bloc.

Perhaps Turkey's most consequential role has been as a mediator over the grain and food supply issue between Moscow and Kyiv. Turkey, along with the United Nations, worked to negotiate a deal to unlock food and grain exports that had been cut off since the start of the war in late February, reaching a breakthrough agreement on July 22 that included the launching of a grain coordination centre in Istanbul.

Much of Ukraine's food and grain exports (as well as those from Russia) must transit Turkey's maritime waters in the Black Sea and Bosphorus to reach global markets in the Middle East, Africa, and beyond. Turkey was the only member of NATO that has good working relations with both Russia and Ukraine, and thus, it could help guarantee the safe passage of maritime vessels through this area. Ankara was able to seize on an opportunity where both Ukraine and Russia benefited from cooperation (Western sanctions on Russia were selectively eased to allow food shipments to go forward), whereas polarisation among Moscow, Kyiv, and the West would likely have prevented such cooperation efforts without an independently minded mediator.

Turkey's strategic connectivity approach has thus produced significant benefits, allowing Ankara to not only unlock vital food supplies but also bolster its diplomatic prestige in the process. However, Ankara's connectivity pursuits have not come without challenges. Its efforts to mediate the grain deal between Russia and Ukraine only came after failed attempts to negotiate a broader peace agreement between Moscow and Kyiv. Ankara has certainly improved its leverage vis-à-vis Moscow in the Eurasian theater (as seen by its pivotal role in inserting itself as a major player in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict), but Russia is clearly willing to act against the interests of Turkey when it deems fit, whether in Ukraine, Syria, or elsewhere. Indeed, the Kremlin's spokesperson threatened on Aug. 9 to make Turkey's plans to build a Bayraktar plant in Ukraine subject to so-called demilitarisation efforts.

At the same time, Turkey's success in negotiating the grain deal has yet to be fully proven. Although ships have now begun to make their way out of Ukrainian ports and into Turkish waters, such traffic will be very limited in the initial weeks and subject to challenges out of Turkey's control. For example, Russia could further threaten the agreement by striking at port facilities it designates as military targets, as Russian forces did within 24 hours of the deal's signing, or pull out of the deal altogether, which would compromise Turkey's image as a mediator and as an influential power broker in Eurasia. And Ankara's ability to balance between the West and Moscow also faces its limits, as the United States has inflicted its own sanctions against the Turks for defence and other forms of cooperation with Russia.

But the Turkish strategy has still produced meaningful results. As grain shipments are now underway, Ukrainian offi-

cial have floated expanding the deal to include the export of other goods, such as metals. Such progress offers an important lesson for the West when it comes to dealing with Russia.

Thus far, the United States and EU have pursued a strategy focused on sanctions and other punitive measures when it comes to responding to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, just as Moscow has responded with its own energy cutoffs and other pressure tactics. In essence, both Russia and the West are utilising a weaponised form of connectivity to undermine the other side in the hopes that it will lead to a change in behavior. There is little in terms of constructive or even conditional outreach, with both sides suffering economically as a result.

The tangible impact of such a zero-sum approach has been skyrocketing inflation, energy disruptions, and rising food insecurity throughout the world -- not to mention the death and displacement of so many Ukrainian people. While the West is right to stand up to Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, it is important to recognise that a multifaceted connectivity strategy that combines pressure with constructive engagement along the lines of Turkey's approach can be more effective in yielding results when it comes to dealing with Moscow. This is something the United States and EU can learn from and adapt to their own connectivity strategies, if only to mitigate against the most disruptive elements of the war and build the grounds for peace.

(Please click [here](#) to read the original article and others on Foreign Policy's website.)

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## Kermanshah Chief of Police: 1700 Women Taken to Custody for Violation of Islamic Veiling Rule

In recent days, Iran's law enforcement has intensified the harassment of women in public for failing to observe the Islamic veiling rules, known as Hijab. The chief of police of Kermanshah Province announced that since the beginning of spring, police have taken into custody or summoned 1700 people due to their failure to observe compulsory veiling. Also, 230 vehicles have been impounded for "roaming in the city in a vehicle".

According to HRANA, the news agency of Human Rights Activists, quoting Tabnak, Kermanshah's Police Chief Ali Akbar Javidan revealed the temporary detention of 1700 women on the streets for the failure to observe veiling codes since the beginning of spring.

Claiming that the Iranian people demand that women must cover their hair, Javidan said that 26 morality checkpoints are working



visibly and six are undercover to impose the rules in Kermanshah. According to Kermanshah's

police chief, since the beginning of spring, security forces have stopped individuals numerous times to

warn them about the veiling and morality codes, 1700 individuals were taken into custody and 230 vehicles have been impounded for driving around the city. Javidan also stated that these rules for recreational, tourist and commercial places are also enforced. Dog walking is forbidden in Kermanshah, Javidan warned that if ceased, the dogs will be taken to animal shelters and if repeated, dog walkers will face legal penalties.



**Dler S. Mohammed**  
2022/08/16

## Iraq has no sovereignty and is run by Iran': Bernard Henry Levi

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) - Iraq is a failed country that has no sovereignty, and inside this failed country, there is Kurdistan Region that wants to stand on its feet, develop, and make a change, the French Intellectual Bernard Henry Levi told Kurdistan 24 on Monday.

"Iraq has no sovereignty and

is run by Iran," said Levi. "However, Kurdistan Region is standing on its own feet and is stronger and developing much better than Iraq."

Levi expressed sorrow that the international community doesn't understand this. He pointed out that the international community must see this change between

Kurdistan and Iraq and highlight the critical and positive role of the Kurdistan Region.

"Iraq has weak institutions and political parties; Iran is running Iraq; Iran has full control of Iraq, and Iraq has no sovereignty; Baghdad is under control of the Iranian imperialism," said Levi. "Iraq is unable to develop

itself, and Iran makes decisions on behalf of it."

Levi stated that "Iran has armed groups in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and other places in the region and that the international community should focus on that."

"The international community should review itself whether it



likes the situation as it is now or they are lazy to change it, or they don't think it is its responsibility to change it or they are afraid that the situation might get worse," he argued.

Levi emphasized that "the source of instability in Iraq is Iran, pointing out that Iraq's biggest problem is Iran." He added, "Iran doesn't let a government be formed in Iraq."

"If Iraq collapses, what happens is that the Kurdistan Region will be able to become independent, and If Kurdistan Region becomes independent, it will be a stable place in the region that will benefit the west," said Levi.

Levi emphasized that "the international community should let the Kurds practice their right and their democracy," adding "the Kurds should have their own country," pointing out that "Kurds are the biggest nation in the world that doesn't have a country."

"This situation should be fixed by creating a country for the Kurds because they have al-



The French Intellectual Bernard Henry Levi being interviewed by Kurdistan 24, August 16, 2022. (Photo: Kurdistan 24)

ways lived under the threat of Baghdad and been under the mercy of the rockets of the pro-Iran armed groups," said Levi. "Baghdad always responds with rockets when the Kurds disagree with it." He stated that "the west supports the Kurds, and the Kurdish Peshmerga are known in western countries for sacrificing for freedom and democracy."

"The west appreciates this role of peshmerga, and many people and institutions, as well as big politicians, appreciate the role of peshmerga and the Kurds," he said. "The US made a historical mistake when it decided not to support the Kurdistan referendum in 2017, which led to the pro-Iran militias coming to kill Kurds in Kirkuk." "US lost its credibility among

the Kurds by taking that step." Levi said, "during the past thirty years, France has always supported the Kurds, affirming that this position is continuing."

"France is one of the best friends of the Kurds; It always tried to keep the balance between Kurdistan and Iraq," Levi said. "The French and the Kurds share the same."

**HRANA**  
HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS NEWS AGENCY

17-08-2022

## Baha'is Banned from Higher Education in Iran

**HRANA has identified 60 Baha'is this year who sat for the nationwide university entrance exam and were banned from entering the university under the pretext of "document deficiencies."**

The individuals who complained to the National Organization of Educational Testing (NOET), have been threatened by the security apparatus.

Each year, numerous Baha'is participate in the nationwide university entrance examination and get rejected for various reasons by the



official website of the NOET, an organization designated for holding the exams and announcing the results.

The enactment of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution of Iran, which ensures that education and culture remain in line with

the Islamic teachings, barred Baha'is from taking an occupational position as well as tertiary education. This is at odds with Iran's laws recognizing the right to education indiscriminately for all citizens.

Such systematic discriminations stand in violation of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which both affirm that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.

## Reprise des relations diplomatiques complètes entre Israël et la Turquie

Israël et la **Turquie** ont annoncé mercredi le rétablissement complet de leurs relations diplomatiques et le retour des ambassadeurs dans les deux pays, mais Ankara a aussitôt souligné sa volonté de "continuer à défendre" les Palestiniens.

Les relations israélo-turques ont connu un réchauffement ces derniers mois après une brouille de plusieurs années provoquée au départ par l'affaire du navire turc Mavi **Marmara**.

En 2010, les forces israéliennes avaient lancé un assaut meurtrier contre ce navire qui tentait d'acheminer de l'aide à Gaza, enclave palestinienne sous blocus israélien et contrôlé par les islamistes du **Hamas**, qui ont d'ailleurs des représentants en Turquie.

En mai 2018, après la mort d'une cinquantaine de Palestiniens tués par l'armée israélienne à Gaza, la Turquie avait rappelé son ambassadeur en **Israël** et renvoyé l'ambassadeur israélien. Israël avait riposté en renvoyant le consul général turc à Jérusalem.

Mercredi, le Premier ministre israélien **Yaïr Lapid** a annoncé le retour des ambassadeurs et des consuls généraux dans les deux pays après la "décision d'élever le niveau des liens à des relations diplomatiques pleines et entières".

"Le rétablissement des relations avec la Turquie est un atout important pour la stabilité régionale et une nouvelle économique très importante pour

les citoyens d'Israël", a-t-il dit dans un communiqué.

M. Lapid s'est entretenu au téléphone dans la soirée avec le président turc Recep Tayyip Erdoganc, selon un communiqué de son bureau.

"Le Premier ministre et le président ont convenu que ces derniers développements sont des éléments importants dans le renforcement des relations qui vont amener à de nombreuses réalisations, notamment dans les domaines touristiques et économiques", affirme le communiqué.

M. Lapid a précisé que les vols directs d'Israël vers la Turquie allaient reprendre prochainement.

A Ankara, le chef de la diplomatie Mevlüt Cavusoglu a affirmé que la Turquie "continuera de défendre les droits des Palestiniens", malgré ce dégel.

"Il est important que nos messages (sur la question palestinienne) soient transmis directement par l'intermédiaire de l'ambassadeur", a-t-il souligné en annonçant la nomination prochaine d'un ambassadeur à Tel-Aviv.

### Une "hostilité"

M. Erdogan, fervent défenseur des Palestiniens et qui maintient des liens étroits avec le Hamas, a par le passé critiqué la politique israélienne envers les Palestiniens.

L'armée israélienne occupe depuis 1967 le territoire palestinien de Cisjordanie de même que Jérusalem-Est, la partie

orientale de la Ville sainte. Elle soumet en outre depuis plus de 15 ans Gaza à un blocus.

"Toute normalisation avec l'occupant (israélien) est une légitimation de sa présence sur nos terres", a réagi le Hamas, bête noire d'Israël.

"Nous attendons de tous les pays arabes, musulmans et amis qu'ils isolent l'occupant et lui mettent la pression afin de répondre aux droits légitimes des Palestiniens", a affirmé à l'AFP Bassem Naïm, cadre du mouvement palestinien armé à Gaza.

"Tant qu'Erdogan est au pouvoir il y aura une certaine hostilité de la Turquie envers Israël à cause de son attache islamiste. Il continuera de soutenir le Hamas par exemple", dit à l'AFP Ephraïm Inbar, directeur du Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS).

"La Turquie est un important pays musulman, qui peut faire contrepoids face à l'Iran donc c'est un pays très stratégique" pour Israël, relève-t-il.

En juin, Israël avait appelé ses ressortissants à quitter "dès que possible" la Turquie par crainte d'attaques de l'Iran, pays ennemi de l'Etat hébreu, avant d'abaisser le niveau d'alerte.

La question des touristes israéliens, qui visitent par dizaines de milliers la Turquie chaque année, a d'ailleurs contribué à favoriser ce dégel.

### Investissements

Fin 2021, M. Erdogan s'était

entretenu au téléphone avec le président israélien Isaac Herzog et l'ex-Premier ministre Naftali Bennett, les premiers entretiens du genre depuis 2013, à l'occasion de la libération d'un couple d'Israéliens accusés d'espionnage et détenus en Turquie.

Puis M. Herzog s'est rendu à Ankara en mars, la première visite du genre depuis 2007.

Des gestes qui ont progressivement ouvert la voie à la normalisation, soulignent des analystes.

La Turquie fait face à une forte inflation et à l'effondrement de sa monnaie. Dans ce contexte, Ankara "tente de normaliser ses relations avec beaucoup de pays dans la région" dont les Emirats arabes unis ou l'Arabie saoudite, dans le but "d'attirer des investissements étrangers directs", estime Galia Lindenstrauss, analyste à l'Institut des études stratégiques (INSS) à Tel-Aviv.

En janvier, M. Erdogan a annoncé que son pays était prêt à coopérer avec Israël sur un projet de gazoduc visant à relier des gisements israéliens en Méditerranée orientale à la Turquie pour ensuite acheminer cette manne vers l'Europe.

Une gazoduc Israël/Turquie faciliterait les livraisons de gaz israélien à des pays européens qui cherchent à réduire leurs importations de Russie, mais reste pour l'heure au simple état de projet.

# Turkey makes peace bid with Chechen leader

**T**urkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Aug. 5 meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin appears to have turned a page in Ankara's chilly ties with Ramzan Kadyrov, the leader of Russia's Muslim-majority Chechen Republic and a Putin loyalist. Turkey's foreign minister and intelligence chief, who accompanied Erdogan in Sochi, huddled with Kadyrov on the sidelines of the summit, and it was the Chechen leader who made the meeting public on [Telegram](#).

Kadyrov has long been associated with espionage claims and a series of murders of Chechen dissidents in Turkey. That senior Turkish officials were willing to meet him not long after he publicly berated Erdogan portends a political shift on Ankara's part — a diplomatic feat that could be chalked up not to Kadyrov, but rather his boss. Putin had so far refrained from taking the Chechen leader to his meetings with Erdogan, even though he would often have him in his entourage when meeting with other Muslim leaders.

Kadyrov has proven his loyalty to Putin by contributing special forces to Russia's military operations in Syria and Ukraine. His soldiers were deployed as military police in Syria, primarily in Aleppo, showing the locals a "Muslim face" of the Russian mission. Their deployment was meant to mend the terrible image left by fighters from Russia's Caucasian regions who joined the Islamic State or allied with the al-Qaeda-linked Nusra Front in Syria's civil war. Kadyrov also took on the restoration of the nine-century-old [Umayyad Mosque in Aleppo](#) and another historical mosque in Homs. Yet, the fighters he sent to the war in Ukraine have

created an [opposite](#) image to that of helping reconstruction in Syria. In both Ukraine and Syria, Kadyrov's missions have clashed with Erdogan's policies.

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Details about the meeting in Sochi are limited to what Kadyrov shared on Telegram the following day. "We had a rich and productive informal discussion, at which we agreed on the need to establish close cooperation between Turkey and the Chechen Republic on various issues," he wrote. Turkish Foreign Minister "Mevlut Cavusoglu expressed hope that this informal meeting would be the beginning of further development of relations and establishing contacts. I agreed with him and noted that both sides will benefit from joint initiatives." He added he was extended an invitation to visit Turkey and readily accepted.

Turkey's National Intelligence Organization has acquired operational capabilities in conflict zones beyond Turkey's borders in recent years, and that its chief Hakan Fidan took part in the meeting has raised doubts over the nature of Ankara's prospective cooperation with Kadyrov among Turkey's opposition and Chechen exiles in the country, many of whom are former pro-independence fighters.

The speculation may be far fetched, but some Kurds wonder whether Chechens might be used in Turkish military campaigns against Kurdish groups in Iraq and Syria. And

many in Turkey's opposition quarters are already anxious about claims that bloody unrest, including assassinations, could mar the lead-up to the elections in 2023, making them suspicious of Ankara's intentions.

The Chechen exiles, meanwhile, fear that Ankara's rapprochement with Kadyrov might come at the expense of the relative safe haven they have found in Turkey despite nine assassinations over the past decade. Nevertheless, Ankara's dialogue with Kadyrov might be conditioned on ending the hounding and targeting of Chechen dissidents in Turkey. In return, refugee and diaspora activities against Kadyrov's administration might be suppressed.

As recently as last year, Turkey continued to be the [scene of score-settling](#) between Kadyrov's men and dissident Chechens. Six people detained on suspicion of espionage in Istanbul and the Mediterranean city of Antalya in October were reportedly linked to Kadyrov cohorts. The [Turkish media](#) reported the incident as the busting of a Russian spy network. The suspects — four nationals of the Russian Federation, a Ukrainian and an Uzbek — were allegedly planning to attack Chechen dissidents. One of them reportedly confessed to taking orders from Kadyrov's cousin Adam Delimkhanov and a certain Kazbek Dukuzov. The police seized an unlicensed gun equipped with a silencer in the residence of one of the suspects. In March 2021, two Chechens believed to be linked to Kadyrov were detained in Antalya as part of a probe into unknown people tailing Chechen exiles.

According to a Chechen exile

who spoke to Al-Monitor in December, the espionage activities targeted individuals involved in [online networks](#) of the diaspora such as "1ADAT" and "Security Turkey" that exposed crimes allegedly committed by Kadyrov and his men in Chechnya, including abduction, torture, murder and blackmailing of former pro-independence fighters and their relatives. Chechen exiles believed that Turkey's intelligence and police had come to take Kadyrov's covert activities in Turkey more seriously.

The tensions brewing behind the scenes erupted into the public eye in December, when Kadyrov threatened to name a park in Grozni after Turkey's public enemy number one — the jailed leader of outlawed Kurdish militants, Abdullah Ocalan — in response to a Turkish town naming a park after Dzhokhar Dudayev, the pro-independence Chechen leader who fought Russian troops in the 1990s. Addressing Erdogan, Kadyrov said, "Make up your mind! Either you become a state that openly supports terrorists or you support honest relations with Russia. We have the right to respond." The [Kremlin backed Kadyrov's reaction](#).

Even though Kadyrov has been an unwelcome figure in Turkey, his alleged crimes have been largely brushed over, not least because of Russia's influence. The Turkish authorities have often been criticized for ignoring the deeds of Russian intelligence and Kadyrov's men and for swiftly extraditing suspects to Russia instead of expanding investigations. Still, Kadyrov has long hoped to be held in esteem by Turkey as he has been by other Muslim nations such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Bahrain.

## La guerre d'usure de la Turquie dans le nord de la Syrie

La Turquie multiplie les attaques dans les zones kurdes, mais une action d'envergure se heurte aux réticences de Washington, de Moscou et de Téhéran.

[Read in English](#)

La menace d'une offensive dans le nord de la Syrie, agitée depuis mai par le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, ne s'est pas encore matérialisée. Son projet de prolonger la « zone de sécurité », profonde de 30 kilomètres, que l'armée turque et ses supplétifs syriens ont conquise depuis 2016, se heurte aux réticences des Etats-Unis et de la Russie. Il s'agissait alors de chasser les combattants kurdes syriens des Unités de protection du peuple (YPG) – la principale composante des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), qui contrôlent le Nord-Est syrien. Dans l'intervalle, la Turquie se livre à une guerre d'usure contre la milice kurde, qu'elle considère comme un groupe terroriste lié au Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK).

Plus un jour ne passe sans [des bombardements et des attaques au drone](#) contre les combattants kurdes, qui font aussi de nombreuses victimes civiles. De la ville de Kobané, que les forces kurdes ont reprise à l'organisation Etat islamique (EI) en 2015 avec l'appui de la coalition internationale emmenée par Washington, à Kamechliyé, plus aucune zone n'est épargnée. Selon le dernier décompte du collectif Airwars, qui répertorie uniquement les victimes civiles, il y aurait au moins 54 attaques ayant fait près de 120 victimes depuis le début de l'année.

Les combattants kurdes vivent sous la menace des drones turcs. Le Centre d'information



Une jeune femme, lors des funérailles d'un combattant des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS) dans la ville à majorité kurde de Kamechliyé, en Syrie, le 10 août 2022. DELIL SOULEIMAN / AFP

du Rojava, basé à Kamechliyé, a répertorié au moins 68 attaques au drone depuis le début de l'année, qui auraient fait au moins 41 morts et 77 blessés. « Au cours de l'année écoulée, la Turquie a étendu sa campagne de drones dans le nord-est de la Syrie et le nord de l'Irak. Nombreux au sein des forces kurdes considèrent que cela relève d'un accord tacite entre la Turquie et les Etats-Unis, comme alternative à la poursuite par la Turquie d'une offensive terrestre », affirme Dareen Khalifa, du centre de réflexion International Crisis Group (ICG).

« Ils se sentent infiltrés »

Plusieurs cadres turcs du PKK, mais également des cadres syriens des YPG, proches du parti autonomiste turc, ont été tués en Syrie et en Irak. Les Américains ont seulement protesté lors de l'assassinat, dans une attaque de drone, le 22 juillet, dans la province d'Hassaké, de Salwa Yusuk,

une adjointe du commandant des FDS Mazloum Abdi. « Les attaques de drone sont devenues une tactique pour combattre les YPG. La Turquie leur signifie que, tant que l'opération militaire n'est pas une option, elle a d'autres moyens de les viser », estime Oytun Orhan, chercheur au centre d'études sur le Moyen-Orient Orsam, basé en Turquie. Ces attaques, qui donnent lieu à des représailles jusqu'en territoire turc, déstabilisent les chefs kurdes. « Ils se sentent exposés et infiltrés. La Turquie doit avoir des informateurs sur le terrain, ce qui crée une défiance », estime M<sup>me</sup> Khalifa.

« Cela n'a pas d'impact stratégique, en revanche. Ça n'affecte pas le contrôle du territoire par les YPG », poursuit M. Orhan. Selon l'expert, une offensive terrestre turque reste envisagée. Elle pourrait viser Tal Rifaat, une poche FDS coincée entre les zones sous le contrôle des rebelles

syriens soutenus par les Turcs et celles aux mains du régime syrien. Elle pourrait concerner aussi Manbij, aux confins occidentaux des territoires contrôlés par les FDS. « Beaucoup à Ankara pensent qu'une offensive sur Tal Rifaat pourrait être rapide et profitable. Ils perçoivent la zone comme une rampe de lancement pour les attaques du PKK et du PYD contre les soldats turcs », explique Dareen Khalifa, de l'ICG. L'expert Oytun Orhan estime, par ailleurs, que la Russie, alliée au régime de Damas, et qui a le contrôle aérien sur cette région, pourrait laisser faire Ankara.

Une opération de plus grande envergure pour prolonger la « zone de sécurité » entre la région d'Afrin, [conquise par les Turcs en 2018](#), et la ville de Kamechliyé, à 45 kilomètres, rencontre en revanche de vives oppositions. Washington a mis en garde Ankara contre une opération qui menacerait la lutte qu'elle mène avec les FDS contre l'EI. Moscou et Téhéran ne sont pas favorables à une opération qui entamerait davantage la souveraineté de Damas. Grâce à sa médiation sur le dossier ukrainien, Ankara a une carte à jouer auprès de Moscou, mais il pourrait s'exposer à des sanctions internationales qui aggraveraient sa crise économique, à l'approche des élections présidentielle et législatives de juin 2023.

**3,7 millions de réfugiés syriens**

Les Russes, qui avaient approuvé les précédentes offen-

sives d'Ankara dans le nord de la Syrie, utilisent la menace turque pour peser sur les combattants kurdes. Ils souhaitent les amener à rompre leurs liens avec les Américains et à renouer avec le président Assad. Les FDS ont accepté un renforcement de la présence militaire syrienne dans les zones qu'ils contrôlent, à la frontière avec la Turquie. « Il y a quelques centaines de soldats du régime à Manbij et au nord de Rakka, mais les FDS sont loin d'accepter de renoncer à leur contrôle militaire et politique sur la zone », précise Doreen Khalifa. Moscou tente également d'amener Ankara à coopérer avec Damas et à normaliser ses relations avec le régime syrien, rompues depuis le début de la guerre, en 2011.

« Les Russes proposent que les forces du régime syrien remplacent les YPG, et que la Turquie coopère avec Damas. Le régime syrien exige au préalable que la Turquie se retire de Syrie et qu'elle cesse son soutien à l'opposition syrienne », explique Oytun Orhan. En écho à l'hostilité croissante de la population turque contre la présence de 3,7 millions de réfugiés syriens dans le pays, les partis de l'opposition turque sont favorables à une normalisation avec Damas. « Depuis un an, il y a aussi des gens au sein du gouvernement qui soutiennent cette idée, disant qu'une marge de coopération existe dès lors que le régime syrien est contre les YPG et contre le fédéralisme », poursuit l'expert. Des doutes existent toutefois quant aux capacités et à la volonté du régime

syrien de combattre les YPG. La dernière rencontre entre Recep Tayyip Erdogan et son homologue russe, Vladimir Poutine, à Sotchi, le 5 août, a relancé le débat. Le président turc a confirmé l'existence d'une coopération en matière de renseignement avec le régime syrien. Selon des experts, certains échanges pourraient porter sur une renégociation de l'accord d'Adana d'octobre 1998, par lequel les deux pays avaient établi une coopération sécuritaire contre le PKK. Le 28 juillet, le ministre des affaires étrangères, Mevlüt Cavusoglu, avait déclaré qu'Ankara était prêt à fournir un soutien politique à Damas contre les FDS. Le 11 août, il a appelé à la réconciliation entre le gouvernement syrien et l'opposition et a reconnu avoir eu un entretien avec son homologue syrien,

Faisal Al-Miqdad, en octobre 2021.

Ses propos ont provoqué des manifestations dans les régions sous le contrôle des rebelles dans le nord-ouest de la Syrie. « Ces déclarations ne traduisent pas un changement radical. Aussi longtemps que l'armée turque est sur le sol syrien et qu'elle appuie l'opposition syrienne, il sera difficile à Ankara et Damas de trouver un point d'accord », estime toutefois Oytun Orhan. Or, si Damas reprenait pied dans l'enclave rebelle, cela pourrait provoquer un nouvel afflux de réfugiés en Turquie. « Ce serait une catastrophe humanitaire, avertit Doreen Khalifa, et pourrait ébranler le parti au pouvoir en Turquie lors des prochaines élections. »

Le Monde

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Clothilde Mraffko, Marie Jégo

## La Turquie et Israël scellent leur réconciliation après des années de brouille

Pour la première fois depuis 2018, les deux pays vont échanger des ambassadeurs et des consuls. Cette reprise des relations est l'ultime rebondissement dans les rapports houleux entre les deux pays ces dernières années.

Tirant un trait sur leurs litiges, [la Turquie et Israël ont annoncé, mercredi 17 août, la restauration complète de leurs relations diplomatiques](#). « L'amélioration des relations contribuera à approfondir les liens entre les deux peuples, à élargir les liens économiques, commerciaux et culturels et à renforcer la stabilité régionale », a souligné le premier ministre israélien, Yaïr Lapid, dans un communiqué publié après l'entretien téléphonique qu'il a eu avec le président turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

profité de l'arrivée au pouvoir, en juin 2021, d'une nouvelle

coalition en Israël pour adoucir le ton face à l'Etat hébreu.

### Rapports houleux

Premier acte concret de ce rapprochement, la visite d'Etat en mars du président israélien, Isaac Herzog, à Ankara, inédite à ce niveau depuis quatorze ans. En mai, le ministre turc des affaires étrangères, Mevlüt Çavusoglu, a été accueilli en Israël et en juin, son homologue d'alors, Yaïr Lapid, a visité Ankara afin de remercier les Turcs de leur coopération, laquelle avait permis, selon lui, de [djouer des attaques iraniennes programmées contre des touristes israéliens à Istanbul](#).



Le ministre turc des affaires étrangères, Mevlüt Çavusoglu (à droite), et son homologue israélien, Yaïr Lapid (premier ministre depuis le 1er juillet), lors d'une conférence de presse tenue à Ankara, le 23 juin 2022. OZAN KOSE / AFP

Cette reprise des relations est l'ultime rebondissement dans

les rapports houleux qu'entretennent Israël et la Turquie ces dernières années. Autrefois allié musulman phare de l'Etat hébreu dans la région, Ankara a rompu une première fois ses relations avec Tel-Aviv après [l'assaut israélien, en 2010, du navire humanitaire turc Mavi Marmara](#) qui cherchait à briser le blocus israélien à Gaza, l'enclave palestinienne, et au cours duquel dix militants turcs avaient été tués.

Organisée par IHH, une ONG islamique proche du gouvernement islamo-conservateur, l'opération humanitaire était soutenue au plus haut niveau de l'Etat turc. L'année suivante, la Turquie expulsait l'ambassadeur israélien.

Les excuses du premier ministre israélien, Benyamin Nétanyahou, en 2013, n'y changeront rien. En 2016, les deux pays trouvent finalement un accord : la Turquie abandonne les poursuites judiciaires contre les militaires israéliens responsables et l'Etat hébreu verse 20 millions de dollars (19,7 millions d'euros) à Ankara.

La réconciliation fut de courte durée. En mai 2018, lors du déménagement de l'ambassade américaine de Tel-Aviv à Jérusalem, qui marque la reconnaissance par les Etats-Unis de l'annexion, illégale aux yeux du droit international, de la partie palestinienne de la ville par l'Etat hébreu, l'armée israélienne tue plus de cinquante Gazaouis lors d'une manifestation de protestation.

### **Sortir de l'isolement, une priorité pour Ankara**

De nouveau, Ankara renvoie l'ambassadeur israélien et

rappelle son représentant à Tel-Aviv. Israël riposte en expulsant le consul général turc de Jérusalem. Depuis, les deux pays entretenaient des relations commerciales ou sécuritaires mais n'avaient pas d'ambassadeurs.

« *A cause de l'échec de la précédente tentative de normalisation, Israël s'est montré plus prudent cette fois-ci et a pris son temps* », note Gallia Lindenstrauss, chercheuse israélienne à l'Institut d'études sur la sécurité nationale (INSS). « *Le côté turc poussait davantage à la reprise des liens que les Israéliens, ce qui est une exception : d'ordinaire, si on regarde l'historique de leurs relations, Israël prenait davantage l'initiative* », explique-t-elle.

Affaibli en interne par une crise monétaire d'ampleur – inflation à 80 % en rythme annuel, effondrement de la monnaie nationale –, le président Erdogan cherche à normaliser les relations avec ses partenaires régionaux, Israël mais aussi les Emirats arabes unis et l'Arabie saoudite. Il est urgent pour lui d'attirer les investissements étrangers qui font tant défaut à son économie.

En janvier, il s'était dit prêt à coopérer avec l'Etat hébreu sur la question du gaz, devenue encore plus cruciale du fait de la guerre en Ukraine qui impose désormais aux Européens de diversifier leurs approvisionnements après les sanctions prises contre la Russie. « *Nous pourrions utiliser le gaz naturel d'Israël dans notre pays, et même plus que cela, nous pourrions travailler ensemble pour l'acheminer vers l'Europe* », avait alors déclaré M. Erdogan. Grosse consommatrice de gaz, dotée d'un ré-

seau moderne et diversifié de gazoducs et de terminaux méthaniers, la Turquie pourrait être une route de choix pour le gaz israélien. Surtout depuis que le projet de construction du gazoduc EastMed, prévu pour relier le champ gazier Leviathan, situé au large d'Israël, à Chypre, à la Grèce puis à l'Europe en contournant la Turquie, a été abandonné faute de soutien des Etats-Unis, qui l'ont déclaré trop coûteux et s'en sont retirés.

Sortir de l'isolement est l'autre priorité du président turc. « *Le désir réitéré d'Ankara de renouer avec les pays de la région signifie la reconnaissance de ce que sa politique conflictuelle l'a placé dans un état d'isolement insoutenable* », rappelait le chercheur américain Nicholas Danforth [dans une analyse publiée le 7 janvier](#) par la Fondation hellénique pour les politiques européenne et étrangère (Elia-mep).

### **La relation reste fragile**

Début août, pourtant, la réconciliation aurait pu vaciller. Israël avait lancé une confrontation meurtrière avec le Jihad islamique à Gaza : trois jours de combats ont fait 49 morts palestiniens dans l'enclave, selon les sources palestiniennes. « *Il ne peut y avoir aucune excuse à tuer des enfants* », s'était enflammé le président Erdogan.

Au fil des années, ce dernier s'est érigé en champion de la cause palestinienne, à travers ses déclarations tonitruantes à l'encontre d'Israël mais aussi en accueillant sur son sol des dirigeants du Hamas, le mouvement qui contrôle Gaza, après leur départ de Damas

dans la foulée de la révolution de 2011.

Ce point a été au cœur des négociations entre Tel-Aviv et Ankara. Des sources arabes à Istanbul affirment que la partie turque aurait fait des concessions en obligeant des militants du mouvement palestinien à quitter le pays. Une assertion démentie par Bassem Naïm, cadre du Hamas à Gaza. « *Nos dirigeants, cadres et membres qui vivent en Turquie jouissent toujours d'une grande liberté de mouvement et d'un large espace pour leurs activités. On ne leur a absolument pas demandé de partir ou de restreindre leurs mouvements.* »

Quoi qu'il en soit, Ankara « *continuera de défendre les droits des Palestiniens* », a rassuré M. Çavusoglu, mercredi. Avec ce rapprochement, la Turquie pourrait conquérir une place de médiateur dans le dialogue informel qu'entretient le gouvernement israélien et le Hamas à Gaza depuis quelques années.

Pour l'heure, la relation reste fragile, soumise au gré des prochaines élections, prévues en novembre 2022 en Israël et en juin 2023 en Turquie. « *L'opinion publique turque n'accepte pas Israël comme un Etat normal aux côtés des Etats arabes*, prévient Moshe Kamhi, ancien consul général israélien à Istanbul. *Cela nous poursuivra toujours et nous n'avons donc pas la garantie que cette normalisation soit irrévocable, irréversible.* »

Clothilde Mraffko (Jérusalem, correspondance) et Marie Jégo (Istanbul, correspondante)



Laurie Mylroie  
2022/08/19

## Congressmen call on Biden administration to support Erbil in energy disputes with Baghdad

**WASHINGTON DC, United States (Kurdistan 24)** – Three members of the House of Representatives sent Secretary of State Antony Blinken a letter calling on the Biden administration to support the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) against pressure to curtail energy production that is coming from Iran and the pro-Iranian parities in Baghdad.

The letter was signed by Rep. Michael Waltz (R, Florida), along with Rep. Dina Titus (D, Nevada) and Rep. Doug Lamborn (R, Colorado.)

Waltz is “a combat-decorated Green Beret,” as his website explains, who served multiple tours in Afghanistan and the Middle East. He sits on the House Armed Services Committee, as does Lamborn. Titus is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

The bipartisan letter closely resembles a [bipartisan letter](#) from the most senior Democratic and Republican senators on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—its chairman, Robert Menendez (D, New Jersey) and its ranking member, James Risch (Idaho).

The administration response has, so far, been minimal. It has other priorities. The State Department remains committed to a “one-Iraq” policy, while its focus on reviving the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal inhibits it from taking a tough stance toward Iran on any issue.

**Congressional Letter: “Remarkable” Success of Kurdistan’s Region’s “Economic Transformation”**



Combined photos of the US Congress members: Michael Waltz (left), Dina Titus (center), Doug Lamborn (right)

The letter from the three Congressmen to Blinken described the “remarkable” success of the Kurdistan Region’s “economic transformation” over the past 15 years, as the region’s oil production rose from zero to 450,000 barrels per day in that time.

That growth has been aided by the U.S. Development Finance Corporation, which has provided “\$300 million to financing American companies to help develop this energy future for the Kurdistan Region,” the three representatives wrote.

The Congressmen also noted the geo-strategic importance of the Kurdistan Region’s energy production. “As a result of these investments, the KRG’s gas resources could be poised to help both Iraq and eventually wean Turkey and southern Europe off Russian and Iranian gas supplies, especially as we maintain sanctions against Russia for its illegal invasion of Ukraine.”

**Iranian Assaults on the Energy Infrastructure in the Kurdistan Region**

The Congressional letter explained that a major target of Iran’s attacks in the Kurdistan Region has been oil infrastructure. “Iran, recognizing this threat to their foreign energy markets, earlier this year fired rockets into Erbil, destroying the home of Kurdistan’s most prominent oil businessman,” the Congressmen wrote. “Furthermore, Iranian-backed sectarian militias took a Kurdish refinery offline and launched at least five separate rocket and drone attacks against Kurdish oil infrastructure.”

The Biden administration has, several times, [condemned](#) the attacks on oil facilities in the Kurdistan Region—but it has not attributed those attacks to any party in particular. Thus, it has never acknowledged Iran’s responsibility or taken action to hold Iran accountable for them. So it should be little surprise that the attacks have continued.

**Iraq’s Federal Supreme Court—suborned by Iran!**

The Congressmen noted that last February, “The Iraqi Federal Supreme Court [FSC] ruled the

KRG’s oil and gas law to be unconstitutional” and directed “the KRG to align their operations with federal directives,” a decision the KRG is contesting.

Soon afterwards, [Prof. Brendan O’Leary](#), of the University of Pennsylvania, explained that Iraq’s so-called Supreme Court was itself illegal, as it was not formed in accord with the post-Saddam constitution. “The constitution required such a court to come into existence with a two-thirds resolution, in a law by the Council of Representatives,” O’Leary stated, but “that has not happened.”

Even by that point, as it later emerged, Iran had suborned the FSC. It used Iraq’s pro-Iranian political parties to do so, as Michael Knights, a scholar at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, recently [explained](#).

Nuri al-Maliki was key to the effort. The original purpose was to prevent Muqtada al-Sadr, who won a plurality of votes in the Oct. 2021 elections, from forming a government. But that objective was soon broadened to undermining the Kurdistan Region, producing February’s ruling on Kurdish oil production

In their letter to Blinken, the Congressmen noted that the Baghdad government “has unevenly enforced the court’s decision, cancelling 2 American and 2 European fuel contracts with the KRG.” By contrast, they stated, “Baghdad has not cancelled the contracts the KRG signed with Russian or Chinese firms.”

"We are concerned that these actions risk destabilizing Iraq, raising tensions in the region, and further disrupting international oil markets," they continued. "It is thus in America's national security interests to facilitate a resolution to this dispute between the Iraqi government and the KRG."

The letter urged the State Department "to help resolve this dispute, ensuring the Kurdistan Region's autonomy and economic rights, and ensuring Iraq will continue to be a multi-ethnic secular republic, free from Iranian interference."

#### Pro Forma Response from the State Department

In many respects, the letter to Blinken from the three Representatives echoed the letter sent to Blinken on Monday from the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), Robert Menendez, and its Ranking Member, James Risch.

As the senators noted, "The Iraqi Ministry of Oil's selective application of the Supreme Court ruling to certain U.S. companies, taken together with Iranian attacks on Iraq's energy infrastructure, harms Iraq's economic viability."

Asked about that letter, State Department Spokesperson Ned Price had little by way of serious response. The SFRC

has a supervisory role over the State Department, and it cannot simply ignore the committee.

However, Price would not acknowledge that any serious problem existed which required more vigorous State Department action, while the remarks he did make were perfunctory and pro forma.

"We have been and we encourage the parties to determine a way forward that supports existing and future investment and advances the interests of the Iraqi people, including those of the Kurdistan Region," Price said on Wednesday. "We have been engaging with the central gov-

ernment in Baghdad. We have been engaging with our partners in the Kurdistan region as well."

Nothing Price said suggested that the State Department saw a serious problem or planned to modify in any significant way its current policies.

Rather, the passion of senior State Department officials in the region revolves around restoring the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal. That causes them to be restrained in any criticism of Iran, while the Department's long-standing commitment to a one-Iraq policy leads them to subordinate Erbil to Baghdad.



franceinfo avec AFP  
19/08/2022

## Syrie : au moins 21 civils tués par des bombardements dans le nord du pays

Dans cette région, les Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), dominées par les Kurdes et appuyées par le régime, affrontent les Turcs et leurs supplétifs locaux.

Au moins 21 civils sont morts depuis jeudi dans le nord de la Syrie, selon un nouveau bilan de l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'homme (OSDH), vendredi 19 août. Dans cette zone du pays, les Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), dominées par les Kurdes et appuyées par le régime, affrontent les Turcs et leurs supplétifs locaux.

Ces victimes ont été tuées dans deux événements distincts. A Al-Bab, sous contrôle de factions syriennes loyales à Ankara au nord-est d'Alep, "des tirs d'artillerie des forces prorégime sur un marché ont tué 17 civils, dont six enfants, et blessé 35", a dé-



La ville syrienne d'Al-Bab, au nord-est d'Alep, où 15 civils ont été tués, le 18 août 2022. (BAKR ALKASEM / AFP)

claré l'ONG. Le porte-parole des FDS, Farhad Shami, a assuré que ses forces n'avaient "rien à voir" avec cette frappe.

A Hassaké, dans le nord-est du pays, zone tenue par les FDS, l'Administration autonome kurde a annoncé vendredi qu'une frappe turque avait "tué quatre enfants et

blessé 11 autres" en s'abattant "dans la nuit sur un centre fermé pour mineures". L'OSDH a confirmé ce bilan.

La Turquie menace depuis mai de lancer [une offensive d'envergure](#) contre les forces kurdes qui contrôlent la majeure partie du nord-est de la Syrie. Depuis juillet, les drones turcs frappent de plus en plus souvent les zones contrôlées par les FDS, considérées comme "terroristes" par Ankara, selon l'OSDH et des responsables kurdes.

Prolongez votre lecture autour de ce sujet

[tout l'univers Turquie](#)



## Erdogan flirte avec le régime de Damas

Le président turc, qui a activement soutenu l'opposition à Bachar el-Assad, n'exclut plus de s'en rapprocher.

### MOYEN-ORIENT

Effet d'annonce ou changement de cap ? Dans son avion qui le ramenait d'Ukraine, ce vendredi 19 août, le président Recep Tayyip Erdogan a affirmé vouloir « franchir de nouvelles étapes » avec le pouvoir de Damas, tout en appelant à une réconciliation entre l'opposition et le régime syrien. Ses propos, qui tranchent avec son soutien indéfectible au renversement de Bachar el-Assad lors du soulèvement de 2011, confirment une inflexion dans la politique d'Ankara. La Turquie, par la voix de son ministre des Affaires étrangères Mevlüt Cavusoglu, a déjà plaidé à deux reprises en dix jours pour « réconcilier » les deux camps. Lors de sa première allocution, le chef de la diplomatie turc avait même créé la surprise en révélant avoir rencontré son homologue syrien Faysal Moqdad en octobre dernier, en marge du sommet du Mouvement des non-alignés à Belgrade, capitale de la Serbie. Ce changement dans la position turque intervient également peu après la rencontre d'Erdogan, le 5 août, avec le président russe Vladimir Poutine, qui pousse pour une normalisation avec son allié el-Assad.

Pour la presse d'opposition turque, il n'y a aucun doute : ces nouveaux signaux d'Ankara, concomitants d'une réconciliation tous azimuts avec d'autres ennemis régionaux (Israël, Égypte, Émirats arabes unis...) ont une dimension domestique à l'approche du scrutin présidentiel de 2023 et alors que le pays subit une crise financière sans précédent depuis l'arrivée de l'AKP (parti d'Erdogan) au pouvoir en 2002. « L'AKP calcule son coup en

vue des élections, puisque le gouvernement n'arrive pas à résoudre la crise économique », observe le journaliste Murat Yetkin dans les pages du quotidien de gauche BirGün. Pour lui, « l'AKP vise à jouer sur le retour des réfugiés en Syrie ». À ce jour, quelque 3,7 millions de Syriens ont trouvé refuge en Turquie, pays qui héberge le plus de réfugiés au monde : résultat direct d'une « politique de la porte ouverte », prônée par Erdogan au début de la guerre syrienne, il y a onze ans. À l'époque, le président turc mise sur une chute rapide de Bachar el-Assad. Il apporte un appui sans faille aux factions d'opposition armées, accueille les dissidents, favorise leur organisation depuis le territoire turc.

Mais l'enlisement du conflit, doublé d'un ressentiment anti-syrien croissant au sein de la population, le pousse aujourd'hui à revoir son discours. Insultes xénophobes, vitrines de boutiques syriennes saccagées, agressions parfois meurtrières à Ankara, Izmir, Istanbul... À travers le pays, les incidents, autrefois isolés, se démultiplient d'autant plus qu'ils sont alimentés par les partis d'opposition à Erdogan, de plus en plus remontés contre les réfugiés. Exemple, cette tentative du Parti républicain du peuple (CHP, social-démocrate) d'imposer un couvre-feu aux réfugiés dans la ville de Bolu, au bord de la mer Noire. Ou encore ces appels répétés du maire d'Istanbul, Ekrem Imamoglu, à un retour des Syriens dans leur pays.

Le président Erdogan se trouve également sous pression accrue de ses alliés politiques du parti ultranationaliste MHP. « Le

rétablissement du dialogue entre la Turquie et le régime syrien mérite d'être traité avec sérieux », insistait il y a quelques jours Devlet Bahçeli, le chef du MHP. Des propos aussitôt qualifiés de « feu vert pour le dialogue avec le régime syrien » par la presse progouvernementale.

Outre la question du retour des réfugiés, deux préoccupations majeures semblent être au cœur des tractations turco-syriennes : le renforcement d'une « zone tampon » au nord de la Syrie et la lutte contre la guérilla kurde du PKK. À la faveur de plusieurs incursions militaires menées depuis 2016, Ankara est progressivement parvenue à consolider un périmètre dit « sécurisé » le long de sa frontière, majoritairement peuplé de déplacés internes arabes sunnites ayant fui les exactions du régime syrien alaouite. Depuis plusieurs semaines, les autorités turques ne cessent de reporter une nouvelle opération contre les forces kurdes, annoncée comme imminente depuis le printemps, en espérant obtenir l'aval sinon de Damas, du moins de Moscou. « Nous n'avons pas de vues sur le territoire de la Syrie (...) Le régime de Damas doit en être conscient », a réitéré, ce vendredi, le chef de l'État turc.

L'idée, selon certains observateurs, consisterait à reprendre contact avec Bachar el-Assad pour obtenir un partenariat clef dans la lutte contre les milices kurdes syriennes, accusées de collusion avec le PKK. « C'est une énorme faveur pour Assad car il a utilisé la guerre en Syrie à des fins d'ingénierie ethnique. Avant la guerre, les Arabes sunnites constituaient plus des deux tiers de la population sy-

rienne, mais ils représentent maintenant moins de la moitié de celle-ci. En échange, Assad peut proposer de remettre la milice kurde syrienne YPG sous son contrôle. C'est un bon accord pour Erdogan et la Turquie », observe Soner Cagaptay, directeur du programme turc au Washington Institute, dans une interview accordée à Arab News.

« On est encore bien loin d'une réconciliation », tempère Bayram Balci, le directeur de l'Institut français d'études anatoliennes (IFEA). D'après lui, les dernières déclarations turques ne sont « ni réalistes, ni cohérentes » et relèvent plus d'une « pseudo-concession » faite à Vladimir Poutine à un moment où, qui plus est, Erdogan joue aux équilibristes entre Kiev et Moscou dans la guerre en Ukraine. « Poutine a tellement mis la pression sur Erdogan qu'il s'est senti obligé de prononcer quelques formules signalant un possible réengagement, mais sans vraiment y croire », estime-t-il. Et de rappeler que, selon lui, « la Turquie n'a rien à gagner dans un rapprochement avec le régime syrien » : « Bachar el-Assad n'est pas en mesure de contrôler le PKK. D'ailleurs, sans le soutien de l'Iran et de la Syrie, serait-il capable de contrôler son propre pays ? » Pour l'heure, le risque d'un rabochage avec Damas est trop élevé pour Erdogan. « Si Ankara se réconcilie demain avec Damas, les réfugiés syriens ne resteront pas les bras croisés. Les récentes manifestations au nord de la Syrie, sous contrôle des rebelles anti-Assad, pour dénoncer la nouvelle initiative turque, montrent à quel point cela peut vite dégénérer », observe Bayram Balci.

## Près de la frontière nord de la Syrie, des villages « made in Turkey »

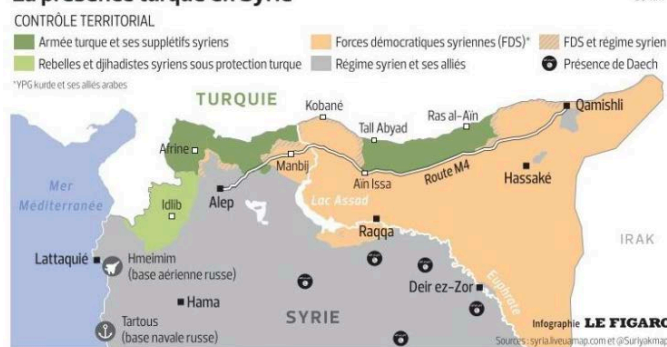
**DÉCRYPTAGE** - Pour Erdogan, il y a urgence à agir sur ce dossier à un an des prochains scrutins présidentiel et législatifs, qui s'annonce périlleux pour son parti.

FINIES, les images de villages de tentes improvisés sous les oliviers par des vagues d'hommes et de femmes fuyant la violence de Damas. C'est désormais une autre image du nord de la Syrie qu'entendent relayer les autorités turques : celle de maisonnettes en parpaings parfaitement alignées les unes contre les autres comme dans une maquette de Lego. Objectif : encourager une partie des 3,7 millions de réfugiés syriens à s'installer dans la « zone sécuritaire » promue par Ankara à sa frontière à renfort de discours politiques et d'opérations de communication.

### Ressentiment croissant à l'égard des exilés syriens

Dernier événement en date, ce déplacement en mai dernier du ministre de l'Intérieur turc, Süleyman Soyulu, à Al-Kamounah, pour inaugurer une cité « pilote » en dur dans un des secteurs échappant au contrôle de Damas, où se trouvent déjà des dizaines de milliers de « déplacés internes ». En tout, treize villes devraient progressivement sortir de terre selon le même modèle à Azaz, Tell Abyad, Jarabulos et autres bourgades de cette bande frontalière afin de préparer le « retour d'un million » de personnes. C'est du moins la promesse faite le même jour à l'occasion d'un message vidéo du président turc. Ce projet « sans risque » et « sur la base du volontariat »,

### La présence turque en Syrie



assure Recep Tayyip Erdogan, devrait compter 100 000 logements d'ici à la fin de l'année, assortis d'écoles, d'hôpitaux avec, à l'appui, la création de zones d'activité agricoles et industrielles.

Le calendrier n'est pas anodin. Pour Erdogan, il y a urgence à agir à un an des prochains scrutins présidentiel et législatifs, qui s'annonce périlleux pour son parti. Outre une érosion de sa popularité sur fond de crise économique, la plupart des sondages révèlent un ressentiment croissant de la population turque à l'égard des exilés. Déjà, en 2021, l'institut Metropoll estimait à 82 % la proportion de Turcs souhaitant le retour des Syriens dans leur patrie. Mais cette opération cache d'autres ambitions : l'arrivée de Syriens arabes diluerait la population kurde du nord de la Syrie, où l'armée turque s'est déployée depuis 2016, afin d'empêcher que la zone tampon tombe sous le contrôle des milices YPG, la guérilla kurde de Syrie, alliée du PKK.

« C'est une savante ingénierie démographique dont nous faisons les frais ! », se désole Jalal, un activiste syrien réfugié à Istanbul. Originaire de la Ghouta, dans la banlieue de Damas, et installé en Turquie depuis 2012, il n'a rien à gagner à repartir dans son pays. « Ce n'est pas rentrer chez moi que de me retrouver dans une région qui n'est pas la mienne, au risque de me faire arrêter et torturer par le régime le jour où il décidera de reprendre le contrôle du nord du pays. Pourtant, le pouvoir turc nous vend cela comme un rêve sur le point de devenir réalité ! », peste-t-il.

Carte à l'appui, le présumé « rêve » n'est autre qu'un ruban profond de 30 kilomètres et large de 120 kilomètres que l'armée turque et ses supplétifs syriens ont progressivement élargi au fil de différentes opérations militaires pour neutraliser les combattants kurdes : « Bouclier de l'Euphrate » (Jarabulos, 2016), « Rameau d'olivier » (Afrin, 2018), « Source de paix »

(2019). À terme, le président Erdogan ne cache pas sa volonté d'aller encore plus loin, en prolongeant ce bandeau stratégique jusqu'à la ville de Qamishli, à l'Est, où la Russie dispose d'une base.

### Nouvelle incursion

Au milieu de cette bande se trouve également la ville symbole de Kobané, libérée de Daech en 2015 par les combattants kurdes, alors soutenus par Washington, et qu'Ankara considère comme « terroristes ». « En nettoyant les derniers territoires en Syrie où l'organisation terroriste se niche, nous espérons bientôt relier les anneaux de cette ceinture de sécurité », a réitéré le président turc lors d'un discours prononcé le 8 août - façon de rappeler qu'il n'a pas renoncé à son projet de nouvelle incursion.

En attendant une opération de plus grande envergure, bombardements sporadiques et attaques au drone se multiplient contre les combattants kurdes en Syrie, mais également en Irak. Au moins 17 personnes ont péri dans la nuit du 16 août lors de frappes aériennes turques dans le village syrien de Jarqali, à l'ouest de Kobané. L'attaque visait des combattants kurdes mais aurait tué au moins trois soldats de l'armée syrienne et en aurait blessé six autres selon l'agence de presse officielle syrienne Sana.

■ D. M. (à Istanbul)

# Turkey signals new rules of engagement to Syrian Kurds, Damascus

Ankara's [reconciliation overtures](#) to Damascus have been accompanied by growing Turkish attacks on Syrian Kurdish and government forces along the border — a sign of new engagement rules in a border strip extending 32 kilometers (20 miles) into northern Syria that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wants to see as a "safe zone."

The attacks resonate as a message that Ankara will not tolerate Syrian army positions that amount to indirect cover or support for the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and its main component, the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which Turkey insists should be removed from the border strip. The SDF and YPG appear to have changed the rules of the game as well, mounting overt attacks on Turkish border posts and patrols, something they have hitherto avoided.

[Erdogan's talk of fence-mending](#) with Damascus followed his Aug. 5 meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi and [Russian capital flows](#) to Turkey. Back in 2016, he had said that Turkey's military thrust into northern Syria aimed to [end the rule](#) of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, whom he described as a "tyrant wrecking state terror" on his people. Now, Erdogan says the issue for Ankara "is not about defeating or not defeating Assad."

The issue, he argues, is about the threat of terrorism — a reference to the Syrian Kurdish forces, which Turkey equates with the Kurdistan Workers Party, the armed Kurdish outfit that has fought Ankara since 1984. In [remarks to reporters](#)

on Aug. 19, Erdogan took a swipe at Washington's collaboration with the SDF, charging that "the United States and coalition forces have been primarily nourishing terrorism in Syria." He said he told Putin that Turkey and Russia should step up cooperation "to carry out a fight against terrorism," and added, "We don't want to prolong further the process here. We don't have an eye on Syria's territory. ... The regime should comprehend that."



A Turkey-backed fighter looks out from a military position in the Syrian area of Jibrin in Aleppo's eastern countryside toward the Kurdish-controlled area of Tal Rifaat on July 19, 2022. - BAKR ALKASEM/AFP via Getty Images

Turkey, Erdogan stressed, "is in contact with Russia on every step it takes" in Syria. "We wished to work more efficiently with Iran as well, but this did not materialize," he added.

Regarding Syria's future, Erdogan voiced hope that a new "constitution will be drafted as soon as possible and steps will be taken to resolve the grievances of the people." Recalling that Turkey hosts nearly 4 million Syrian refugees, he said, "The process might be much more auspicious from now on. ... Political dialogue or diplomacy between states should never be discarded." He called for "more advanced steps with Syria," which, he said, would

help "foil many ploys" against Muslim nations in the region.

In a further reflection of the U-turn in Ankara's rhetoric, [Numan Kurtulmus](#), deputy chair of Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, said, "Presenting the issue as an issue between Turkey and the Syrian regime is extremely wrong. It's an issue between the Syrian regime and its people."

On the ground, however, Turkey has continued to send military reinforcements to Syria, and Turkish forces and their Syrian rebel allies have stepped up [coordinated attacks](#) on Kurdish forces along contact lines in Tal Rifaat, Manbij, Ain al-Issa, Kobani and Tal Tamer. The attacks appear to be Ankara's reminder that the prospect of peace with Damascus is conditioned on jointly fighting the Kurds. They seem to also be a message that Turkey will continue to target Kurdish forces in the border strip and Damascus should accept that as of today.

Following the accords that put an end to Turkey's Operation

Peace Spring in northeastern Syria in 2019, Turkey had acquiesced to Syrian government forces moving north to the Turkish border as part of understandings with the SDF. But it seems it will no longer accept deployments that serve to camouflage the YPG or SDF presence near the border.

In a staggering sign to that effect, the Turkish military hit a base used by Syrian soldiers in an area west of the Kurdish-populated border town of Kobani on Aug. 16. Three soldiers were killed and six others injured in the strike, according to Syrian sources. Turkey's Defense Ministry said the [strike was a response](#) to a deadly mortar attack on a Turkish border post. Yet, there was no information that the mortar was fired from the base of the Syrian soldiers. That the retaliation targeted the Syrian army rather than the SDF is thought provoking.

Furthermore, a [Turkish drone](#) targeted government forces at the Menagh military airport in the north of Aleppo province the following day, reported the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, with no immediate information about casualties. On Aug. 18, [two Syrian soldiers](#) were reportedly wounded in [Turkish attacks](#) near Tal Tamer in Hasakah province, a region where Turkish shelling had left another pair of soldiers injured on Aug. 12. In Aleppo alone, the observatory tallies seven Turkish attacks on areas where government and Kurdish forces are both present since July.

As for Kurdish-held areas, the attacks have been akin to a war in recent months, short of only a ground offensive to

complete the picture. According to an Aug. 18 report in the Syrian daily Al-Watan, Turkish drones have carried out **52 strikes** in SDF-controlled areas this year, killing 53 people, including five civilians, and injuring at least 86.

On the evening of Aug. 18, four girls were killed and 11 others injured while playing volleyball at a UN education center in Hasakah in a drone attack that the de facto Kurdish-led autonomous administration in the region **blamed on Turkey**. The commander of the US-led coalition forces in Syria and Iraq **condemned the attack** without naming a perpetrator.

The escalation has seen the SDF extend its firing range toward the Turkish border. On Aug. 8, its media office claimed that 23 Turkish soldiers had

been killed in **three attacks** along the border in the Turkish province of Mardin. There was no statement about casualties from the Turkish side, but it was the first time the SDF claimed responsibility for an attack despite previous exchanges of fire at the border.

In another statement on Aug. 18, the SDF said its forces had taken “a series of efficient **actions against the occupying Turkish army** in response to its attacks” and vowed to continue to do so. It claimed killing six soldiers near a border outpost in the Turkish province of Sanliurfa, targeting another border outpost in Gaziantep and killing a soldier in an attack on an armored vehicle at the border in Mardin.

On the Turkish side, officials said a **soldier was killed** and four

others injured in the Aug. 16 attack on the border outpost in Sanliurfa. This was the attack to which Turkey responded by bombing the Syrian army base near Kobani. In the second attack claimed by the SDF, **mortars landed** on an empty field. A **mortar attack** on the same border outpost in Gaziantep had left a soldier dead and three others wounded on May 12. No casualties were reported in the Aug. 10 **attacks** at the border in Mardin.

A Kurdish source knowledgeable of the matter told Al-Monitor, “The SDF has for the first time claimed responsibility for retaliatory attacks. There have been exchanges of fire previously, but they would be stopped upon requests from Russia and the international coalition. The SDF has now changed the rules of engage-

ment because the United States and Russia — the guarantors of the 2019 accords — have failed to prevent Turkey’s attacks. This has been the case for about a month.”

Back in 2019, months before Turkey seized control of the northeastern border strip between Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ain in Operation Peace Spring, SDF commander **Mazloum Abdi** had told a group of journalists in Hasakah, including this author, that a Turkish attack would spark a full-scale war along the entire border. The clashes ultimately remained contained to the targeted region, as had happened in Afrin in 2018. The Kurdish restraint stemmed from concerns over giving Turkey a pretext for an all-out occupation, also reflecting the United States’ breaking influence.

## Kurdistan au féminin

22/08/2022

Le Kurdistan à travers le regard féminin

# Une jeune Kurde de 18 ans assassinée à Şırnak

## TURQUIE / KURDISTAN DU NORD –

Firdevs Babat, une jeune Kurde de 18 ans habitant Şenoba, dans la province de Şırnak, a été assassinée par son ex petit-ami. L’assassin appartiendrait à un clan de la région collaborant avec l’Etat turc depuis des années et qui commettent des écocide en abattant les forêts de la région.

La gendarmerie turque (police militaire) de la province kurde de Şırnak a découvert samedi soir un corps dans la rivière Hezil, dans le district d’Uludere (Roboski). La femme morte a été retrouvée partiellement déshabillée et coincée entre

deux rochers, ont annoncé dimanche les autorités. Ses diverses blessures évoquaient un homicide, c’est pourquoi le corps a dû être autopsié.

Entre-temps, il est apparu que le défunt était Firdevs Babat, 18 ans, de la ville de Şenoba. L’adolescente avait été portée disparue par ses parents jeudi après être partie tôt le matin pour rendre visite à une amie mais n’est pas revenue. Elle aurait été tuée le même jour.

Une brigade des homicides enquête sur le site bouclé depuis samedi. Cela comprenait également la sécurisation des preuves. Vraisemblablement,

car le corps était resté là depuis si longtemps, la cause du décès n’a pas pu être déterminée malgré plusieurs heures d’autopsie à l’hôpital d’Uludere, de sorte que le corps a été transféré à l’hôpital de Şenoba. D’autres analyses seraient en cours.

Dimanche soir, un suspect a été interpellé. Il s’appelle Ahmet Babat. Il serait issu de la même famille élargie de Şenoba à laquelle appartenait également la victime Firdevs Babat, et serait son ex-petit ami. Lors du premier interrogatoire de police, l’homme aurait gardé le silence. Il a ensuite avoué au parquet d’Uludere qu’il avait tué la jeune fille de

18 ans. Un tribunal a ordonné son placement en garde à vue.

## Association de gardes villageois de Babat

L’association familiale Babat, qui appartient à la tribu Goyan, est presque entièrement à la solde de l’État turc en tant que clan de gardes villageois. Depuis les années 1990, les Babats sont impliqués dans la sale guerre contre le PKK, faisant « disparaître » de nombreuses personnes par l’équipe d’escadrons de la mort surnommée « *l’Équipe de Dague* » (Hançer Timi). Aujourd’hui, ils participent à l’écocide au Kurdistan du Nord et à l’invasion du Kurdistan du Sud.



Wladimir van Wilgenburg  
22/08/2022

## Iranian Kurdish parties unite after 16 years split

**T**wo Iranian Kurdish parties on Sunday announced that they unified their parties again, after 16 years of being separated.

The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party – Iran (KDP-I) decided to reunite again after long negotiations.

We are pleased and proud to announce that the negotiations between the leadership of the KDP and the #PDKI have finally resulted in the unification of the two parties. Congratulations to the people of #Kurdistan! #PDKI [pic.twitter.com/457N5VLXYI](https://pic.twitter.com/457N5VLXYI) — PDKI (@PDKIenglish) August 21, 2022

“We are pleased and proud to announce that the negotiations between the leadership of the KDP and the PDKI have finally resulted in the unification of the two parties,” the official account of the PDKI said in a tweet.

The PDKI itself was founded in the city of Mahabad in Iranian Kurdis-



Khalid Azizi, Secretary General of the KDP-I (left), and Mustafa Hijri, Secretary General of the PDK-I (right) hold hands in a sign of unity (Photo: Kurdistan u Kurd.)

tan (Rojhelat) on Aug. 16, 1945. The party has been fighting for Kurdish autonomy within a federal and democratic Iran. Iran had in the past assassinated PDK-I leaders Abdulrahman Ghassem-lou and Sadeq Sharafkandi in Europe in 1989 and 1992 respectively, weakening the PDK-I.

The KDP-I split from PDKI in 2006 after an internal dispute. Previously, both parties had separate headquarters in the Kurdistan Region’s town of Koya that were both hit by Iranian ballistic missile strikes in 2018, which killed 18 people.

The parties in a [joint statement](#) said the split in 2016 caused a great sadness among supporters of the party.

“The people of East Kurdistan (Iranian Kurdistan) never accepted this separation and did not recognize it officially,” the statement said, adding that they now will open a new chapter for the party. “Since their division, in 2006, the both splinter factions of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan were under immense pressure by their supporters and people of Rohjelat (Iranian Kurdistan),” Sierwan Najmaldin Karim, President of the

Washington Kurdish Institute (WKI), told Kurdistan 24.

“At the same time, Iranian Kurdish opposition parties seek to unite their front and reorganize their struggle in the light of regional and international events. The reunion of PDK-I will pave the way for other Kurdish parties to do so, such as the Komala party.”

“Additionally, this step will result in gaining more backing inside Rohjelat and internationally. Both wings share the same ideology and principles,” he concluded.

# Barzani says former Turkish president wanted federation with Iraq's Kurds

As [Turkey escalates](#) its campaign against [Kurdish militants](#) in the north of Syria and Iraq and Kurdish politicians within its borders, Masoud Barzani, the preeminent leader of Iraq's Kurds, recalls a time when Ankara's policy toward his people was distinctly different.

In the fifth volume of his memoirs published on Aug. 16 and titled "Barzani and the Kurdish Freedom Movement," Barzani describes how Turgut Ozal, the iconoclastic liberal who governed Turkey first as prime minister and then president from 1983 until his sudden death in 1993, floated the idea of "annexing" Iraqi Kurdistan and the oil-rich province of Kirkuk as well as Mosul, which had been "unjustly" taken from Turkey and made part of Iraq by the League of Nations in 1924. It's the first time Barzani has publicly shared this information.

Barzani says he was "puzzled" by Ozal's frankness and decided to raise the matter with the Americans. The Americans said they would get back to him on "this great subject that is worthy of further research" but then never did.

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The conversation between Barzani and Ozal took place after the first Persian Gulf War. The United States had kicked the late Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussain out of Kuwait and declared no-fly zones over the



Masoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, speaks during a ceremony to commemorate the Anfal massacre over 100 coffins draped with the Kurdish flag and containing the remains of victims in Erbil, the capital of Iraq's northern Kurdish autonomous region, July 30, 2022. - SAFIN HAMED/AFP via Getty Images

Shiite-majority south and the Kurdish-majority north of Iraq while crippling Baghdad with sanctions. US jets shielding the Kurds and the Shiites from further attack would fly out of the Incirlik airbase in southern Turkey. The first seeds of the American- and Turkish-midwifed Kurdish statelet in Iraq were thus sown.

Today, with thousands of Turkish forces deployed across northern Iraq and Turkish spies sprouting from every corner, a growing number of Iraqis, including their leaders, believe that Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan harbors similar ambitions. That's unlikely.

As racist sentiments toward an estimated 5 million Syrian and other refugees soar, adding more Kurds and Arabs to the population would hardly be a vote winner. In any case, Ozal's musings were not driven by hostility to the Kurds. On the contrary, says Cengiz Candar, a leading Turkish analyst on the Middle East and an Al-Monitor contributor, who served as Ozal's adviser from

1990 until his demise. When it came to the Kurds, Ozal was the most forward-leaning Turkish leader in the country's modern history, one who played a critical role in helping get Iraq's Kurds to where they are today.

Candar says Ozal had urged President George Herbert Walker Bush to overthrow Hussein, pledging full Turkish military support for the proposed campaign. Ozal had been deeply traumatized by Saddam's use of chemical nerve agents against the Kurds in Halabja in 1988. He aired his revulsion to the Iraqi leader in a face-to-face meeting. "He viewed Saddam as a menace to the region and wanted him gone," Candar said.

Candar noted that Ozal had expected Saddam to fall far sooner. In the chaos that would likely ensue and with Iran swooping in, Ozal believed that Turkey's natural partners in the region were the mainly Sunni Kurds.

As such, incorporating the Kurdish-majority areas — and

possibly Mosul and Kirkuk — were ideas that Ozal toyed with, though he told Candar he regarded oil as a curse that held back nations from democratizing.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry and the country's generals who then held sway were horrified. Turkey's chief of general staff resigned in protest. It didn't help that Ozal believed that Turkey should switch from a tightly centralized system to a loose federal one under which the country's own Kurds would enjoy some form of cultural and political autonomy. Candar says that Ozal was also unshakably pro-Western, which is why he applied to the European Union for full membership back in 1987.

For a while, it seemed that Erdogan, with his blitz of democratic reforms tailored to secure EU membership, including the first ever direct peace talks with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), had embraced Ozal's vision. Today, Erdogan is indistinguishable from the Turkish generals that he determinedly defanged.

Turkey's close alliance with the Kurdistan Regional Government remains intact, cemented by a pipeline that since 2014 has carried Iraqi Kurdish crude to export terminals on Turkey's Mediterranean shore. However, its unremitting military campaign against the PKK with an ever rising toll of civilian lives is putting Iraqi Kurdish leaders increasingly at odds with their own people. Though few dare say so, and it's plainly exaggerated, to many, Erdogan is starting to look.



Par Reuters  
23.08.2022

## La Turquie dit ne pas avoir de conditions préalables au dialogue avec la Syrie

**ANKARA (Reuters)** - La Turquie n'a pas de conditions préalables au dialogue avec le gouvernement syrien et les pourparlers doivent être axés sur des objectifs, a déclaré mardi le ministre turc des Affaires étrangères, Mevlut Cavusoglu, dans un nouvel assouplissement de la position d'Ankara vis-à-vis de Damas.

La Turquie a soutenu les rebelles qui luttent pour renverser le président syrien Bachar al Assad et a rompu ses relations diplomatiques avec Damas au début du conflit qui dure depuis 11 ans.

Mais l'intervention russe a aidé le gouvernement de Bachar al Assad à repousser les rebelles dans une poche du nord-ouest de la Syrie. Le président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan a dé-



La Turquie n'a pas de conditions préalables au dialogue avec le gouvernement syrien et les pourparlers doivent être axés sur des objectifs, a déclaré mardi le ministre turc des Affaires étrangères, Mevlut Cavusoglu (photo), dans un nouvel assouplissement de la position d'Ankara vis-à-vis de Damas. / Photo d'archives / REUTERS / Umit Bektas

claré, après des entretiens en Russie au début du mois, que son homologue russe Vladimir

Poutine avait suggéré à la Turquie de coopérer avec le gouvernement syrien pour lutter

contre la violence le long de leur frontière commune.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan a prévenu que la Turquie pourrait lancer une nouvelle incursion militaire dans le nord de la Syrie, visant les combattants kurdes syriens, afin d'étendre une "zone de sécurité" dans laquelle Ankara estime que certains des 3,6 millions de réfugiés syriens qu'elle accueille actuellement pourraient retourner.

Interrogé la semaine dernière sur d'éventuelles discussions avec Damas, le président turc aurait déclaré que les relations diplomatiques entre les États ne peuvent jamais être totalement rompues. Il est "nécessaire de prendre de nouvelles mesures avec la Syrie", a dit Recep Tayyip Erdogan, cité par les médias turcs.

**L'Orient  
LE JOUR**

23/08/2022

## Réunification de deux partis d'opposition kurdes iraniens, 16 ans après leur divorce

**D**eux partis kurdes iraniens d'opposition, interdits par Téhéran et basés au Kurdistan d'Irak, ont annoncé leur réunification, seize ans après une dispute interne qui avait mené à leur séparation. Les négociations entre le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan d'Iran (PDKI) et le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan – Iran « ont abouti à l'unification du parti », ont indiqué

les instances dans un communiqué publié dimanche soir. En 2006, à l'issue de querelles internes, une fraction du PDKI avait claqué la porte pour créer une nouvelle formation, le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan – Iran. Créé en 1945, le PDKI a été interdit en Iran après la révolution de 1979, Téhéran le considérant comme une organisation terroriste. La réunification des deux partis « est une

nouvelle étape dans la lutte contre le régime de la République islamique d'Iran et contre la mentalité qui nie le pluralisme ethnique en Iran et les droits des différents peuples », ont encore écrit les dirigeants du parti dans leur communiqué.

Deux partis kurdes iraniens d'opposition, interdits par Téhéran et basés au Kurdistan

d'Irak, ont annoncé leur réunification, seize ans après une dispute interne qui avait mené à leur séparation. Les négociations entre le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan d'Iran (PDKI) et le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan – Iran « ont abouti à l'unification du parti », ont encore écrit les dirigeants du parti dans leur communiqué.

## Pourquoi Erdoğan a plus que jamais besoin d'Assad

Les dernières frappes aériennes turques sur les postes frontières syriens et les positions kurdes suggèrent une nouvelle série d'échanges meurtriers entre Damas et Ankara. Les véritables cibles de la Turquie sont les forces kurdes soutenues par les Américains, mais après d'innombrables efforts pour résoudre le problème du Nord-Est de la Syrie, le président Recep Tayyip Erdoğan doit prendre conscience qu'il ne peut pas sortir de cette situation délicate en bombardant.

Alors qu'Erdoğan effectue lentement mais sûrement un virage à 180° sur toutes ses politiques du Printemps arabe, notamment avec les récents rapprochements avec les Saoudiens et les Émiratis, le temps est venu pour une remise à zéro du compteur syrien. La récente rencontre du ministre turc des Affaires étrangères Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu avec son homologue syrien montre d'Ankara s'est élançé sur le chemin de Damas.

En Syrie, les divisions sont telles que chaque levier que la Turquie a pu avoir perd en force de jour en jour

Si ce chemin est long et semé d'embûches russes et iraniennes, Erdoğan – face à des élections à venir qui seront dominées par les questions de terrorisme, de démographie et de réfugiés syriens – n'a d'autre choix



Le président syrien Bachar al-Assad accueille le Premier ministre turc Recep Tayyip Erdoğan à Damas, en avril 2008 (SANA/AFP)

que de tenter de rétablir ses liens avec Damas. Mais cette réconciliation a probablement plus à voir avec le pragmatisme de l'accord d'Adana de 1998 qu'avec le copinage d'un peu plus tard, à l'époque où Erdoğan et le président syrien Bachar al-Assad passaient leurs vacances en Méditerranée.

Si Erdoğan a habilement manœuvré entre l'OTAN et la Russie sur l'Ukraine, il s'est heurté de manière répétée à un mur dans ses tentatives de jouer les équi-

libristes en Syrie. L'offensive militaire turque annoncée depuis longtemps, mais constamment reportée, dans le Nord de la Syrie commence à ressembler à l'histoire du garçon qui criait au loup.

La principale raison, c'est que dans la mesure où le Nord-Ouest de la Syrie est comme l'arrière-cour de la Turquie, toute nouvelle offensive sur le Nord-Est créerait des problèmes pour les supplétifs de la Turquie ailleurs. Erdoğan n'a donc d'autre choix que de



Des chars turcs à l'ouest de Karkamis, ville à la frontière turco-syrienne, en septembre 2016 (AFP)

conclure une entente lui permettant de sauver la face avec Assad.

### Diviser pour mieux régner

En ce qui concerne l'Ukraine, la Turquie a su tirer son épingle du jeu, Erdoğan jouant avec adresse sa carte de la diplomatie du diviser pour régner entre la Russie et l'OTAN. Mais en Syrie, les divisions sont telles que chaque levier que la Turquie a pu avoir perd en force de jour en jour.

La Turquie ne peut pas prétendre combattre l'État islamique car Washington considère l'ennemi juré de la Turquie, les Forces démocratiques syriennes, comme les principaux protagonistes de la lutte contre le terrorisme militant. Ankara ne peut pas non plus prétendre agir comme interlocuteur de Damas comme elle l'a fait il y a plus de dix ans.

La Turquie ne veut pas contrebalancer les Russes non plus ; malgré la relation multi-niveaux d'Ankara avec Moscou, Poutine n'abandonnera pas Assad en faveur d'Erdoğan car la Syrie est l'allié arabe stratégique de Moscou depuis plus de 50 ans et c'est actuellement le principal pivot pour le retour de la Russie au Moyen-Orient.

En outre, après les efforts déployés par Erdoğan pour



retrouver les bonnes grâces des [Saoudiens](#) et des [Émiratis](#), il ne peut plus prétendre soutenir les groupes prônant l'islam politique, ce qui lui fait perdre certains des progrès réalisés en 2011.

En Syrie, malgré la distraction ukrainienne, les Russes sont actifs, [tirant régulièrement contre l'aviation israélienne](#) pour faire monter les enchères contre toute menace directe envers Damas. Au sommet de Téhéran le mois dernier, la Russie et l'[Iran](#) ont tous deux [mis en garde](#) Erdoğan contre une nouvelle invasion de la Syrie. Une [guerre de renseignements](#) prend de l'ampleur entre Iraniens et Turcs, et ni Ankara ni Téhéran ne veulent qu'elle ne s'étende au Nord de la Syrie.

Dans le même temps, les Russes n'ont pas perdu de vue les impacts des [drones turcs](#) sur leurs forces en Ukraine, sans compter le [conflit entre l'Arménie et l'Azerbaïdjan](#). Tout cela signifie que l'armée turque doit réfléchir à deux fois avant de lancer toute nouvelle opération.

### Colère de l'opinion publique

Si Erdoğan n'a pas su unir les forces d'opposition syriennes pour affronter le gouvernement de Damas, sa politique syrienne ces dix dernières années a paradoxalement uni contre lui ses opposants en Turquie, qui sont [contre](#) les opérations turques en Syrie. Cela contribue au malaise [national](#) et aux frictions sur ce qui est perçu comme une prise de pouvoir des Syriens en Turquie.



Des combattants syriens, soutenus par la Turquie, autour d'un char lors d'un exercice militaire dans la campagne de Manbij, en Syrie, le 2 juin 2022 (AFP)

Les réfugiés syriens sont victimes de [violences xénophobes](#) et accusés d'être responsables des malheurs [économiques de la Turquie](#), mais [l'opinion publique est aussi en colère](#) face aux opérations militaires turques en Syrie, qui sont peu transparentes sur le plan financier et ne donnent pas de résultats. Les [partis](#) d'opposition [font campagne](#) pour remettre à plat les relations avec Damas et [rapatrier les réfugiés syriens](#) dans leur pays. Erdoğan est désormais aculé sur le sujet syrien.

### Le nord de la Syrie est devenu le défouloir d'Erdoğan

Étant donné les [griefs historiques](#) d'Erdoğan et du président [américain Joe Biden](#) concernant le soutien allégué de la Turquie aux organisations terroristes, Ankara a peu de poids à Washington. Et Brett McGurk, césar du Moyen-

Orient à Washington, a également un petit faible pour les [Kurdes syriens](#).

Si la Russie et les États-Unis semblent soutenir un rapprochement des Kurdes avec Damas et le considérer comme l'option la plus satisfaisante, Ankara n'a d'autre choix que de se réconcilier également avec Damas. L'opposition syrienne peut se reposer sur ses deux oreilles, sachant qu'il est quasiment impossible qu'Erdoğan ne l'abandonne complètement à Idlib. Mais comme le président turc l'a montré en renouant le contact avec des dirigeants du Moyen-Orient [autrefois dédaignés](#), il n'y a pas de raison qu'il ne puisse pas recoller les morceaux avec Assad.

Malgré le discours nationaliste et les récentes frappes aériennes, le temps d'Erdoğan est compté avant les prochaines élections pour résoudre le nœud gordien qu'est

la Syrie. Pour sa part, Assad peut se contenter d'attendre : la Turquie, une fois de plus, ne pourra pas s'en sortir en bombardant le Nord-Est syrien – et Erdoğan a bien plus besoin d'Assad que l'inverse. - [Kamal Alam](#) est spécialiste de l'histoire militaire contemporaine du Moyen-Orient. Entre 2015 et 2019, il a été chercheur au Royal United Services Institute, think tank britannique spécialisé dans la défense et la sécurité. Il est actuellement chercheur à l'Institute for Statecraft et maître de conférences dans plusieurs établissements militaires à travers le Moyen-Orient.

*Les opinions exprimées dans cet article n'engagent que leur auteur et ne reflètent pas nécessairement la politique éditoriale de Middle East Eye.*

*Traduit de l'anglais (original) par VECTranslation.*

The New York Times

Bret Stephens  
Opinion Columnist  
Aug. 23, 2022

## Will Anyone Punish Iran for Its Murderous Campaign?

A lot has been written about the broader meaning of the attack this month on Salman Rushdie, for which a [Muslim religious fanatic](#) has been charged with attempted murder. Not enough has been said about the evil of the regime that presumably inspired the deed and so many others like it — or of what it says of the wisdom of trying to strike a nuclear deal with it.

The Islamic Republic of Iran did not take responsibility for the murder attempt on Rushdie. But Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's 1989 fatwa against him for "The Satanic Verses" remains in effect, and in 2007 Rushdie reported that every Feb. 14 he receives a "sort of Valentine's card" from Iran recalling its promise to kill him. Following this month's attack, Iranian state media called it "divine retribution."

Nor is Tehran being discreet about similar attempts being made on American and European soil against some of its other enemies, literary or political.

On Aug. 10, the Justice Department [unveiled criminal charges](#) against Shahram Poursafi, a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, for trying to orchestrate [an assassination attempt](#) against former national security adviser John Bolton. Axios's Mike Allen [reported the same day](#) that Iran had put out a \$1 million bounty for the murder of former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

In July, the target was Masih Alinejad, the Iranian American journalist and human-rights activist, [whose Brooklyn home](#) was visited last month by a man later arrested with a loaded AK-47 in his car. The regime was also behind [an elaborate earlier kidnapping attempt](#) against Alinejad.

Last year, a Belgian court con-



A memorial for Salman Rushdie outside the site where he was attacked. Credit...Angela Weiss/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

victed Vienna-based Iranian diplomat Assadollah Assadi, along with three Iranian Belgian accomplices, in a plot to bomb a 2018 gathering of Iranian opposition figures in Paris. In July the Belgian Parliament ratified a [prisoner-exchange treaty with Iran](#) after Tehran arrested a Belgian national in Iran on espionage charges, though a Belgian judge [has barred an exchange](#).

Also last year, the Iranian American writer Roya Hakakian [disclosed](#) that she had been warned by the F.B.I. that she, too, was a target for Iranian agents in the United States. Hakakian is the author of "[Assassins of the Turquoise Palace](#)," the stunning account of Iran's 1992 assassination of four Iranian opposition figures in Berlin's Mykonos restaurant, and of the long struggle for justice that followed.

### On it goes:

In November, [Norwegian media disclosed](#) that a former first secretary to the Iranian Embassy in Oslo was accused by authorities of being the mastermind of a 1993 assassination attempt against William Nygaard, Rushdie's publisher there. In

2020 Iran executed journalist and dissident [Ruhollah Zam](#) after he had been lured to Iraq and then handed over to Iran. That same year, in Dubai, [Iran kidnapped Jamshid Sharmahd](#), a German citizen and California resident. He is now at serious risk of execution. In 2018 [Denmark foiled an effort by Iranian intelligence](#) to assassinate a dissident there. In 2011, Iranian agents plotted to kill the Saudi ambassador to the United States by bombing the Cafe Milano in Washington. "The assassination needed to go forward, even if doing so would cause mass casualties," the plot leader instructed his accomplices, [according to court filings](#).

The point of this [abbreviated](#) list is that the stabbing attack on Rushdie, even if it was only inspired by Tehran rather than directed by it, was not unique. On the contrary, it was all too typical.

The Islamic Republic has been carrying out a campaign of assassination, kidnapping and intimidation of its critics from its earliest days. Those who argue that these efforts are merely responses by Iran for wrongs done to it — the Trump administration's

2020 assassination of Maj. Gen. Qassim Suleimani of the Revolutionary Guards, for instance — have cause and effect backward. Suleimani was targeted after a career spent killing others, [including, according to the Pentagon, hundreds of Americans](#). How does all this bear on the negotiations over Iran's nuclear program? The conventional wisdom is that it doesn't — that Iran's record of fanaticism and murder has nothing to do with its willingness to limit its atomic ambitions in exchange for economic incentives.

But this evades two key points. First, what signal does it send to Tehran that we will do nothing to punish it, and will continue to negotiate with it, even as it seeks to murder Americans on our own soil, including former senior officials? The answer is: weakness. That's a perception the Biden administration can ill afford, and an incentive to further Iranian provocations.

Second, what do Iran's murderous tentacles reveal about the character of the regime? The answer is: It doesn't stop at red lights. Advocates of a deal can tell themselves that it will have safeguards to verify compliance. But Iran has [found ways to cheat](#), and the lifting of sanctions will provide it with a financial bonanza that it will immediately put to destructive use. Making a deal with Iran now is about as wise as striking a new arms-control agreement with Vladimir Putin.

Since the attempt on Rushdie's life, writers, activists and celebrities have sought to raise the banner for free speech. That's good as far as it goes. But it will never go far enough until the free world again finds the nerve to stand up to the odious regime that brought the outrage about.



23-08-2022

## Le lac de Van gravement menacé par la sécheresse et la pollution

Tandis que de nombreux plans d'eau de la région sont asséchés, le lac de Van souffre également de la sécheresse et de la pollution due à l'écoulement des eaux usées.

Le lac de Van est grandement menacé par la sécheresse, ainsi que par la pollution causée par les eaux usées provenant des zones résidentielles situées dans les environs. La baisse des précipitations, particulièrement au cours de ces dernières années, a conduit à une réduction des eaux du lac. Dans le même temps, de nombreux étangs de la région se sont asséchés. Conséquence: le pourtour du lac de Van est envahi par les mauvaises odeurs et les déchets transportés par les ruisseaux qui traversent la ville.

### La faune menacée

Entre-temps, de nombreux poissons ainsi que des oiseaux



Des mouettes mortes sur les rives du lac de Van

ont péri à cause de la pollution urbaine. Un grand nombre de poissons ont péri dans le lac du barrage de Sarımeşmet, dans le district de Muradiye, en raison de la chaleur extrême de septembre dernier. Des chercheurs de la faculté

d'aquaculture de l'université Van Yüzüncü Yıl ont décrit ainsi la cause des décès massifs des poissons: « un état de choc provoqué par les changements soudains de la température de l'eau ».

Par ailleurs, un grand nombre

de poissons ont péri lorsque les eaux du barrage de Koçköprü sur le fleuve Zilan ont diminué en raison de la sécheresse.

Des poissons morts dans le bassin du barrage de Koçköprü

### Le lac Akgöl asséché

Le lac de Van n'est pas le seul lac de la région touché par la crise climatique. Le lac Akgöl, qui se trouve dans le district de Başkale, s'est complètement asséché en raison de la température extrême et de l'évaporation rapide de l'eau. Ce plan d'eau qui accueillait autrefois de nombreuses espèces d'oiseaux est aujourd'hui une terre aride.

Le Monde 24/08/2022

## Syrie : l'armée américaine bombarde des milices pro-iraniennes

Ces frappes contre des bunkers de stockage de munitions constituent une réponse à une attaque contre une base de la coalition antidjihadistes.

C'est la réponse à une attaque contre une base de la coalition antidjihadistes: l'armée américaine a annoncé avoir bombardé mardi des bases de milices pro-iraniennes dans l'est de la Syrie. Ces frappes ont eu lieu dans la province de Deir ez-Zor et ont visé des « infrastructures utilisées par

des groupes affiliés aux gardiens de la révolution », a écrit le commandement central de l'armée américaine au Moyen-Orient (Centcom) dans un communiqué, mercredi 24 août.

Le corps des gardiens de la révolution, considéré comme l'armée idéologique du ré-

gime iranien, figure sur la liste noire américaine des « groupes terroristes ». Ces « frappes de précision défensive et protègent les forces américaines d'attaques comme celles menées le 15 août dernier par des groupes soutenus par l'Iran », a déclaré le colonel Joe Buccino, le porte-parole

du Centcom, dans un communiqué.

(Statement Regarding Precision Strikes in Syria <https://www.centcom.mil/ME/DIA/STATEMENTS/Statements-View/Article/3137354/> — CENTCOM (@U.S. Central Command))

AUGUST 23, 2022



**TAMPA, Fla. - Statement Regarding Precision Strikes in Syria**

Attributable to Colonel Joe Buccino, USCENTCOM Communication Director:

"At President Biden's direction, U.S. military forces conducted precision airstrikes in Deir ez-Zor Syria today. These precision strikes are intended to defend and protect U.S. forces from attacks like the ones on August 15 against U.S. personnel by Iran-backed groups. The U.S. strikes targeted infrastructure facilities used by groups affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

"Today's strikes were necessary to protect and defend U.S. personnel. The United States took proportionate, deliberate action intended to limit the risk of escalation and minimize the risk of casualties.

"The President gave the direction for these strikes pursuant to his Article II authority to protect and defend U.S. personnel by disrupting or deterring attacks by Iran-backed groups.

"The United States does not seek conflict, but will continue to take necessary measures to protect and defend our people.

"U.S. forces remain in Syria to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS."

Le bombardement aérien américain de mardi a frappé neuf bunkers utilisés notamment pour le stockage de munitions, [a ensuite précisé](#)

[à CNN](#) le colonel Bucino. Les forces américaines ont « *mené cette opération proportionnée et délibérée pour limiter le risque d'escalade et*

*celui de faire des victimes* », a-t-il affirmé.

Le bombardement américain n'a pas été confirmé par les médias d'Etat syriens ou iraniens. L'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'homme (OSDH) et Deir ez-Zor 24, cités par l'agence Associated Press, ont déclaré que les frappes visaient le camp d'Ayash, dirigé par le groupe Fatimiyoun, composé de combattants chiites originaires d'Afghanistan. L'OSDH a précisé qu'au moins six militants syriens et étrangers avaient été tués dans ces frappes aériennes.

**Relancer l'accord de 2015 sur le nucléaire iranien**

Le 15 août, un drone est lancé contre un

bâtiment de la base américaine d'Al-Tanf, qui abrite des combattants de l'opposition syrienne soutenus par Washington. Aucun blessé n'avait été déploré. Des centaines de soldats américains sont encore déployés dans le nord-est de la Syrie dans le cadre de la coalition antidjihadiste chargée de combattre, avec leurs alliés kurdes des Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), les restes du groupe Etat islamique (EI).

Ce n'est pas la première fois que les Etats-Unis mènent des raids aériens en Syrie ou en Irak contre des groupes alignés sur l'Iran. En juin 2021, ils avaient frappé un centre opérationnel et un dépôt de munitions en deux lieux distincts en Syrie.

Lire aussi : [Organisation Etat islamique : un deuxième membre de la cellule des « Beatles » condamné à la prison à vie aux Etats-Unis](#)

Cette opération intervient au moment où Washington a prévu de répondre à un texte proposé par l'Union européenne dans le but de relancer l'accord de 2015 sur le nucléaire iranien. Elle survient aussi alors qu'un média d'Etat iranien a annoncé la mort, dimanche, d'un général des gardiens de la révolution, tué au cours d'une « mission » en Syrie. Aucune précision n'a été donnée sur les circonstances de la mort du général, juste décrit comme un « *défenseur du sanctuaire* », un terme utilisé pour désigner ceux qui travaillent pour le compte de l'Iran en Syrie ou en Irak. L'Iran dit avoir déployé des forces en Syrie à l'invitation du régime de Damas et simplement en tant que conseillers.

Le Monde avec AP, AFP et Reuters



Un blindé américain dans la province d'Hassaké, en Syrie, le 20 avril 2022. Des centaines de soldats américains sont encore déployés dans le nord-est de la Syrie dans le cadre de la coalition chargée de combattre les djihadistes, avec leurs alliés kurdes des Forces démocratiques syriennes, les derniers restes du groupe Etat islamique. DELIL SOULEIMAN / AFP

## La mort de Maria, réfugiée syrienne de 5 ans, réveille l'opinion publique grecque

La petite fille est morte après avoir été piquée par un scorpion sur un îlot au milieu du fleuve Evros, entre la Grèce et la Turquie, où, pendant des jours, un groupe de réfugiés a été abandonné.

« *Nous voulons que justice soit faite pour notre fille* ». Les parents de Maria, une petite réfugiée syrienne de 5 ans, morte des suites d'une piqûre de scorpion alors qu'elle était bloquée sur un îlot au milieu du fleuve Evros, entre la Grèce et la Turquie, étaient entendus cette semaine par le procureur d'Orestiada. « *Ils sont traumatisés, fatigués, enfermés dans le camp de Fylakio et ils doivent penser à enterrer leur fille dignement alors qu'elle a juste été recouverte de terre sur l'îlot où ils sont restés pendant plusieurs jours sans que les autorités grecques ne leur portent assistance, malgré de nombreux appels à l'aide* », explique Klotildi Prountzou, l'avocate du Conseil grec pour les réfugiés (CGR) qui les représente.

Le drame de la jeune Syrienne commence le 14 juillet. Maria, ses quatre frères et sœurs, et ses parents font alors partie d'un groupe composé de 50 migrants qui tentent la traversée périlleuse du fleuve Evros. D'après les témoignages des exilés, majoritairement syriens et palestiniens, ils sont arrêtés immédiatement après avoir rejoint la rive grecque, par des policiers et des hommes masqués. Ils sont ensuite renvoyés de force sur un îlot situé au milieu du fleuve, sans eau ni nourriture. « *Durant ce violent refoulement, le groupe que nous avons interrogé a raconté que deux hommes sont décédés par noyade, tandis qu'un autre migrant aurait été roué de coups jusqu'à la mort. Le procureur d'Orestiada doit également éclaircir ces points-là* », demande Klotildi Prountzou.

Le CGR et l'ONG Human-Rights360, contactés par le groupe de migrants, saisissent dès le 20 juillet la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme (CEDH) pour que les autorités grecques mettent à l'abri les demandeurs d'asile. Mais la police grecque affirme ne pas réussir à les localiser. Le 26 juillet, les ressortissants syriens et palestiniens sont de retour sur la rive turque où un accueil tout aussi brutal leur est réservé. Les soldats turcs refusent de les laisser passer de nouveau sur leur territoire, les tabassent et, après les avoir gardés plusieurs jours, les reconduisent le 6 août sur un autre îlot au milieu du fleuve Evros.

Le 9 août, alors que plusieurs ONG, le Haut-Commissariat des Nations unies pour les réfugiés (HCR) et des journalistes en contact avec le groupe ont tenté de persuader les autorités d'intervenir, Maria meurt à la suite de la piqûre d'un scorpion. Aya, sa sœur de 9 ans, est aussi piquée et sa santé se détériore. Dans cette zone militarisée, même l'accès des humanitaires, du HCR et des services de secours n'a pas été autorisé. La chaîne britannique Channel 4, qui réussit à communiquer avec les réfugiés par téléphone, publie alors un reportage glaçant largement repris en Grèce : « *Ici, c'est l'enfer sur terre. Nous sommes au milieu de la rivière, sans eau potable, entourés de serpents et de scorpions et personne ne vient nous aider !* » s'inquiète dans un appel vidéo Baida Al Saleh, une Syrienne de 27 ans.

### Partie de ping-pong macabre

Le président de la Fédération grecque des médecins hospitaliers, Panos Papanikolaou, demande que des collègues puissent aller sur place afin d'éviter « davantage de morts » mais les autorités locales refusent. Sur Twitter, le mot-dièse « Evros » est désormais en tête des recherches des utilisateurs en Grèce. Les médias et l'opposition se saisissent de la question. Le ministre des migrations, Notis Mitarachi, prétend alors que l'îlot où se trouvent les réfugiés n'est pas situé en Grèce mais en Turquie et accuse Ankara de ne pas venir à leur secours. Le principal parti d'opposition, Syriza (gauche), demande des preuves et rétorque que dans le cadastre, l'îlot est bien mentionné comme appartenant à la Grèce.

Coincés au milieu d'une partie de ping-pong macabre, où les deux pays se renvoient la balle, les réfugiés craignent à nouveau le pire lorsqu'une femme enceinte de huit mois commence à saigner abondamment. Le 15 août, alors que le pays fête l'Assomption de la Vierge Marie, le groupe de réfugiés est enfin retrouvé par la police grecque à 4 km de l'îlot après avoir, en désespoir de cause, commencé à traverser le fleuve sur un canot abandonné par d'autres migrants. Maria, pour sa part, a été enterrée à la va-vite sur le bout de terre.

La Grèce est accusée par des ONG et des enquêtes journalistiques de mener de manière systématique, depuis mars 2020, des refoulements illégaux de migrants vers la Turquie, une pratique contraire au droit international et

à la convention de Genève sur les réfugiés, qui s'accompagne souvent de racket, de coups et d'humiliations. Athènes a toujours nié avoir recours à ces méthodes et accuse au contraire Ankara d'instrumentaliser la question migratoire pour faire pression sur elle. Selon le ministre grec de la protection civile, Takis Theodorikakos, 25 000 migrants ont tenté d'entrer en Grèce dans la région de l'Evros rien qu'au mois d'août. « *Ils viennent majoritairement de Syrie et les autorités turques les arrêtent en leur donnant deux options : soit tenter de traverser en Grèce, soit être renvoyés en Syrie* », soutient Takis Theodorikakos. Ils ne sont plus les bienvenus en Turquie où, en mai dernier, le président Recep Tayyip Erdogan a annoncé « *préparer le retour d'un million* » de réfugiés syriens dans leur pays.

L'histoire tragique de la petite Maria a attiré l'attention de l'opinion publique grecque et de l'opposition, souvent restée silencieuse face aux refoulements de migrants car elle redoute d'être accusée de céder à la pression turque et de ne pas servir les intérêts nationaux.

A quelques mois des prochaines élections, le gouvernement conservateur, qui compte sur un électorat nationaliste, campe sur sa position et pense que, face à « *l'instrumentalisation de la question migratoire* » par Ankara, la solution est d'ériger une forteresse infranchissable. Mardi 23 août, un conseil de défense a été convoqué en urgence : il a été décidé de prolonger de 80 km le mur existant de 40 km à la frontière entre la Grèce et la Turquie dans la région de l'Evros...



26-08-2022

## 7 Kurdes exécutés par le régime iranien en un mois

Selon le Réseau des droits humains du Kurdistan, 52 personnes ont été arrêtées arbitrairement et 7 personnes exécutées au Rojhilat (Est-Kurdistan) au cours du mois dernier. L'ONG indique également que 6 kolbars ont été tués dans les villes de Sine et Urmia au cours de cette même période.

Le Réseau des droits humains du Kurdistan a publié un rapport sur les violations survenues au Kurdistan oriental entre le 22 juillet et le 22 août. Selon ce rapport, 52 personnes ont été arrêtées pour des motifs politiques dans les villes kurdes de Sine et Urmia. 7 d'entre elles sont aujourd'hui en prison et 10 sont en liberté surveillée. L'ONG précise qu'il n'y a pas encore

d'informations sur le sort des autres personnes arrêtées.

Le rapport indique par ailleurs que la cérémonie de funérailles organisée pour le combattant kurde Rêzan Cavid, tué au Rojava, a été entravée par les forces iraniennes et que la mère et le frère du défunt ont été entendus par la police.

Selon le rapport, 7 Kurdes condamnés pour homicide volontaire et crimes liés à la drogue ont été exécutés.

Le rapport indique également que 6 kolbars (porteurs de marchandises) sont morts à la suite d'attaques directes des forces du régime, et que 32 ont été blessés.

L'organisation de défense des

droits humains relève par ailleurs qu'une femme a été tuée par son mari à Kermanshah, et que 6 travailleurs ont perdu la vie dans des accidents du travail.

5 personnes ont été blessées à la suite d'explosions de mines au cours du mois dernier, rapporte encore l'ONG.



26-08-2022  
avec AFP

## Syrie : les Kurdes à l'offensive dans le camp d'Al-Hol, « pépinière de djihadistes »

L'immense camp de réfugiés d'Al-Hol, en Syrie, abrite au moins 56 000 personnes, dont 10 000 étrangers, que les Kurdes, en première ligne dans le combat contre Daesh, cherchent à recenser pour identifier les djihadistes

Les forces kurdes dans le nord-est de la Syrie ont arrêté des dizaines de personnes liées au groupe Daesh dans le camp de réfugiés d'Al-Hol, a déclaré vendredi un responsable kurde.

Ce camp, administré par les Forces démocratiques syriennes (FDS), dominées par les Kurdes, est situé à moins de 10 kilomètres de la frontière irakienne. Délabré et surpeuplé, il abrite, selon l'ONU, environ 56 000 personnes dont 10 000 étrangers, notamment des proches de djihadistes, des déplacés syriens et des réfugiés irakiens.

L'opération, lancée jeudi par les forces kurdes, « vise à arrêter les membres de l'EI dans le

camp qui sont à l'origine de plusieurs attaques terroristes », a déclaré Siyemend Ali des Unités de protection du peuple (YPG), la principale milice armée des forces kurdes. Au total, 27 personnes ont été arrêtées, a déclaré Ali depuis Al-Hol.

« Pépinière »

« Nos forces ont entamé le démantèlement des tentes vides utilisées par Daesh lors des attaques et ont commencé à enre-

gistrer les noms des résidents du camp et à relever leurs empreintes digitales », a-t-il précisé. Vendredi, les forces de sécurité kurdes étaient massivement déployées dans le camp, ont indiqué des correspondants de l'AFP.

Dans un communiqué, les FDS ont qualifié Al-Hol de « pépinière » de djihadistes, arguant que le camp était devenu un terrain fertile pour les nouvelles recrues terroristes.

Kurdistan au féminin 29/08/2022

## Enterrement de Suheyl Xurşîd Ezîz, militant kurde assassiné à Slémani

**KURDISTAN DU SUD** – L'écrivain et historien Suheyl Xurşîd Ezîz, a été abattu dimanche devant sa maison à Kifrî, dans la province de Sulaymaniyah. Pour les proches d'Ezîz, il a été tué par les agents turcs (MIT) qui ont multiplié les assassinats des activistes kurdes ces derniers mois. Suheyl Xurşîd Ezîz (Mamoste Şemal,) a été enterré dimanche soir à Kifrî.

L'écrivain et historien Suheyl Xurşîd Ezîz, membre de l'assemblée générale du Mouvement pour une société libre (Tevgera Azadî), a été abattu devant sa maison dans la ville kurde de Kifrî. Tevgera Azadî pense que le meurtre de Su-



heyl Xurşîd Ezîz a été ordonné par l'État turc car pour la Turquie, Tevgera Azadî est liée au PKK qu'il combat par tous les moyens légaux et illégaux. « Suheyl Xurşîd Ezîz a été victime d'un attentat terroriste. Il est mort aux mains de l'État turc et de ses complices », a

déclaré le mouvement.

Suheyl Xurşîd Ezîz était auteur, historien et membre de l'Assemblée générale du mouvement Tevgera Azadî. Il a été abattu dimanche par des hommes armés non identifiés devant son domicile à Kifrî, un

district du sud du gouvernorat de Sulaymaniyah. L'homme de 62 ans, également connu sous le nom de Mamoste Şemal, travaillait à l'autorité agricole locale. Le ou les assassins ont tiré plusieurs coups de feu sur Ezîz. Il a été inhumé dimanche soir au cimetière de Kifrî.

Tevgera Azadî a lancé un appel urgent aux autorités pour qu'elles prennent très au sérieux le point de vue du mouvement sur la possibilité que l'assassin ait pu être engagé par l'État turc. L'organisation appelle les dirigeants politiques du Kurdistan irakien à prendre des mesures immédiates pour accélérer l'enquête sur le meurtre.



2022/08/29

## Suspected ISIS Amilitants kill Kurdish shepherd in Kirkuk

**ERBIL (Kurdistan 24)** – A Kurdish shepherd was killed in southeast Kirkuk on Sunday by suspected ISIS militants, a security source told Kurdistan 24.

The attack took place near Rokhana lake in the southeastern Laylan subdistrict in the province, according to the police source.

At least four Kurdish shepherds were attacked by two suspected ISIS militants,

whose offensive was later repelled by the herders, the source added.

As a result of the clashes, Zirak Zahir, a Kurdish shepherd, and a militant were killed, he said. The other assailant fled the scene.

Previously, Kurdish shepherds have faced kidnapping by the members of the terror group in the disputed territories between Erbil and Baghdad.

Once they are abducted, their families are asked to pay a ransom in exchange for the shepherds' release. An amount of about \$25,000 is usually demanded by the abductors.

In June, an Arab shepherd was similarly kidnapped in Kirkuk. Two months earlier, four more shepherds were abducted in the same area.

Following the ISIS territorial defeat of the group in 2017, the

radical militants have resumed kidnapping as a form of income-generating business for the group, according to security experts and officials.

Lack of cooperation between Kurdish and Iraqi forces is usually cited as a factor behind the rise in attacks.

**Additional reporting by Kirkuk correspondent Soran Kamaran;**

## Irak : quinze manifestants tués par balle à Bagdad après l'annonce du « retrait définitif » de la politique de Moqtada Al-Sadr

Des centaines de personnes ont également été blessées dans le chaos qui a agité la « zone verte », un espace ultrasécurisé de la capitale, après l'annonce du leader chiite. Un couvre-feu décrété par l'armée a pris effet lundi en fin d'après-midi dans tout le pays.

Quinze partisans de Moqtada Al-Sadr ont été tués par balle, lundi 29 août, dans la « zone verte » à Bagdad, théâtre de violences depuis l'annonce, dans la journée, par le leader chiite de son « retrait définitif » de la politique, selon un nouveau bilan fourni par des sources médicales à l'Agence France-Presse (AFP).

Quelque 350 manifestants ont en outre été blessés – certains par balle, d'autres en respirant du gaz lacrymogène –, dans le chaos qui agitait la « zone verte », ce périmètre ultra-sécurisé du centre de la capitale irakienne, qui abrite des institutions gouvernementales et des ambassades.

Selon une source sécuritaire, les brigades de la paix, un groupe armé aux ordres de Moqtada Al-Sadr, visaient la « zone verte » depuis l'extérieur. A l'intérieur se trouvaient des forces spéciales de l'armée et une unité du Hachd Al-Chaabi, d'ex-paramilitaires pro-Iran intégrés aux forces irakiennes, qui répliquaient. La « zone verte » était notamment visée par des obus de mortier – au moins sept projectiles – tombés dans ce périmètre, a poursuivi cette source, qui n'était pas en mesure de fournir de bilan.

Habitué des coups d'éclat, M. Al-Sadr avait annoncé dans la matinée sur [Twitter](#) son « retrait définitif » de la politique. Une décision qui intervient alors que l'Irak est embourbé

dans une profonde crise politique depuis les élections législatives d'octobre 2021.

Riche en pétrole mais accablé par une grave crise économique et sociale, le pays n'a toujours pas de nouveau premier ministre ni de nouveau gouvernement, les forces

reaux, les forces de l'ordre tentaient de disperser d'autres manifestants à coups de grenades lacrymogènes aux entrées de la « zone verte ». Construit sous Saddam Hussein, le palais de la République était utilisé par l'ancien dictateur pour recevoir des hôtes de marque et abrite aujourd'hui le

Antonio Guterres, le secrétaire général des Nations unies (ONU), dont le siège de la mission en Irak se trouve dans la « zone verte », a appelé « au calme et à la retenue », et demandé « à tous les acteurs concernés de prendre des mesures immédiates pour désamorcer la situation et éviter la violence », a fait savoir son porte-parole, Stéphane Dujarric. « Le secrétaire général appelle toutes les parties et tous les acteurs à dépasser leurs différends et à s'engager, sans délai, dans un dialogue pacifique et inclusif », a-t-il ajouté. Le porte-parole du département américain de la défense, John Kirby, a de son côté jugé que ces violences étaient « inquiétantes » et appelé au « calme » et au « dialogue ».



Des militant sadristes dans la ville irakienne de Nassiriya, le 29 août.  
ASAAD NIAZI / AFP

chiites, dont celle de M. Al-Sadr, n'arrivant pas à se mettre d'accord sur leur mode de désignation. Le courant du leader chiite était arrivé en tête aux législatives mais, incapable de constituer une majorité, M. Al-Sadr avait fait démissionner ses députés en juin.

### Couvre-feu respecté dans la capitale

La situation a brutalement dégénéré lundi, après l'annonce de son retrait de la vie politique, des milliers de ses partisans envahissant le palais de la République, situé dans la « zone verte ». Alors que les sadristes investissaient les bu-

conseil des ministres. Le chef du gouvernement, Moustafa Al-Kazimi, a suspendu la réunion du conseil « jusqu'à nouvel ordre », appelant Moqtada Al-Sadr à « enjoindre aux manifestants de se retirer des institutions gouvernementales ».

L'armée irakienne a décrété un couvre-feu sur l'ensemble du pays à partir de 19 heures (18 heures à Paris). Dans la nuit, il semblait respecté dans la capitale. Les rues d'ordinaire animées étaient vides de toute voiture ou de tout passant.

### D'autres bâtiments gouvernementaux envahis

En soirée, le chaos a gagné d'autres régions irakiennes : dans la province de Zi Qar (sud), plusieurs sadristes ont envahi le siège du gouvernorat et pénétré dans d'autres bâtiments officiels à Nassiriya, selon l'AFP.

Le siège du gouvernorat de Babylone (centre), dans la ville de Hilla, a également été occupé par des partisans de Moqtada Al-Sadr, ont affirmé des témoins. Plusieurs routes reliant Hilla à Bagdad et à d'autres provinces du Sud ont par ailleurs été coupées.

### « Pas de place pour les réformes »

Depuis des semaines, M. Al-Sadr, qui compte des dizaines



de milliers de partisans au sein de la population, [réclamait la dissolution du Parlement et de nouvelles législatives anticipées](#) pour tenter de dénouer la crise. Plus généralement, il exige une « réforme » de fond en comble du système politique irakien et la fin de la « corruption ».

Pour Hamzeh Hadad, chercheur invité au Conseil européen pour les relations internationales (ECFR), l'annonce du « retrait » de Moqtada Sadr « n'est pas très

claire ». « Dans la tradition sadriste, on peut s'attendre à ce qu'il fasse marche arrière », a-t-il jugé dans un entretien à l'AFP. Mais, « et c'est plus terrifiant, on peut penser qu'il donne à ses partisans le feu vert pour faire ce qu'ils veulent, en disant qu'il ne répond plus de leurs actions ».

Samedi, Moqtada Al-Sadr avait proposé que « tous les partis » en place depuis la chute de Saddam Hussein en 2003 – le sien compris – renoncent aux postes gouvernementaux qu'ils

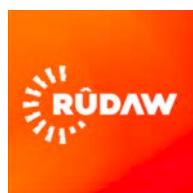
détiennent pour résoudre la crise. Il avait alors donné « 72 heures », faute de quoi « il n'y aurait pas de place pour les réformes ».

Le bras de fer qui l'opposait à ses adversaires chiites du Cadre de coordination n'avait, jusque-là, pas dégénéré en affrontements armés, mais le Hachd Al-Chaabi, d'anciens paramilitaires alliés à Téhéran et intégrés aux forces irakiennes, s'était dit prêt à « défendre les institutions étatiques ». Dans la soirée, le

Cadre de coordination a condamné l'« attaque contre les institutions de l'Etat », tout en appelant les sadristes au « dialogue ».

Né en 1974, Moqtada Al-Sadr n'a jamais lui-même gouverné depuis la chute de l'ancien dictateur Saddam Hussein. Mais de son fief de la ville sainte de Najaf (centre), son aura religieuse et politique porte dans une partie de la communauté chiite, majoritaire en Irak.

Le Monde avec AFP



29-08-2022

## Kurdish forces arrest 12 ISIS suspects in al-Hol camp

**ERBIL, Kurdistan Region** - Internal security forces (Asayish) in northeast Syria (Rojava) announced on Monday the arrest of 12 suspected members of the Islamic State (ISIS) group in the notorious al-Hol camp, marking the fourth day of an ongoing security operation.

"Our forces were able to complete the combing and thorough search operations ... arresting 12 suspects, five of whom admitted affiliation with ISIS," the Asayish said in a [statement](#).

Asayish, in cooperation with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the global coalition, launched Operation Security and Humanity on Thursday to counter ISIS sleeper cells in al-Hol camp, infamously known



Kurdish security forces inspect tents at the Kurdish-run al-Hol camp amid an ongoing operation against ISIS sleeper cells on August 28, 2022. Photo: Delil Souleiman / AFP

as a breeding ground for the terror group.

On the operation's third day, the Asayish [arrested](#) 48 suspected ISIS members, uncovered trenches used by the suspects as hideouts, and

demolished 54 tents used as the site for spreading the terror group's ideology.

ISIS also used the tents as courts for handing out punishments and execution sentences.

Security forces on Saturday [announced](#) the arrest of 27 ISIS suspects in the camp during the first three days of the operation.

The SDF arrested swarms of ISIS fighters and their families when they overran ISIS's last stronghold in Syria in March 2019. Many of these people were taken to al-Hol, which is now home to around 56,000 people - mostly women and children of different nationalities.

Located in Hasaka province, al-Hol has infamously been branded a breeding ground for terrorism, with Kurdish and Iraqi authorities describing the sprawling camp as a "ticking time bomb," saying the situation in the camp is "very dangerous" with ISIS sleeper cells active there.



29-08-2022

## One in twelve Syrian Kurds in Duhok are stateless, says NRC

ERBIL, Kurdistan Region - One in twelve Syrian Kurdish refugees who reside in the Kurdistan Region's Duhok province are stateless and do not possess their country's nationality, a humanitarian organization that assists people forced to flee said on Sunday.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) said it surveyed around 1,300 Syrian refugee families and revealed that almost 7,000 stateless Syrians exist out of nearly 86,000, which is eight percent of the total Syrian refugee population in Duhok.

"Not only have many Syrian Kurds in KRI [Kurdistan Region of Iraq] been living in displacement for over a decade, but their struggle is compounded by the fact that they remain stateless and on paper belong nowhere," NRC Country Director in Iraq James Munn said.

The data for the survey was obtained from Domiz camps, as well as Bardarash camp in Duhok province, and camps outside of the city, Policy and Advocacy Advisor at NRC Caroline Zullo told Rudaw English on Monday.



Refugees from Syria in the Kurdistan Region's Bardarash camp on January 12, 2022. Photo: Bilind T. Abdullah/Rudaw

Unregistered Syrian stateless Kurds (maktoum in Arabic, plural maktoumeen), were stripped of their citizenship by an impossibly rapid census conducted in 1962 in northeast Syria's (Rojava) Hasaka province where the highest concentration of Kurds are.

The census was conducted in a single day and around 120,000 Syrians in Hasaka were stripped of their citizenship in the aftermath, the overwhelming majority of whom were Kurds.

"Maktoumeen" was a term coined for those who could not provide authorities any documents during the one-day census, while those who possessed ID documents and could provide limited documentation to

prove their citizenship were classed as foreigners (ajانب in Arabic).

"In addition to being denied citizenship in their country, stateless Syrian Kurds have for generations faced a long list of restrictions such as not being able to own land, obtain a marriage certificate, enroll in school, vote, or get a job," according to NRC.

The NRC survey also says that more than a quarter of the refugees intend to travel elsewhere, meaning they will face difficulties regarding their legal status upon exiting the Kurdistan Region.

"We are still living in camps and our children cannot properly attend school ...

We also do not have many opportunities for jobs, but it is the same for Syrian citizens here [in Duhok] too. We just want to get an ID for any country for the future of our children," Ahmed, a Syrian Kurd, told NRC.

Due to the hereditary nature of statelessness, the number of "maktoumeen" has dramatically increased in the decades following the census.

In 2011, the total number of stateless Syrian Kurds had reached more than 517,000, according to data by the non-governmental organization Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ).

The NRC has called on the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the Iraqi federal government, and the government of Syria "to provide clear mechanisms and safe pathways to access services and obtain documentation."

The Kurdistan Region is home to almost two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, according to numbers from the KRG's Joint Crisis Coordination Center (JCC) with over 240,000 Syrian refugees living in the Region.

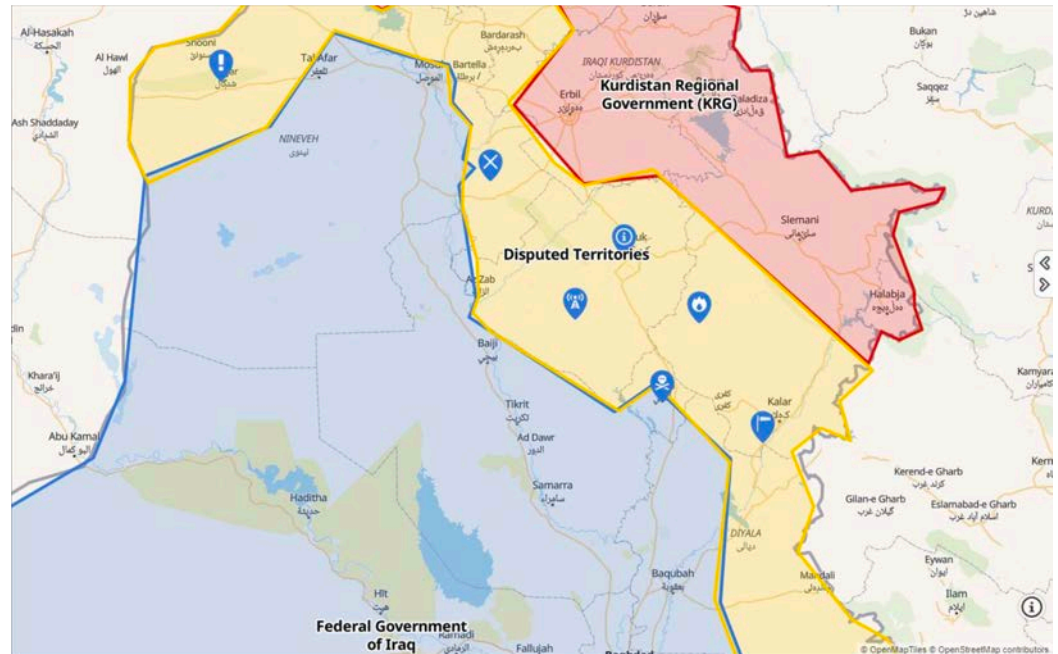


# Kirkuk Minute July 29, 2022

## Kirkuk

Iranian-backed militias kidnapped and tortured an off-duty Peshmerga named [Ayman Abdi Jassem](#) near Amerli on July 23. The militants assaulted Jassem, insulted his [Kakai faith](#), and shaved his mustache. Hundreds of Kakai Kurds protested the attack and called for the Iraqi government to arrest the perpetrators immediately. The Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs [described the act](#) as “ugly, far from all customs and laws” and demanded the attackers be arrested. On July 25, a delegation from the Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) met with senior Kakai leaders and requested “some days” to find the perpetrators and hand them over for prosecution. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) representative to Kirkuk, [Ali Iqbalpur](#), also participated in the meeting alongside the negotiating PMU delegation. On July 24, Kakai leaders from Mosul, Halabja, and Kirkuk met and laid out three conditions, including “the perpetrators must be brought to justice,” otherwise they will have a “stronger stance.” Nearly ten thousand Kakais gathered in support of the leaders.

Unknown militants bombarded the [Khor Mor gas field](#) in Sulaymaniyah Governorate’s Chamchamal District for the fourth time in less than a month on July 25. The Kurdistan Regional Government’s (KRG) Ministry of Natural Resources [said](#), “There were no casualties, and the natural gas production process was unaffected.” On July 27, The Peshmerga forces conducted a military operation near Qadir



Karam subdistrict and foiled another rocket attack at Khor Mor. The Peshmerga forces [confiscated a truck](#) with rocket launchers. The UAE-based Dana Gas manages the Khor Mor field, and suspected [Iranian-backed militias](#) began targeting it after Kurdish plans to export natural gas to Europe via Turkey were revealed.

On July 25, ISIS (Da’esh) terrorists targeted three power towers, transferring electricity from Kirkuk to Tikrit. On the following day, the terrorists clashed with the security forces southwest of Daququ, injuring two federal police officers.

Kirkuk police arrested “92 child beggars” in the city, brought from outside the province and used by [traffickers](#). Separately, the police also arrested four prostitution groups consisting of 26 women, including seven teenagers. The police said members of the groups are not Kirkuk residents, and they con-

fiscated counterfeit dollars during the arrests.

## Khanaqin

On July 26, a Diyala’s Operations Command delegation visited the 5th Infantry Brigade of the Peshmerga forces between Khanaqin and Kalar. According to a statement issued by the Peshmerga Brigade, they discussed the security situation in the region and filling the security gap between the two sides in Khanaqin and Kalar. The two sides stressed the need to promote relations and have further, cooperation, and coordination between them to destroy and eradicate the threat of Da’esh, which has increased dramatically since the October 16, 2017 events. Separately, in Tuz Khurmatu, a security meeting between the Iranian-backed militias, Iraqi federal police and army, and local police. According to a press release, four topics were discussed: “protection” of the

border areas with the Kurdistan Region, strengthening coordination between security institutions, further protection of the Kirkuk-Baghdad road, and how to “find” Da’esh sleeper cells.”

## Makhmour

On July 28, Da’esh terrorists released a kidnapped shepherd named Saleem Dahan near Makhmour after 20 days of captivity. The shepherd’s family paid 50,000 US dollars for his release.

## Shingal (Sinjar)

On July 27, the Hamburg Regional High Court [sentenced a German-born Da’esh terrorist](#) to five and a half years in prison for “crimes against humanity” during the Yazidi Genocide. This trial was the second for Da’esh terrorists in Germany in connection with the genocide against the Yazidi community in Iraq and Syria.



# Kurdistan's Weekly Brief August 30, 2022

*A weekly brief of events occurred in the Kurdistan regions of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.*

## Iran

Dozens of political parties and organizations, including exiled Kurdish and non-Kurdish opposition parties, congratulated the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDP-I) for its reunification with the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI). Both wings of the KDP-I agreed to hold a party congress within the next year and appointed an interim leader, Mustafa Hijri, and designated Khalid Azizi as spokesperson.

Iranian security forces arrested activists [Omed Ibrahim](#) in Shinno and Jamal Alawi in Mehabad. Iranian authorities also detained two civilians, Rebwar Talibi and Mohammed Bapander, in Baneh. Concurrently, Iranian intelligence officers (Ettela'at) in Sanandaj warned a female activist named Arazo Amjadi to refrain from participating in events or social activities.

Iranian border guards killed two Kurdish border porters (kolbars), Aras Mohammadpour and Rebwar Rashidi, near Baneh. At the same time, a mine from the Iran-Iraq War killed a 70-year-old man named Khasrow Chandaro near Gilanegharb.

## Iraq

Muqtada al Sadr announced his ["resignation"](#) from politics on August 29. Earlier that day, Grand Ayatollah Kadhim al Haeri [quit](#) his post and called for "obedience to the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ali Khamenei." Al Sadr criticized [al Haeri](#) and said Najaf remains home to the Maraji, who serve as sources of emulation for Twelver Shi'a. Thousands of al Sadr's supporters also stormed government buildings

in Baghdad and several provinces, including the government palace and prime minister's office. Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhimi responded by postponing cabinet meetings and imposing a curfew across all of Iraq except for the Kurdistan Region. Concurrently, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) [called for protesters](#) to "leave Baghdad's international zone, vacate all governmental buildings, and allow the government to carry out its responsibilities" after Sadrists stormed the Green Zone. Twenty Sadrists were killed and dozens were wounded in [clashes](#) with Iraqi security forces. Iraqi security forces also fought with Muqtada al Sadr's militia, [Saraya al Salam](#), in Baghdad and Basra on Monday night. Several protesters accused ["Iranian"](#) forces of firing on demonstrators. Al Sadr's resignation comes after his demand for Iraq's Federal Supreme Court to dissolve the Council of Representatives within 48 hours went unheeded due to the court's claimed lack of legal authority. President of Kurdistan Region Nechirvan Barzani responded to Monday's events by [urging](#) the involved parties to "return to logic" and hold a "national dialogue." Meanwhile, Iranian-backed militias in [Kirkuk began](#) moving towards Erbil and Sulaymaniyah checkpoints to ostensibly counter the deployment of Peshmerga forces. On Tuesday, al Sadr told his supporters to withdraw from the Green Zone and the Iraqi government lifted curfews.

Peshmerga forces defused three [Katyusha launchers](#) that were aimed at the natural gas facility run by the UAE-based Dana Gas near Qadir Karam.

Iranian-backed militias have attacked gas fields in Iraqi Kurdistan [several times](#) since the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) announced plans to export natural gas to Turkey and Europe. Separately, Kurdish security forces [announced](#) the arrest of four ISIS (Da'esh) terrorists that were planning attacks and assassinations in Bazyan.

Turkish drones struck the Makhmour refugee camp and a location near Shingal (Sinjar) on Monday. Preliminary reports indicated the attack killed and wounded several people.

## Syria

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the local security forces (Asayesh) launched a massive military operation inside the al Hol Camp, holding Da'esh families and captives. The three-day operation resulted in the arrest of [48 suspects](#) and the discovery of several tunnels and tents used by sleeper cells for "training children and holding Sharia courses." Terrorist have committed dozens of [crimes against women](#) in the camp in 2022, leaving the security forces to contend with it. The SDF also announced the arrest of twenty-three Da'esh suspects and drug dealers in Junaynah villages in Deir Ez Zor.

Turkish-backed factions arrested more [than a dozen](#) Kurds last week in occupied Afrin. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported most detainees are accused of working with the former Kurdish administration. At the same time, Turkish proxies also seized seven houses [belonging to Kurds](#).

On August 24, the United

States Central Command (CENTCOM) [released a statement](#) announcing attacks on Iranian-backed militias in Syria, responsible for shelling US troops. Earlier, on the same day, the US struck several bunkers in Deir Ez Zor which were being used by Iranian proxies to attack the US troops. "The United States does not seek conflict with Iran, but we will continue to take the measures necessary to protect and defend our people." read the CENTCOM statement.

## Turkey

The US Treasury Department warned Turkish companies [against working with Russian](#) companies and breaking the sanctions imposed by the west. More than ten Turkish companies so far have [acquired or sought Russian assets](#). The US also rejected the normalization efforts between Turkey and Syria. "The US does not intend to upgrade our diplomatic relations with the Assad regime, and we don't support other countries normalizing their relations, either," [said Vedant Patel](#), Deputy Spokesperson for the Department of State.

Turkish police arrested six people in Ankara over social media posts criticizing the government. In Urfa, the police detained the father of a [Roboski victim](#), without a warrant. In Sweden, a Kurdish activist named Zinar Bozkurt remained in custody, facing deportation to Turkey after a deal between the government and Turkey over NATO membership. Civil organizations expressed concerns, but Bozkurt's asylum case is under review.

# Russie-Iran, le grand rapprochement qui perturbe l'Occident

## Analyse

Malgré des avancées sur le dossier nucléaire, le régime iranien s'ancre de plus en plus dans l'axe Pékin-Moscou. Avec des conséquences majeures pour le bloc occidental.

A Téhéran, le slogan s'affiche sur le fronton du ministère des Affaires étrangères, dans une magnifique calligraphie sur fond bleu : "ni Est, ni Ouest, la République islamique d'Iran". Depuis la révolution des mollahs, en 1979, cette phrase structure la diplomatie iranienne, indépendante des grandes puissances, féroce-ment non alignée.

Quarante ans plus tard, la formule reste placardée, mais elle a perdu de sa superbe. Alors que la logique des blocs refait surface, l'Iran a choisi son camp et s'inscrit pleinement dans l'axe Pékin-Moscou. "Pour les conservateurs iraniens, l'Occident s'enfonce dans la décadence, à la manière de la Rome antique, et l'avenir appartient à la Chine et à la Russie, souligne Farid Vahid, spécialiste du Moyen-Orient à la Fondation Jean-Jaurès. Résultat, l'Etat iranien a scellé une alliance très stratégique avec Moscou, qui aura des conséquences durables sur l'économie, la défense et le marché de l'énergie."

## Chine et Russie, bouées de sauvetage de l'économie iranienne

Le coup d'éclat de Donald Trump, sorti de l'accord nucléaire en 2018, n'y est pas



Vladimir Poutine avec le président iranien Ebrahim Raïssi à Téhéran, le 19 juillet 2022. AFP

étranger. Asphyxié par les sanctions depuis quatre ans, l'Iran est allé chercher de l'air du côté de Pékin, puis du Kremlin. En mars 2021, la République islamique signait ainsi un pacte de coopération inédit avec la Chine, valable pour une période de vingt-cinq ans et portant principalement sur l'armement et l'énergie.

Puis, en juillet dernier, quelques heures avant une visite du tsar Poutine à Téhéran, le géant russe Gazprom concluait un protocole d'accord de 40 milliards de dollars pour remettre en état les infrastructures énergétiques iraniennes. "Cet accord permet à Gazprom d'exercer un contrôle direct sur le marché énergétique du Moyen-Orient, explique le chercheur Nima Khorrami dans une note pour le Middle East Institute. A l'avenir, cela signifie que Moscou utilisera ce levier pour s'assurer que l'Iran ne soit jamais en position de nuire aux intérêts énergétiques de la Russie."

Le sujet est loin d'être anecdotique pour l'Europe. En

manque de gaz russe, le Vieux Continent espère qu'un accord sur le nucléaire iranien lèvera les sanctions touchant le régime et qu'il pourra ainsi libérer ses énormes quantités d'hydrocarbure. De quoi soulager le marché mondial de l'énergie avant un hiver périlleux. "Mais les accords du régime avec Moscou compliquent l'équation, souligne Farid Vahid. Les Russes ne seront pas ravis de voir Téhéran inonder l'Europe de gaz, ils ne laisseront pas faire. Il est probable qu'en cas d'accord nucléaire, les exportations d'hydrocarbures iraniens concernent avant tout l'Asie."

Les alliances de Téhéran commencent aussi à peser sur la guerre en Ukraine. Mi-juillet, les renseignements américains alertaient sur l'achat de "centaines de drones iraniens" par la Russie, qui peine à remporter la bataille des airs. Autre fait inquiétant pour les Occidentaux : début août, ils ont assisté, médusés, au lancement d'un satellite de renseignement iranien par les Russes.

## Deux Etats devenus parias sur la scène internationale

Le rapprochement avec la Russie n'avait pourtant rien de naturel pour Téhéran. Les Iraniens gardent en tête les innombrables guerres entre l'Empire russe et la Perse au XIXe puis au début du XXe siècle, mais aussi l'appui militaire offert par Moscou à Saddam Hussein lors de la guerre entre l'Iran et l'Irak, de 1980 à 1988. Il aura fallu un autre conflit pour rapprocher les deux camps dans les années 2010 : la guerre civile en Syrie, où l'Iran comme la Russie ont décidé de maintenir Bachar el-Assad au pouvoir par tous les moyens possibles. Aujourd'hui, ils occupent chacun une partie du pays.

Téhéran et Moscou partagent aussi les deux premières places au classement des nations les plus sanctionnées au monde. Avec son invasion de l'Ukraine, la Russie est d'ailleurs montée sur la première marche, devant l'Iran. "Les sanctions internationales ont rapproché Moscou et Téhéran, devenus deux Etats parias, juge Yonatan Freeman, professeur de relations internationales à l'Université hébraïque de Jérusalem. Les Iraniens connaissent parfaitement ce que traversent les Russes depuis février, ils peuvent s'identifier à leur situation."

En cas d'accord sur son programme nucléaire, Téhéran devrait voir son isolement international s'alléger. Sans pour autant renoncer à ses nouvelles amitiés.

The New York Times

Jane Arraf  
Aug. 30, 2022

## After Clashes Kill 24, Iraq Cleric Works to Defuse Tension in Baghdad

# Iraqi Shiite Factions Turn Their Guns on Each Other in a Deadly New Phase

With no functioning government and no common ground, tensions among Shiite political factions have become a deadly matter in Baghdad this week.

After years of harsh repression under Saddam Hussein, Iraq's majority Shiites finally came to political power in the wake of the 2003 U.S. invasion, and have largely held on to it through wrenching chapters of sectarian civil war, terrorist uprisings and internal tensions.

Now, long-building frictions among some Shiite factions have erupted into deadly fighting on the streets of Baghdad, leaving 24 dead. The turmoil has raised fears that the country is caught in a perilous cycle with no functioning government and no common ground to make one.

Although political turmoil and street protests are common in Iraq, this round of violence laid bare the risks of a potent mix of political paralysis, the decay of state institutions, and the escalating rivalries between Shiite groups that are backed by Iran and a more Iraqi nationalist faction led by the cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

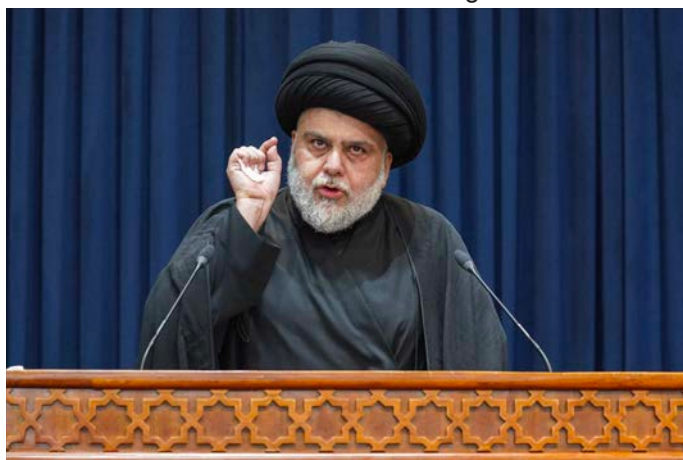
The violence began on Monday, after Mr. Sadr declared in a tweet that he was quitting Iraqi politics. His followers [stormed the Green Zone](#) — the heavily

guarded district that is home to Iraqi government offices, the United Nations and diplomatic missions including the U.S. Embassy — and ransacked government buildings.

After those supporters came under fire from government security forces, who included members of

Though it was short-lived, the eruption of deadly clashes left some Iraqis shaken by the fear that the country might once again be descending into the cycle of seemingly endless factional violence that has plagued their country over the past two decades.

Following the U.S. invasion



In a speech in the holy city of Najaf on Tuesday, Mr. Sadr apologized and called on his supporters to pull back. Credit...Qassem Al-Kaabi/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Iran-backed militias that Mr. Sadr opposes, Sadrist fighters armed with rifles and rocket-propelled grenades emerged to take on the security forces.

On Tuesday, Mr. Sadr sought to defuse the hostility just as suddenly as it had flared, calling on his followers to stand down and leave the Green Zone.

in 2003, a sectarian civil war between Shiite and Sunni hard-line factions broke out and raged for years.

Then there was a yearslong battle by Iraqi security forces, aided by Shiite militias loyal to Iran and Kurdish fighters from northern Iraq, to drive out the Islamic State after the Sunni terrorist group took over large parts of the country.

In recent years, rivalries among Shiites have become the main driver of Iraqi political instability.

Iran-backed Shiite militias formed in 2014 to fight Islamic State have become a permanent part of Iraqi government security forces, with some more answerable to Iran's Shiite theocracy than to the Iraqi government.

Mr. Sadr is the leader of a rival Shiite opposition. And his political movement has been fueled in part by lingering distrust of Iran that was born in the devastating war between the neighboring countries in the 1980s and was shaped by years of Iranian manipulation and intervention in Iraq's affairs.

Elections last year in October were seen as a fresh start for the country — a response to [massive protests](#) against a corrupt and dysfunctional government. Instead they led to the current political deadlock.

Mr. Sadr, appearing at a news conference on Tuesday in Najaf, a southern city holy to Shiite Muslims worldwide, called on his supporters to withdraw immediately from the Green Zone, where the fighting

over the past two days has been focused. He said he was sorry about what had happened.

“Regardless of who started the sedition yesterday,” he said, referring to the violent clashes, “I say that my head is down and I apologize to the Iraqi people.”

Mr. Sadr added that anyone who did not comply with his order would be considered no longer loyal to him. He also called on supporters to dismantle protest camps they had maintained for weeks, including around Parliament.

Witnesses and Iraqi security officials confirmed that shooting had stopped in the Green Zone soon after that and that Sadr militia members and other supporters were withdrawing, some carrying guns and others holding tents they had used in sit-ins.

A road passing through the Green Zone bore evidence of the fighting: palm trees riddled with shrapnel and unexploded shells, according to witnesses.

Iraq’s prime minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, praised Mr. Sadr’s call for withdrawal as showing “the highest level of patriotism.”

Baghdad began Tuesday under its second straight day of strict curfew. But after Mr. Sadr’s announcement, Iraqi security commanders said they were lifting the curfew in the capital and in all the other parts of Iraq where it was in place.

Iraq’s political evolution over the past two decades is a far cry from U.S. ambitions of instilling a multi-sectarian and multiethnic democracy when it led an invasion to topple the country’s longtime dictator, Saddam Hussein, in 2003.

The governments that rose up in Saddam’s wake were led by Iraqi expatriates the United States had put in place, and they implemented a system of awarding leadership positions based on ethnic or religious background. That system has devolved into ministries being given to specific political parties, many of which have drained them through endemic corruption.

U.S. occupation authorities also disbanded the Iraqi Army, leaving a considerable security vacuum that Mr. Sadr stepped into when he raised a militia that fought U.S. forces in Baghdad and across the south. He later disbanded that militia and renounced violence after fighting new Iraqi government security forces for control of the city of Basra in Iraq’s Shiite-dominated south.

Mr. Sadr comes from a revered Shiite family of clerics and commands millions of followers in Iraq. His bloc won more seats than any other single party in Parliament [in the October election](#), and he had [tried in vain for months](#) to form a coalition government with other partners after the elections. Frustrated over the failure, he urged his followers into the streets instead to achieve their aims.

The clashes over the past day mainly pitted Iran-backed paramilitary units that are part of Iraqi government security forces against armed members of Mr. Sadr’s paramilitary organization, the so-called Peace Brigades, attacking each other’s positions and offices, according to Sajad Jiyad, an Iraq-based fellow with the Century Foundation.

A senior Iraqi security official said some of those killed on Monday had been shot by pro-Iran militia members who are part of Iraqi security forces as they approached the home of former Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, who is closely tied to Iran. The official asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Neighboring Iran, which has exerted extensive efforts over the past several years to bring Shiite factions in Iraq closer together, reacted with alarm to the fighting, closing its borders with Iraq and telling Iranians it would work to bring them home safely.

Mr. Sadr holds no formal political office but remains one of the most powerful political forces in Iraq. His influence derives from the legacy of his father and uncle, who were senior religious scholars revered by millions.

Religious factors closely entwined with politics and power seemed to have underpinned Mr. Sadr’s announcement on Monday that he was quitting politics for good.

Mr. Sadr’s father, who was assassinated in Iraq in 1999, was a grand ayatollah — one of the most senior Shiite religious authorities, based in Najaf. One of the divides in the Shiite world separates those who pledge allegiance to the top religious scholars in Najaf or in the Iranian holy city of Qom, its theological rival.

One of the big differences between the two is that the Qom religious leadership places religious authorities above the authority of the state — as is the case in Iran’s theocracy.

Iraqi and Iranian analysts said they saw Mr. Sadr’s decision to leave politics this week as connected to an announcement on Monday from Qom by a successor to his father, Grand Ayatollah Kadhem al-Haeri, who said he was retiring from his position and directed his followers to transfer allegiance to Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Ayatollah al-Haeri said that Mr. Sadr’s actions in the past had risked tearing apart the Shiite community and Iraq, and that he was not worthy of the name Sadr.

His pronouncement was delivered from Qom and was seen as a blow to Mr. Sadr’s influence among some followers as well as to Najaf, where Mr. Sadr lives.

Falih Hassan, Nermeen al-Mufti and Awadh al-Taie contributed reporting from Baghdad and Farnaz Fasihi from New York.

## En Irak, « les violences sont le point d'orgue de la crise que traverse le pays depuis dix mois »

A Bagdad, les combats entre les partisans du chef populiste chiite Moqtada Al-Sadr et ses rivaux des partis et milices affiliées à l'Iran ont fait, lundi 29 août, trente morts. Robin Beaumont, chercheur à l'EHESS, revient sur cette impasse politique.

La tension est violemment montée, lundi 29 août, à Bagdad, la capitale irakienne. Des milliers de soutiens du chef populiste chiite Moqtada Al-Sadr – gagnant des élections législatives d'octobre 2021 – sont descendus dans la rue. Les échauffourées ont laissé place, à la nuit tombée, à des échanges nourris d'armes automatiques, de roquettes et d'obus de mortier avec les forces de sécurité nationales. Trente partisans sadristes ont été tués et près de 600 personnes ont été blessées. [Le calme régnait de nouveau à Bagdad mercredi](#), après environ vingt-quatre heures de violences meurtrières, mais l'impasse politique qui dure depuis près d'un an ne semble pas vouloir s'apaiser.

Robin Beaumont, doctorant en science politique à l'Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) et directeur du programme Afrique du Nord/Moyen-Orient du think tank Noria, revient sur les origines de cette crise politique.

### Quelle est l'origine de la crise politique qui secoue actuellement l'Irak ?

On pourrait remonter à l'invasion de l'Irak par les Etats-Unis en 2003 et au système politique qui a alors été mis en place. Mais si on se contente d'analyser la séquence politique actuelle, il faut revenir [au mouvement de protestation contre le gouvernement](#), en octobre 2019, qui réclamait, notamment, la fin de la

*mouhassassa [système de répartition des postes par quotas ethniques et confessionnels] et de la corruption endémique. Cette mobilisation antigouvernementale a été réprimée dans le sang et a pris fin à cause du Covid-19. Depuis, rien n'a été fait pour atténuer les conditions d'émergence de la colère des Irakiens.*

Des élections législatives anticipées [ont eu lieu en octobre 2021](#), et l'Irak est dans une impasse politique depuis



Des partisans du chef populiste irakien Moqtada Al-Sadr affrontent des partisans du Cadre de coordination, un groupe de partis chiites, dans la « zone verte », le quartier ultraprotégé de Bagdad qui abrite les institutions, le 29 août 2022. THAIER AL-SUDANI / REUTERS

ce scrutin, remporté par le dirigeant populiste chiite Moqtada Al-Sadr. La deuxième force politique du pays est un agrégat de partis chiites – le Cadre de coordination – rassemblant les forces de l'ex-premier ministre Nouri Al-Maliki [2006-2014] ainsi qu'un ensemble de partis dont certains sont issus de groupes armés ayant combattu l'Etat islamique et réputés proches de l'Iran.

Dans ce contexte, Moqtada Al-Sadr a insisté pour former un gouvernement « de majorité », c'est-à-dire sans y associer ses adversaires du Cadre de coordination. Les alliances qu'il a conclues ne lui ont pas permis d'y parvenir. En conséquence, le pays n'a, depuis plus de dix mois, ni nouveau président ni nouveau premier ministre. Cet enlisement a contribué à effriter le capital politique de Moqtada Al-Sadr, et il a commencé à être perçu comme celui qui bloquait la si-

dad qui abrite les institutions, pour réclamer la dissolution du gouvernement et l'organisation de nouvelles élections. Depuis, ils campaient au Parlement et Moqtada Al-Sadr leur avait donné l'ordre de poursuivre le sit-in jusqu'à ce qu'advienne la « révolution ». On en était là au début de la semaine.

**Un déchaînement de violence armée dans le secteur de la « zone verte » a fait trente morts et près de six cents blessés, lundi 29 août, dans les rangs des partisans de Moqtada Al-Sadr. Le bras de fer qui oppose Moqtada Al-Sadr à ses adversaires du Cadre de coordination n'avait, jusque-là, pas dégénéré en affrontements armés. Comment expliquer l'explosion de ces combats meurtriers ?**

Ces violences sont le point d'orgue de la crise que traverse l'Irak depuis dix mois. L'impasse dans laquelle se trouve le pays a donné lieu à une escalade. Au fil du temps, Moqtada Al-Sadr s'est rendu compte qu'il perdait en crédibilité et qu'aucune solution plausible n'était à portée de main pour parvenir à ses fins – à savoir la domination sans partage du camp chiite irakien et le contrôle de l'Etat. Il a donc tenté des coups de force ([notamment avec l'envahissement du Parlement](#) par les partisans sadristes).

C'est alors qu'est intervenu un événement extérieur : l'annonce le 28 août par un ayatollah irakien résidant en Iran,



Kadhim Al-Haeri, de sa démission des fonctions religieuses. Il était l'ayatollah désigné par le père de Moqtada Al-Sadr comme son successeur, et la référence religieuse de nombreux sadristes, ainsi que de Moqtada Al-Sadr lui-même. Leurs relations étaient tendues, il avait depuis longtemps refusé d'être la caution religieuse du mouvement, mais son nom importait dans les rangs sadristes. Avec l'annonce de sa démission, il a invité ses fidèles à suivre désormais le guide iranien Ali Khamenei. Surtout, il a, sans le nommer mais de façon explicite, désavoué Moqtada Al-Sadr de façon très dure, en rappelant son manque de légitimité religieuse. Le lendemain, Moqtada Al-Sadr annonçait son « *retrait définitif* » de la vie politique.

Etant donné la proximité entre

Kadhim Al-Haeri et le régime iranien, il est difficile de concevoir qu'il ait provoqué un tel séisme en Irak sans au moins l'aval de Téhéran. C'est ce qui a mis le feu aux poudres et des milliers de ses partisans sont sortis dans les rues ; les affrontements avec les forces de sécurité et des groupes armés liés au Cadre de coordination ont fait plusieurs dizaines de morts dans les rangs sadristes.

### **L'annonce du retrait de la vie politique de Moqtada Al-Sadr est-elle guidée par une stratégie ?**

En tant que chercheur, je me garderai bien d'essayer de deviner ce qu'il y a dans la tête des individus. Cela étant, on peut tirer des enseignements des précédents : depuis 2003, Moqtada Al-Sadr a annoncé sept fois son retrait de la vie politique. On peut donc légitime-

ment émettre des doutes quant à la sincérité de son annonce et supposer que l'Irak n'en a pas fini avec lui.

Moqtada Al-Sadr sait qu'il peut compter sur l'appui d'une très grande base populaire. Il a fait campagne autour des thèmes de la lutte contre la corruption et de la reconstruction de l'Irak, tout en jouant sur la fibre nationaliste – autant de thématiques suffisamment fédératrices dans un pays gangrené par la déliquescence des élites.

### **Pourquoi de nouvelles élections législatives ne sont-elles pas organisées pour rebattre les cartes de la politique irakienne ?**

L'Irak est l'un des rares pays de la région à tenir régulièrement des élections raisonnablement fiables. Le

problème ne vient pas d'un manque de transparence du processus électoral, mais d'une crise de légitimité des élites gouvernementales et politiques. Il n'y a qu'à voir le taux de participation historiquement bas aux dernières élections d'octobre 2021 (41 %). Structuellement, depuis 2003, le système politique irakien a été conçu de manière à ne pas faire émerger de nouveaux rapports de force. En cause notamment : le fameux système actuel qui impose des quotas confessionnels dans la répartition des postes. Malgré leurs divergences, il y a bien une chose sur laquelle s'accordent les différents partis politiques irakiens, c'est leur maintien au sommet de l'Etat et le partage entre eux des pouvoirs. Le système est verrouillé. Et s'il doit être remis en cause, ça ne passera pas par des élections.

## Kurdistan au féminin

31/08/2022

Le Kurdistan à travers le regard féminin

# Le mépris de la Turquie pour les morts kurdes n'est pas nouveau

La livraison par les autorités turques d'ossements de Kurdes tués lors de combats à leurs familles dans des sacs n'est pas une pratique isolée ou nouvelle. Deux parents victimes d'actes similaires racontent leur calvaire, tandis que le barreau de Diyarbakır (Amed) a porté plainte contre cette pratique qui viole les normes internationales de respect et de protection des morts.

Les ossements d'Hakan Arslan, qui a été tué pendant le couvre-feu et les opérations militaires en décembre 2015 dans le district de Diyarbakır (Amed) Sur, ont été livrés à son père dans un sac en plastique sept ans plus tard. Le père d'Hakan Arslan, Ali



Rıza Arslan, ne s'est pas rendu compte qu'il allait récupérer les restes de son fils au palais de justice. Il s'attendait à recevoir le corps de son fils de la morgue de médecine légale dans un cercueil, a-t-il déclaré. « *Il n'y avait ni procureur, ni juge, ni officier. Quelqu'un a sorti la boîte avec les os de*

*mon fils de 28 ans du placard et me l'a tendue. Je ne me souviens pas comment j'ai reçu la boîte contenant les os de mon fils, je ne me souviens pas comment je l'ai pris, j'étais dévasté* », a-t-il déclaré.

La famille Arslan n'est pas la première famille kurde à rece-

voir les restes d'un proches de cette manière des années plus tard. Des événements similaires se produisent depuis les années 1990, lorsque le conflit kurde était à son apogée.

Un père kurde qui a reçu les ossements de son fils de 12 ans 20 ans après sa mort en détention, s'est entretenu avec l'agence Mezopotamya.

Davut Altinkaynak avait 12 ans lorsqu'il a été arrêté à Mardin (Mêrdîn) en 1995, avec huit autres civils kurdes lors d'un raid de service de renseignements et antiterrorisme de la gendarmerie turque (JITEM). Parmi les huit personnes se trouvait la mère de Davut, qui a déclaré plus tard que la der-

nière fois qu'elle avait vu son fils vivant, c'était lorsqu'il avait été pendu sur un support de torture au poste de police.

Des restes ont été découverts dans un puits en 2015 et, en mai 2016, une analyse ADN a révélé que les os appartenaient à Davut Altinkaynak. Ensuite, le bureau du procureur a livré les os du garçon à sa famille dans un sac.

Le jour même où le père d'Altinkaynak a reçu le paquet d'ossements, un autre paquet similaire est arrivé au domicile de la famille Akyön. Les restes de Nedim Akyön, 16 ans, ont été livrés dans un autre sac.

Les deux familles ont demandé au bureau du procureur de conserver les restes en bon état un peu plus longtemps pendant qu'ils préparaient les funérailles, mais le bureau du procureur a rejeté cette demande.

« Nous avons signé le bon de



*livraison. Ils nous ont apporté deux sacs blancs avec les noms de nos enfants écrits dessus. Ils ont pris nos enfants vivants et les ont livrés dans un sac », a déclaré Altinkaynak.*

*«Ils auraient dû remettre ces os dans des cercueils, de manière humaine. Mais ils ne considèrent pas les Kurdes comme des êtres humains. Je n'oublierai jamais. Si Davut n'avait pas été un Kurde, ils auraient condamné l'auteur à une peine d'emprisonnement à perpétuité. Mais Davut était un garçon kurde. Ils pensaient*

*que c'était ce que méritait mon fils et ce que méritait Hakan Arslan», a déclaré le père de Davut Altinkaynak.*

Un procureur du parquet général de Diyarbakır était responsable de l'enregistrement et du traitement des restes humains en question. Le barreau de Diyarbakır, déclarant que cette pratique est contraire à la loi, a déposé une plainte auprès du Conseil des juges et des procureurs (HSK) contre le procureur qui a remis les restes d'Arslan à son père dans un sac.

« La livraison de restes humains de cette manière est inacceptable en raison des normes du droit humanitaire et des valeurs sociales, culturelles et religieuses. Le droit national et international indique en détail comment ces livraisons doivent être effectuées, en respectant la mémoire de la personne et en protégeant le droit d'être enterré. Ce traitement envers le défunt constitue le crime de torture et de mauvais traitements. Cette pratique viole les normes de respect et de protection des morts et le droit à une sépulture décente », a déclaré le barreau dans sa requête.

Selon l'Association turque des droits de l'homme (İHD), il y a eu au moins 900 cas de disparition forcée [majoritairement des Kurdes] en Turquie. En outre, l'İHD rapporte que plus de 3 000 victimes d'exécutions extrajudiciaires sont enterrées dans 253 sites distincts.