



*Kongreya Neteweyî ya Kurdistanê*  
*Kurdistan National Congress*  
*Congrès National du Kurdistan*

**KNK**

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## **The Turkish army is conducting an unjust war and atrocities in Kurdistan**

Dear Ms. / Mr.

We want to draw your attention to atrocities and war crimes committed by the Turkish army

Humanity has been trying since the earliest ages to create a law of war and for over 150 years has applied some form of treaty for the rules of war time. Turkey is an subscriber to many of the international agreements that are now in place. But unfortunately when the Kurds is the issue then Turkey changes her rules and 'forgets' these international treaty obligations. But it is not only the Kurds who are suffering from these atrocities. The destiny of 1,612 prisoners of war from Cyprus, that was invaded by Turkey in 1974, is still unknown.

In our country there is an ongoing war of 26 years duration. During these years neither the Turkish army nor the governments have applied the rules of war and have always committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. Thousands of villages and pastures have been burned down and ruthless destruction of forest conducted. As another result of the war millions of people have been displaced or left no choice except to leave their homes. Hundreds of thousands of people have been tortured, many more killed or executed in the streets without any fair trial. Many outlawed weapons were used and guerrillas that were captured were killed after heavy torture, their bodies burned and mutilated amounting to atrocities against humanity.

For two months now the war has escalated. The Turkish army is again conducting the same atrocities as before. During the last 20 days bodies of guerrillas have been captured during the war in suburbs of Siirt, Hakkari and Gumushane. The bodies of killed guerrillas have been tortured. Many of these bodies have eyes, noses, hands, fingers, heads cut off and some of them have been totally destroyed. The corpses are unable to be recognized.

Turkey has signed the 1949 War Treaty of Geneva. According to this agreement: **"It is forbidden to torture the bodies of those killed during the war. The killed ones should be treated with respect and their tombs should be approached with respect as expected."** But the Turkish army is still conducting war crimes.

In order to leave no hiding place for the guerrillas, forests are being burned in Kurdistan. Right now the forests around Sirnak, Hakkari, Siirt, Dersim, Bingol, Mardin and Bitlis are being burned by the Turkish army. The inhabitants around these regions are being prevented from extinguishing the fire. Right now thousands of acres of fields are turned into ashes. The Geneva Convention has a lot of rules covering the safety of the environment and the banning the destroying of forests; **'Damaging war methods that are continuing for a long time in a very large forest area are forbidden. Annihilation of forests and environment is not allowed to be used as a weapon.'** What the Turkish army is doing here is also another war crime.

These are very concrete examples. If no prevention takes place, the Turkish army will continue its atrocities as previously. The above mentioned issues are being reported every day in the media.

Hereby we attach a dossier with pictures related to these urgent issues. We would like you to give them your urgent and serious attention and believe that you will show your sensitivity and draw the right conclusions.

Yours Sincerely,

The Foreign Affairs Commission of Kurdistan National Congress



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## **BRIELY NEWS**

### **‘Tortured corpse of HPG members creates great anger among Kurds’**

**DIHA 10.07.2010-** Representatives of the NGOs in Diyarbakir warned Justice and Development Party (AKP) administration for torturing People Defence Forces (HPG) members’ corpses by security forces; “Tortured corpse of HPG members creates great anger among Kurds instead of giving message to them. Humanity is going to judge this brutality.”

M. Emin Aktar, president of Diyarbakir Bar Association read out the joint press statement of NGOs Diyarbakir Branches; “The new period, full of conflicts, casualties, attacks against civilians, extrajudicial killings, tortures the dead bodies, forest fires, is not unfamiliar for the people of the region. Tense situation began to dominate the region, once again. It remains 90s when inhuman practices were all over Turkey, particularly in the Region. We do not want to go back at that term.”

Lawyer Sezgin Tanrikulu, representative of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) Diyarbakir Branch also emphasized the increasing tension of the Region; “Torturing corpses cannot fit any kind of understanding or beliefs. This is unbelievable ferocity. Security forces need to respect people’s values and beliefs. We have already known that the records of Turkey about respecting human life are not good but the latest brutality proved us that this record is getting worst.”

Selahattin Coban, head of MAZLUMDER Diyarbakir Branch, has also a speech to condemn the last events and AKP administration.

### **New accusation about use of chemical weapons**

**ANF 13.07.2010-** Calling on the Assembly Human Rights Board of Review for an urgent meeting to discuss about the torture applied on the bodies of HPG (People Defence Forces) guerrillas who lost their lives in recent clashes, BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) demanded a sub-commission to be founded to search the subject. BDP Siirt MP Osman Özçelik said that Turkish army uses chemical weapon.

BDP Diyarbakir MP and Council Human Rights Board of Review member Akın Birdal filed a written statement to the commission concerning the torture on HPG guerrillas and called the commission for a meeting at short notice. In the written statement on the issue, Birdal pointed out to the recently increasing operations and the bad treatment on the bodies of HPG guerrillas and recorded; “The videos recorded while taking the corpses in the region reveal the heavy torture on corpses.”

“Wars and conflicts also have a law” says Birdal and points at humanitarian law, stating that his written statement remarks that the aforesaid law determine what will and will not be done to women, elders, children, civilians and corpses during the war. Reminding Turkey’s side with its approval for Geneva Convention in 1953 and for “the convention on the protection of cultural goods in case of an armed conflict” in 1954, Birdal’s statement recorded; “ The scenes reflecting to media show that Turkey doesn’t go with the clauses of the conventions. I offer a sub-commission to be founded and sent to the region to make a on-site research into human rights and these non humanitarian situations and to release the results to the public.

BDP Siirt MP Osman Özçelik held a press conference at the assembly and considered the no delivery of the corpses as follows; “ Flammable and caustic chemical weapons are used during the clashes. The corpses are unrecognizable.”

Recording that the no delivery of the corpses to families calls back different questions to mind, Özçelik spoke as follows; “Flammable and caustic chemical weapons are used during the clashes. The corpses are unrecognizable. The corpses are ruined so much that they cannot be recognized. Both possibilities clearly confront us with a crime against humanity. The government must give account of all cases encountered and relieve the state of imputation.”



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## **Jake Hess : Turks Let Kurdish Forests Burn**

**IPS 13.07.2010-** The Turkish General Directorate of Forestry claims to devote the bulk of its resources to combating forest fires, but it is passively observing the Turkish army ignite forested areas in the country's predominantly Kurdish south-eastern region. Residents of Ikizce and Toptepe, Kurdish villages in Sirnak province not far from the Iraqi border, tell IPS that they're facing economic disaster and possibly displacement as Turkish soldiers set fire to their forests and crops. "The fire started when soldiers from the military base near Ikizce indiscriminately launched missiles into wooded areas in Cudi mountain," shepherd Cem Guney explains. "Soldiers helped us subdue the flames the first day, but since then they've done nothing."

"We're sinking as time goes on," Ikizce village elder Baver Senlik tells IPS. "Every day it spreads, grows, becomes more problematic," he says. The forest fire has been burning more than a week now.

The Turkish army, which is armed by the U.S. and some European countries, claims that the inferno started following clashes between them and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the leftist insurgency which demands greater rights and freedoms for Kurds. Villagers dispute this, saying there's actually no fighting in the area.

Villagers add that with the exception of 2009, such fires have occurred in the same way and at roughly the same time every year for the last eight years. They suggest that the military consciously uses forest fires as a tool of policy. Such reports are frequently made of villages like Ikizce and Toptepe, which were emptied when the war was at its height in the 1990s but have been gradually repopulated in recent years. Whatever its causes, there's no doubt that the forest fire is pushing impoverished locals into greater hardship.

Most villages in Sirnak province depend heavily on animal husbandry for income, and Ikizce and Toptepe are no different. The forest fire has scorched most of the grazing areas used by livestock breeders, causing serious problems for the local economy.

"Nothing's left -- no trees, no shrubs," Toptepe elder and shepherd Sivan Aslan says. "Everything's been burned, so we'll be forced to buy feed for our animals." He adds that the villages have also lost scores of fruit trees to the fire, which he estimates will end up costing every household in the area between 1,000 and 1,500 euros this year.

Local villagers additionally complain that the Turkish military arbitrarily blocks shepherds' access to highland pastures on security grounds, further compounding their difficulties. Ikizce residents, for example, are forced to bring their animals down from the pastures every day before evening prayers, while inhabitants of Toptepe, who use much of the same land and live only a few minutes away, are free to leave their animals out at night. "There haven't been clashes around here for several years, but soldiers prevent us from accessing our grazing lands," Senlik says. "Fighting was most severe in the late 1980s, but even then we could graze our animals comfortably."

The punishing combination of annual fires and grazing prohibitions has brought the livestock economy in Ikizce to the point of collapse. Senlik says that his village used to have at least 15,000 heads of livestock, whereas a population of 400 people now subsists on 1,000 heads.

"We have no source of income aside from animal husbandry. When we can't rear our cattle, we remain hungry and can't send our children to school," Senlik tells IPS. "We're thinking of leaving the village because we can't get by like this. When you add everything up, it seems like they're trying to displace us."

On Jul. 3, one day after the forest fire began, Sirnak municipality sent a delegation of elected officials to inspect and try to subdue the fire. Soldiers reportedly launched missiles at an area 200 metres away from the delegation, causing the fire to spread to areas it had not previously reached. "When there's a fire in western Turkey, the government suppresses it with all available means, including helicopters," Sirnak mayor Ramazan Uysal, who participated in the excursion and is a member of the leftist and pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), tells IPS. "When we try to suppress fires here, they launch artillery at us."

Leaders from Ikizce and Toptepe have explained their grievances to many public authorities, including the military, provincial governorship, agricultural and forestry ministries. Despite this, the government has done



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nothing to subdue the fire, and the inferno has become too large to be tamed without the aid of helicopters, village chiefs say."The directorate of forestry affairs sent a few people, who came here, looked around, and did nothing," Guney explains. "Why doesn't anyone help us? This inaction shows that (Kurds) are not counted as equal citizens in this country."

One Friday evening two weeks before the current fire in Cudi mountain began, Taybet Inan went to water her wheat field near Sirnak town. "Shortly thereafter, a helicopter lowered over my head and launched two incendiary projectiles into my field," she tells IPS. "My relatives and I put out the flames quickly, but the losses amounted to about 250 euros." That is a significant amount of money in a region where half the population lives beneath the poverty line.

"There are no clashes around there. I don't know why they did it. Maybe for fun," she says.

Similar incidents occur in other parts of Kurdish southeastern Turkey. An investigation conducted by local human rights groups into forest fires that occurred in three villages near Hasankeyf, a town which may be left underwater if construction plans for a nearby dam are implemented, concluded that the fires began in areas close to military bases, were not caused by clashes, resulted in the destruction of thousands of fruit trees, and that soldiers took no initiative to suppress them. (END/2010)

## **Turkish army is violating Geneva Convention**

**Kurdish Info 13.07.2010-** Following the recent clashes between the Kurdish rebels and the Turkish soldier, Turkish army put its signature under the brutality on the guerrilla bodies. Turkish army resorted such brutalities in the 90's and the photo in which Turkish soldiers were posing with heads of Kurdish rebels, chopped off their bodies are in living memories.

However, while the Turkish army executes the captured guerrillas, PKK guerrillas fulfill the requirements of the Geneva Convention and treat the Turkish captives accordingly.

Article 17 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War states: "No physical or mental torture, nor any other form of coercion, may be inflicted on prisoners of war to secure from them information of any kind whatever. Prisoners of war who refuse to answer may not be threatened, insulted, or exposed to any unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind."

Article 3 (a) further stated that "Violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture" are war crimes. Despite the fact that Turkey is a party to this convention it violates the Convention in front of the eyes of the world.

Turkish army has tortured the dead bodies of the Kurdish guerrillas who lost their lives in the clashes took place in Gumushane, Siirt and Hakkari provinces. Some of the bodies were beheaded, their eyes were taken out and their organs were chopped off. These treatments remind Saddam Hussein's crimes against humanity.

There are also provisions under Turkish law prohibiting such treatments on dead bodies. However, Turkey is not only violating Geneva Convention but also its own law.

The Turkish soldiers and the police officers captured by the Kurdish guerrillas have stated that, their rights under Geneva Convention were read out by the guerrillas and they were treated under these provisions.

**WE ARE SORRY TO SENDING THE PICTURES!**



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**Photos of Kurdish Guerrilla - June 2010**

**The bodies of guerrillas have had their eyes  
gouged out,**



**Bayram Dun - Silvan**



**Hamit Ulas - Gumushane**



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## **Their heads broken,**



**Ozgur Daghan - Gumushane**



**Serdar Tekin - Gumushane**



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## **Their arms, legs and bodies cut off.**



**Eylem Demirpence Sirnak**



**Mustafa Tangören**



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# **IS THIS NOT A WAR CRIME?**



# **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE ATROCITIES?**