

TOWARDS A RESOLUTION: AN ASSESSMENT OF POSSIBILITIES, OPPORTUNITIES AND PROBLEMS

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This report covers the resolution/peace process that took place between the years of 2013 and 2015 in Turkey. It was the first time that the Turkish army and the PKK experienced bilateral ceasefire. This work aimed to contribute to the peace process in the transformation of the ceasefire into a negotiation process.

After this report had been written, in President Erdoğan's words the peace process has been put into deep freeze. And now, peace process had changed into a violent process in Turkey. There have been street clashes, deaths, bombings and all-out massacres. Local mayors and politicians were arrested by the state. More than hundred people were killed in Ankara and Suruç blasts. Diyarbakır Bar President Tahir Elçi was killed while he was making a press statement asking an end to violence. This violent atmosphere undermined the efforts of democratic powers, NGOs, and peace groups.

The report which was written before the start of the violence tried to draw the attention of the actors to the shortcomings and dangers in the peace process. Unfortunately, the violence started to dominate Turkey's agenda again.

The Turkish version of this report was introduced to the public in a conference named 'Towards a Peaceful Resolution' in İstanbul. Also, this Turkish version was published by Metis Publishing, in October, 2015. The name of the book is 'Defending Peace Perspective' .

This report is the written by five specialists'.

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Best regards,

Turkey Peace Assembly,
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The Trajectory of the Peace Process

Ayşe Betül Çelik, Evren Balta, Levent Korkut, Murat Çelikkan, Nil Mutluer

The conflict/war axis between the Kurdish armed political movement, the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan/Kurdistan Workers Party) and the state of Turkey has, to a large extent, shaped the political, social and economic problems that Turkey has had to confront during the last 30 years. This milieu of war also led to deep-rooted social problems. Widely referred to as “The Kurdish Issue”, the ethno-political conflict has been instrumental in determining the agenda of Turkey since the 1980s.

In addition to the heavy human cost of the conflict/war, there were inevitable political and social costs. Nearly 40 000 individuals, including soldiers, guerilla and civilians were killed. More than a thousand individuals were forced to disappear, around 10 000 individuals were summarily and arbitrarily executed. More than one million people were forcibly displaced. Those survivors, on the other hand, have had to cope with torture and human rights violations. Within the context of the Peace or Resolution Process which was expected to progress from a suspension of hostilities to negotiations; a peaceful and democratic resolution was being pursued to the immense and complicated social concern known as the Kurdish Issue.

Many reasons can be listed for the necessity of the resolution of problems away from the quite costly and burdensome military approaches and armed conflict towards peace and democracy. The most important, however, is the political will shown in this direction. The peace process in Turkey, like its counterparts around the world, demands political decisiveness. Consequently, the preference for a peaceful solution by both parties to the conflict is the most important factor in the initiation of this process. As has been shown in comparable circumstances around the world, political will in peace by both parties is crucial in the transition from discussions to negotiation. However, with the transition to negotiations, the process has to become transparent to some extent, confidence-building measures implemented for both the public and the opposing parties, and the Process of Peace must be socialized to protect it from daily political influences. This is also the rationale behind establishing legal and social foundations for peace.

The healthy progress, consolidation and endurance of the Peace Process is, no doubt, dependent upon social support. Apart from the social impact of the 30 plus years of conflict, the process is also dependent upon legal, socioeconomic, political, human safety issues, as well as those involved in reconciling with the past. Topics such as a novel definition of constitutional citizenship, how to overcome social and economic issues that led to the conflict, the transition from a state-centered to a human-centered security approach and the production of national and local models in this broader context, repairing individual-individual, individual-social, social-social and individual-state relations, in addition to compensation for individuals and the environment damaged by the conflict, will all be issues discussed in this context.

It is essential to take measures to boost social support in debating these issues, developing the political and legal framework of the peace process, preparing the road map and timing the steps to be taken in the duration. The healthy progress of the process is largely dependent upon confidence-building measures,

an open and timed road map, the transition from a war-oriented to a peace-oriented language, the active engagement of the civil society and the “third party”¹ or parties, hence the socialization of peace.

The transition from war to peace, or the solution of problems by democratic and peaceful means instead of military *modus operandi* also implies a transformation from the old to the new. The novel arrangements and democratization concerning the new era can be considered the *sine qua non*² of peace. As evidenced in examples from the world at large, the consolidation of peace can produce fast and dynamic democratization. Before examining the state of the interrupted Peace Process in Turkey it is important to look at its background.

Background of the Kurdish Issue

THE PERIOD FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC TO THE 1980 MILITARY COUP

29.1 The 1921 Constitution, establishing national sovereignty of the people of Turkey did not impose an ethnic identity on its citizens, and implicitly gave the Kurds some degree of autonomy. Also, the state was named the State of Turkey, and the people here referred to as the People of Turkey, rather than the Turkish State, and Turkish People, found to be significant by some constitutional law and political science professors³ It was, however, replaced by the 1924 Constitution after the foundation of the Republic (1923), which identified citizenship with being Turkish and rejected regional governance. In this respect, the modification in the 1924 Constitution would be instrumental in creating the constitutional basis for an ethnically homogeneous society and denying the presence of Kurds within its boundaries.

The policy of Turkification starting before the establishment of the Republic was instrumental in enforced displacement and enforced relocation during the Republican era, and implementing the ban on speaking Kurdish in public and Kurdish publications at large, the forbidding and altering of Kurdish names and last names of individuals, of villages and other place names as well. There were 21 Kurdish insurgencies in between the establishment of the Republic and the Dersim Massacres of 1937, 1938.⁴

The policies of what has generally been referred to as “the single party regime” of the Republic between 1925-1950 concerning the Kurds, were shaped around the “Reform Plan for the East” which can be summa-

1 See the next article on “**The Peace Process: Negotiations and the Law**”

2 An examination of the post civil war peace processes between 1989-1999 in 14 countries show many differences; yet there is a common element which is rapid democratization, Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*, Cambridge: Univ. Pr., 2004

3 See for instance: Bülent Tanör, *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri (Ottoman and Turk Constitutional Developments)*, p. 211. And Ahmet Demirel, “1920-1923 Arasında Türkiye Dünyanın En İleri Temsili Demokrasilerinden Birine Sahipti”, (In between 1920-1923 Turkey had one of the most progressive representative democracies in the world) *Türkiye Günü*, March-April 2000, No 60, p.6.

4 In the seventeen days of the 1938 offensive alone, 7,954 persons were reported killed or caught alive; the latter were definitely a minority. According to these official reports, almost 10 percent of the entire population of Tunceli was killed. The Kurds claim that their losses were even higher. “Martin von Bruinnesen 1994, “The Suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in Turkey (1937-38) in: George J. Andreopoulos (ed), *Conceptual and historical dimensions of genocide*, . University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994, pp. 141-170.

alized as involving the missions of “discipline”, “exile”, “assimilation”, and “civilizing” the Kurds.⁵ From 1925 to 1950 the Eastern and Southeastern regions of Turkey, populated mostly by Kurds, were under Martial Law. For some parts of the region this meant continuous Martial Law in between 1925 and 2002.

During the 1960 military coup d'état, assimilation policies were implemented and asserted in the slogan “There are no Kurds, only mountain Turks that describe themselves as Kurds”. The '60s also witnessed the rise of socialist movements in Turkey. One of the three founding groups of The Worker's Party of Turkey, TİP, were Kurds, and hence mass meetings referred to as East Meetings during this period became an important factor in the development of the significance of the Kurdish identity. Although the Military Directive of 1971 (followed by the 1971 coup d'état) slowed down this process somewhat, 1970s through the 1980s saw the rise of quite a few Kurdish political groups.

The rise of this political activity would end with the third military coup in 1980. The coup put an end to the leftist, socialist, Kurdish and all the rest of civil society organizations by trampling down on them all. It also attempted to popularize and make official the “mountain Turks” approach of the 1960s military coup d'état. At this time the PKK protected its cadres by taking them outside the country; eventually, however, it initiated the guerrilla war by its well-publicized 1984 incursion (the raid of Şemdinli, Eruh) and attack on other targets.

FROM 1984 TO 1990

In spite of the State's attribution of such action to “a few looters”, and “terrorists whose heads could be crushed fast” the armed conflict between the military and the PKK continued until 1990 with increasing intensity. While the state used violence or other political pressure to whoever it believed to be militia or civilian supporting the guerrilla, there were also acts of the use of force attributed to the PKK ending in the death of civilians. In the Ortabağ village of Hakkâri there were 8 deaths in 1987, in the attack on the Ömerli district of Mardin 30, in the attack on the Peçenek village of Şırnak 16, in Mardin, Midyat, 31, in the Kılıçkaya village of Eruh 23 and in the Meşeçi village of Şırnak 13 such killings occurred.

At the onset of the 1990s, the General Staff, The National Intelligence Organization and the political elite, abandoned the former approach of “terrorists whose heads could be crushed fast” and started the search for a new war strategy. It is necessary here to speak of the two distinct policies adopted towards the Kurds at this time: The first is the employment of State of Emergency (shortly OHAL in Turkish), and secondly, the military, political and administrative transformation in accordance with the definition of the “new enemy”.

Referred to as the “State of Emergency Region” (here SER, i.e OHAL Bölgesi in Turkish) during the 1990s, parts of eastern and southeastern Turkey had, in fact been under Martial Law since 1987, and other parts since 1925. On July 19, 1987, martial law was lifted in the Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Siirt, and Van provinces, and instead a State of Emergency Regional Governorship (SERG) was established, initially to cover eight provinces. After a short while, however, the SERG was expanded to cover thirteen provinces with the result be-

⁵ Ercan Çağlayan, Cumhuriyet'in Diyarbakır'da Kimlik İnşası (1923-1950), (The Republic's Structuring of Identity in Diyarbakır, 1923-1950), İstanbul, İletişim, 2012.

ing that some areas here were under continuous Martial or State of Emergency for a long duration indeed. Hence emergency rule became the norm, “Normal Rule”, rather than its exception. The authority of the SER Administration allowed it to depopulate certain localities, to forbid entrance to others, to suspend all educational activities, to forbid or restrict the entrance of all kinds of food items and domestic animals to the region and to manipulate and utilize all communicative activity as it saw fit. With the establishment of a new set of rules, laws and regulations, all the deeds of the SER Governorship were freed from inspection and supervision based on the laws which governed the rest of the country.

The second important implementation was the creation of a “new enemy” concept and the realization of relevant military, political and administrative transformations. By the 1990s the perception that it was not possible for a regular army to prevail over guerrilla forces using conventional methods of warfare prevailed, making it necessary to implement an integrated restructuring strategy in line with principles of ‘irregular warfare’. Another dimension of this shift was increasing the number of recruits to the institution of Temporary Village Guard and the continuous expansion of the actual field of their operation during the ‘90s.

From 1993 on, the team of the Prime Minister Tansu Çiller and Chief of General Staff, Doğan Güreş introduced a special security strategy around the concept of ‘Territorial Dominance and the Removal of the PKK from the Region’. This security strategy meant, first and foremost, the severance of support provided to the guerrilla forces by the civilian population in order to regain territorial supremacy. The visible increase in the enforced evacuation of villages and other settlements, ‘unsolved murders’, summary executions of civilians and the number of enforced disappearances took place after the introduction of this new territorial supremacy strategy. Especially in the period from 1993 to 1995, with Süleyman Demirel as President, Tansu Çiller as Prime Minister and Doğan Güreş and İsmail Hakkı Karadayı as successive Chiefs of General Staff, the concept of ‘Territorial Dominance and the Removal of the PKK from the Region’ was implemented, bringing along with it, a series of systematic, diverse and integrated human rights violations against civilians.

For quite some time it has been recognized that systematic human rights violations including enforced disappearances, extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions and cases of death by torture were carried out by certain paramilitary/counter-guerrilla formations, which are not officially, but actually part of the state.”⁶ These crimes were committed particularly by the organization known as JİTEM (Gendarmerie Intelligence and Anti-Terror Unit), whose existence has never been recognized by the state, but which is known through a few individual confessors, and Army personnel, who constitute the source for these narratives.

Another clandestine warfare organization used, trained and, in fact, allegedly founded by the state was Hizbullah. The name Hizbullah was mentioned in the context of many abduction, torture, and murder cases, and summary executions carried out particularly in the OHAL region. The report, known as the Susurluk Report, dated 3 April, 1997, and prepared by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey’s Parliamentary Inquiry Commission, states that the Hizbullah received political and military training from military units in Batman. In his statement to the court within the scope of the Ergenekon case, on January 17, 2011, Colonel

6 Ö.S. Göral, A. Işık, Ö. Kaya, *The Unspoken Truth: Enforced Disappearances*. İstanbul Hafıza Merkezi, 2013

Arif Doğan, who claims to have founded JİTEM, stated that he founded the Hizbullah under the title Hizbul-Kontra (The Party of the Contras) to fight the PKK.

In this period the PKK directed some its action against the security forces as well as civilians. Village teachers and engineers working in the Emergency Rule Region were massacred, furthermore, villages were raided, civilians in addition to families who had village guards as their members were killed. However, some such raids and killings ending in civilian deaths that had long been attributed to the PKK, were not perpetrated by them as later research showed: Such for example, is the killing of 11 individuals riding a minibus in Güçlükonak in 1998, and the 16 individuals killed in a raid on Lice in 1992. Witness accounts have confirmed that these acts were carried on by the armed forces and the cases have gone to the court.

Background of the Peace Process

Today the Peace Process negotiated between the PKK and the Republic of Turkey in addition to the simultaneously ceased armed conflict has come to a standstill. In fact, there was no consensus among the political actors involved on the two parties in the naming of the process from the start. While the representatives of the state used the term “The Resolution Process”, the PKK and some civil society organizations preferred the qualification “The Peace Process”. The differentiation in terminology also gave cues as to differences in anchoring the problem and its solution.

THE CEASEFIRES

It can be said that the Peace Process, interrupted today, has quite a long period of pre-negotiations. Starting in 1990, the two parties, either alone or both, engaged in a series of activities to procure peace.

The one-sided ceasefire declared by the PKK in 1993, coincided with the positive measures taken by the, then Prime Minister Turgut Özal’s (later president of the Republic) attempts to accept the existence of Kurds at the state level towards the end of 1980s and coincided with the US intervention and presence in Iraq. On March 20, 1993, the PKK declared ceasefire for a month. Then it extended ceasefire for another two months following the completion of the month. However, President Turgut Özal died suddenly two days after this announcement. Forty days after his death, 33 soldiers were killed by the PKK on the Elazığ-Bingöl highway. Although the dispatching of the soldiers without any protection or guns whatsoever was much discussed, the first serious ceasefire thus became history.

In 1995 there was a similar period of ceasefire. The PKK listed its demands, but these were not discussed. Instead the military made a cross-border operation on Northern Iraq. Hence the second attempt at ceasefire also remained inconclusive.

In 1998, on September the 1st, celebrated by socialists as World Peace Day, the PKK declared another ceasefire; but this single-sided ceasefire was also short-lived.

The leader of PKK, Abdullah Öcalan was caught in an international operation in Kenya and brought to Turkey on February the 15th,, 1999. During his court case, held in the İmralı Island off the coast of İstanbul

in the Marmara Sea, Öcalan asked the PKK to move outside the borders of Turkey. And thus it happened; in fact a group from the region and two Peace and Democratic Resolution groups from Europe came to Turkey. This intentional coincidence with the 76th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic Day, on October the 29th, can even be considered as the official registration of the project of the “Democratic Republic”. The members of these groups, who came with the intention of joining public, political and social life in Turkey, however, were arrested, tried, sentenced and convicted. This ‘peace’ process lasted five years. The retreat of the forces of PKK on August 2, 1999 was met with a massive armed operation by the Turkish military and resulted in the death of hundreds of guerilla. This was one of the major reasons for the abandonment of ceasefire and retreat policies by the PKK. However, it would not be wrong to point out that in this period, which coincided with discussions concerning the process of Turkey’s ascension to full membership in the EU, several such ceasefires took place without being named as such.

Although there were declarations of ceasefire in 2005 and 2006 they were not long lasting. One ended with a Turkish military operation in Şırnak, while the other concluded after the PKK’s alleged bomb attack on a minibus in Hakkâri, carrying the children of the Turkish military.

During these periods of ceasefire, the PKK started defending the idea that there might be a peaceful solution within the boundaries of Turkey for the first time. However, none of the governments in power at the time made any active effort to structure a peace process. No political will emerged for doing so at the time following the death of President Özal. In fact, just the opposite, with the policies followed by the governments of this period, the country suffered from the most bloody armed conflict and human rights violations since the beginning of armed conflict in 1984.

The ceasefire declared in 2009, on the other hand, ended in October of 2009 when a group of PKK guerilla entered Turkey through the legal Habur border check-point; Turkish nationalists responded with much anger at the enthusiasm shown by those in the vicinity, and the government could not handle the crisis appropriately and hence the symbolic attempt at taking steps toward peace failed.

THE DELIBERATIONS

The first peace initiative undertaken by the government was the Oslo discussions of 2009. The Oslo Process, the details of which we do not know since they were kept secret from the public (still to this day), was the first such attempt of its kind where the PKK and the government entered a direct dialogue. In the meetings held in Oslo and other cities, the state, represented by the National Intelligence Organization, met and had talks with the members of the PKK. The Prime Minister at the time, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan confirmed in 2012 that that such discussions had indeed taken place while explaining that there were also some international organizations involved in the process.

There was no serious armed conflict during the Oslo talks until the April of 2010. The official circles and the establishment media attributed the lock in Oslo talks to the “Habur Incident” referred to earlier.

This interruption and failure in the Oslo deliberations led to even denser armed conflict lasting until 2013

when hundreds of individuals lost their lives.

This aside, the process, which started with the detainment of 53 individuals in Diyarbakır, on April 14, 2009, was followed by the arrest of over 8000 Kurdish politicians, local administrators, journalists and lawyers. These arrests have been referred to as KCK⁷ Lawsuits.

In this context it possible to say that 2011 was an unfortunate turning point. With instructions from Abdullah Öcalan (imprisoned in the İmralı Island) and on account of elections to be held in Turkey, the PKK declared ceasefire until the 15th of July 2011, which, however, ended on the 14th of July when 13 soldiers were killed in the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish Military in the rural areas of Silvan. In 2011 Turkey was witness to yet another massacre, the perpetrators of which have still to be uncovered. The Turkish military airplanes dropped four bombs on Kurdish smugglers along the border near the Roboski village (administratively connected to the Şırnak province) on December 28, 2011 in between 9:39 pm and 10:24 pm. There were 38 men, and children in this group in addition to 50 donkeys. The donkeys were carrying oil and cigarettes. There were only four survivors. Among the dead, many were not even 19. Those documents that could produce some evidence concerning the culprits were declared “official state secret”. One of the most important was the report prepared by the Ministry of Interior. The Research Commission established in the Parliament two weeks following the incident, on January 11, 2012, to discover the sequence of events and the culprits, could only peruse the documents and take notes, but was not allowed to take a photograph or to make a single copy of it.

Neither was the Commission permitted to talk to the responsible members of the government or the state. The Commander of the Air Force, the Chief of Staff, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Interior and the, then Prime Minister Erdoğan did not provide any testimony to the effect. The Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecuting Office declared its decision of lack of jurisdiction on the case, upon which the Chief of General Staff sent it to the military prosecutor. When the Military Prosecutor declared its judgment “to proceed no further” and demurred and the objections were overruled, it was decided to take the file to the Constitutional Court based upon the right to individual application. Now, nearly four years after the Roboski massacre, there has been no legal judgment concerning its investigation.

That same year the long lasting meeting of the Democratic Societal Congress,⁸ followed by a summary statement in its aftermath, was used by the media in a contradictory manner to produce an adverse effect. The explanation following the meeting provided by its Vice-President, m.p from Van, Aysel Tuğluk, was as follows: “As the Kurdish people we declare our democratic autonomy in the light of the rights provided by international human rights agreements in a common country based on territorial integrity and within the perspective of a democratic nation with the peoples of Turkey”. Members of DTK did not own up to this declaration of one-sided autonomy later on; however, the statement did impact the process unfavorably. In addition, the leaking of some of the discussions held in Oslo had the undesired consequence of terminating the fragile steps that needed to be taken toward peace in 2011.

7 KCK, or Koma Ciwaken Kurdistan in Kurdish- or the Union of Kurdistan Organizations. KCK is a political, democratic, social confederation not organized as a state, but somewhat similar to it in structure. Established in 17 May 2005, headed by Murat Karayılan.

8 DTK or Kongreya Civaka Demokratik, in Kurdish; gathers together all civil society organizations under its umbrella.

It would not be wrong to say that the first assertions concerning the Peace Process started with the Oslo Process. However, it is necessary to point out that the hunger strikes by convicted and arrested members of the PKK also had an influence in setting it off. By the end of 2012, those imprisoned and convicted members of the PKK in prison started a hunger strike because Abdullah Öcalan was not allowed to talk to his lawyers. The prolongation of the strikes and the possible health risks to the strikers prompted the Minister of Justice at the time, Sadullah Ergin to have one-to-one talks with the strikers without informing the public at large. Then the idea was developed to have talks with Abdullah Öcalan to try to end the strikes. Eventually Abdullah Öcalan was allowed to talk to his brother, Mehmet Öcalan and requested that the hunger strikes be ended, and thus they did.

At the end of 2012, the then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in a TV talk show program, publicized the fact that indeed, talks had taken place with Öcalan. On January 3, 2013 m.ps from the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) Ahmet Türk and Ayla Akat Ata went to the İmralı Island to talk to Öcalan. On February 23, 2013 another group, this time Pervin Buldan, Sırrı Süreyya Önder and Altan Tan, all m.ps from BDP, went to İmralı for more talks with Mr. Öcalan while in another visit in the April of 2013 Selahattin Demirtaş, the current co-leader of the HDP (Peoples Democratic Party) was also present in the talks in İmralı. All of these visits and talks were shared with the public and mark the start of what has been named the Resolution Process by the government. The most significant aspect of this process is the removal of earlier secrecy, and the statements made about it to the media and the public. During the Newroz day celebrations on March 21, 2013, a letter from Abdullah Öcalan was read in front of the public in Diyarbakır.

In the letter, Abdullah Öcalan explained that historically the days of armed conflict were over and that the Kurdish movement would now proceed in the direction of broadening and enhancing the democratic struggle. In his suggestions for the Peace Process Öcalan proposed a three-stage program: the withdrawal of the armed forces, the implementation of democratic reforms and lastly, PKK's integration into civilian and political life.

In the summer of 2013, the forces of PKK started withdrawing from the borders of Turkey towards Kandil⁹ in accordance with the proclamation by Abdullah Öcalan and, in the direction of the consensus reached. On September 10, 2013 the PKK administration publicized that nearly 29 groups composed of 600 individuals altogether had exited Turkey starting on the 8th of May, 2013. Yet, it was observed, that there was no consensus in between the proclamations of the Turkish government and the PKK in this regard. It was later disclosed however, that the PKK had suspended withdrawal due to the construction of "kalekol"s¹⁰ and since the government had refrained from taking steps in the Peace Process.

The process and results of the general election on June 7, 2015 in which the AKP was not able to get sufficient votes to form a single party government and the Peoples Democratic Party (HDP) of Kurds passed the 10 percent electoral threshold getting 80 of its members elected to the Parliament, led to a rise of ten-

⁹ Mountains along the border of Turkey with Iraq, next to Iran and close to the province of Erbil

¹⁰ Fortified and enlarged police/gendarmerie stations that can house large numbers of police and/or soldiers and able to withstand shelling by mortar and equipped with robots and laser (heat) cameras and food stocks.

sion on both parties. The President of the Republic denied the stage reached in the talks thus toppling the peace table, while the PKK restarted its insurgent activity following the Suruç massacre¹¹ and finally the government started bombing Kandil, thus the Peace Process came to a total standstill and it was all back to square one, an atmosphere of partial-war.

Although this was named the AKP's and the President's fight for power, peace ended and public's confidence in the process and its actors was shaken deeply.

Some Observations and Suggestions Concerning the Process

It must not be forgotten that peace is a difficult process with ups and downs. Most of the time it portrays a picture of "one step forward and two steps back". This is in the nature of the process. What is important is a persistent will for peace. It has to be kept in mind that peace is a process requiring long years of responsibility and attachment. In Guatemala the durations between the start of the talks and the agreement was 10 years, while in Sudan, 11. Nonetheless, this does not imply that peace processes all over the world, or here in Turkey will be of similar duration. What is important is the will to continue the process in spite of the ups and downs, or, as one of the architects of the Irish peace, Jonathan Powell has emphasized, "to keep turning the bicycle's wheel".

Negotiations also tend provoke power play. Using an argument such as "we don't need the negotiations", the parties in the conflict may attempt to make a show of strength. They may also try to make it appear as if every single step taken in the negotiations was "a major sacrifice". The use of such strategies is quite understandable from the perspective of the two-parties; however, for those on the side of peace, to identify with such tactics and use a single-sided critical approach is quite unhelpful to the process. What they should be doing instead is to understand the essence in the use of such language, keep outside of it and provide critical support for the process.

The road map and the question of time imply that the path drawn be followed carefully for the success of the process. The addition of an expiration date to the negotiations may increase the pressure on the parties to find solutions, but may, on the other hand, prolong the duration needed for reaching an optimal solution -which needs time.¹² On the other hand, even if the parties were able to time the process openly or covertly at the start, they may take a different route than foreseen at the outset. Hence, what is important is not to expect them to publicize a razor-edged timing and an outline with all the stages shown in the road map.

¹¹ Where 34 students who had come over from other regions in Turkey, to aid the young and child victims of war in Kobanê, Syria were killed in a suicide bomb attack.

¹² Before the accepted negotiations between Guatemala and URNG (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca) in 1994, for example, an agreement was reached on issues such as what will be discussed, the role of the mediators, how civil society would be included in the talks, how much of the process would be shared with the public at large, and the timing of the process. The two sides decide on the format of the process, but if the process comes to a deadlock, then the format can be changed. For example during the peace process in Guatemala in between 1991-1994 a multi-formatted approach was used. Most important are the direct talks but if the process is clogged up, the sides may decide that they will accept the civil consensus in whatever areas it exists, and continue, thus disregarding its own decision as binding.

There are and always will be groups that exploit conflicts in any country, at any time. Hence, the establishment of trust is a substantial concept in the process. What is important is to keep alive the belief in a solution and to persevere in response to assaults from every which side.

It is important that the public at large be prepared for the peace process at all its stages. Talking to those who have earlier been viewed, as the enemy by the government/or the organization is a totally new situation. This must be explained to the public in a style and language that does not alienate the respective parties. Those at the head of the process must refrain from using language that would impact it negatively. Many times the process comes to an impasse due to a problem of confidence. In this context the responsibility falls on all those who want peace. For the continuation and final realization of the process it is important that the media develop the language of peace.

- The help of third parties may be sought to overcome the problem of confidence. Many different formations can provide this, in other words, they need not be external. Aid may also be provided by **insider-partials**; i.e. group or individual insiders that are biased/or have taken parties.¹³ What is important is that the public considers these groups or individuals reliable. Formations that will be included in the process and perform the role of confidence building measures can also be organized in Turkey. However, as long as the parties do not want or trust this, it is senseless to be insistent upon a third eye. In the final analysis, it must not be forgotten that this is an ethical task for those on the side of peace.
- Social work must be conducted in order to strengthen the relations of the peace process with different sections of the public, local agenda must be kept on peace as was done during the period of the Wise Persons Delegation in urban centers in Turkey. This will assure that the precious periods away from conflict and death will be remembered amidst the busy daily agenda.

The Peace Process:

¹³ In the Republic of South Africa, Colombia and Nepal these were mainly handled internally as organic processes. In Guatemala, for example, at the beginning, the Catholic Church had the role of the facilitator, with the United Nations acting as mediator only later. In Sudan a more regional mediating process took place while the US put pressure on the Khartoum regime. These are relatively good examples. In contrast, Sri Lanka is a relatively bad example, because here, the pressure put by the international community was found to be overwhelming and backfired. Hence there is no single example to follow; the countries involved can draw up their own models. In Nicaragua, in 1998, the Reconciliation Commission was given the job of searching for sensitive subjects that can be misunderstood in the process.

Negotiations and the Law

Ayşe Betül Çelik, Evren Balta,, Levent Korkut, Murat Çelikkan, Nil Mutluer

The Instruments

WISE PERSONS DELEGATION

One of the most important instruments of the Peace Process in the past two years has been the implementation of the Wise Persons Delegation. In the April of 2013, The Prime Minister (then Erdoğan) designated 63 persons including 12 women to act as members of the Wise Persons Delegation in different regions in Turkey. Their work was determined to last one month, but extended to two months, a month later. In the duration of the two months, each regional committee organized meetings, visits, panel discussions and seminars and discussed the peace process with the people living in different regions in Turkey. It was announced that the Public Order and Security Undersecretary would provide logistical support for the delegation.

Unlike its counterparts elsewhere in the world (where they had to alleviate the lack of trust between the parties, to act as mediators, and to provide alternative solutions in times of crisis and follow the process closely), The Wise Persons Delegation in Turkey was employed as a publicity tool and as an instrument to promote peace. No framework for action was drawn, with each regional envoy left free to formulate its own activities.

Although the government, by and large, articulated the names of individuals to take part in the Delegation, the suggestions of İmralı (Abdullah Öcalan) and Kurdish politicians were also partly taken into account. Also there was some evaluation of those selected to take part in the Delegation. In general, the criticisms revolved around the few number of women taking part and the lack of representation of various political tendencies. The Delegation could have had additional duties such as expediting the process by following up and acting as mediators; these, however, were not realized.

The impact and results of this practice were not clear, however, even though it was crucial for the socialization of the Peace Process. Each committee had prepared a report of its counsel and determinations, but these were not made public, nor were the actors in the process allowed to give their opinion of the reports or how they would proceed. Although the Delegation of Wise Persons could have acted as a third party, as seen in examples from around the world, it was not provided with the capacity to do so. It could have acted as a mediator in the atmosphere of insecurity, called the parties to common sense, could have helped in administering crisis situations, could have interpreted events with a third eye and prevented the parties from leaving the table; these essentials still need to be met.

It should be pointed out, however, that the Wise Persons Delegation did play an effective role in discussing

the Peace Process with the public and civil society, listening to their expectations and anxieties concerning the Peace Process and reporting on these; it served, in other words, in the socialization of peace, in diverting the attention of the media from war to peace, in bringing and working together with individuals having diverse opinions on peace, and in publicizing the peace process in general.

THE RESOLUTION COMMISSION

In the April of 2013 a commission of significance to the Peace Process was established in the Grand National Assembly (TBMM) under the name, “The Resolution Commission” for short, or “The Parliamentary Inquiry Commission for the Exploration of Avenues to Societal Peace and the Evaluation of The Resolution Process”. Ten members of the ruling AKP, and one member of BDP (formed by Kurds) took place in this, while The Social Democratic Party, CHP, and the Nationalist Movement Party, the MHP, refused to participate. The commission was expected to listen to and reconcile the views of many civil society organizations, victims, representatives of rights’ groups, academicians, and women’s organizations, and victims of war. However, the commission could not accomplish its mission and prepare a common report. The AKP parliamentarians produced their own report without consulting the BDP, whose members in turn, wrote their own report. Both parties accused the other, but the commission ended up having two reports prepared by the two parties. The commission could not produce a common approach and mutual suggestions to fill in the abyss between the parties from the perspective of rhetoric, concepts, determinations and suggestions.

In spite of this, the Commission, now had, in its hands, not only the stories and demands of the victims, but a collection that could be evaluated from the perspective of the various determinations and demands made by academicians, researchers and civil society organizations, and by all those working on the subject.

DEBATING THE THIRD EYE

After the Wise Persons completed their mission, relinquishing the idea of the establishment of another one in a short span of time with fewer members left a major gap in the process.

The PKK, the Kurdish politicians, and some civil society organizations showed an interest and expressed a desire to form another Delegation independent of the first one. The government, at least, did not refuse or deny the need for a third eye or a follow up delegation. On October 19, 2014, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, in a meeting with the Wise Persons Delegation said he was not against such a new formation, but that its timing and conditions would be of crucial importance. The Prime Minister expressed, in addition, that such a new group could check whether the promises were kept and follow up and observe the situation in the region and that it should be neutral enough to be able to determine which party was fair and which unfair. The advisor to the Prime Minister, Etyen Mahçupyan, on the other hand, said, in a statement he made later, that it would be more proper if the Monitoring Delegation was formed and started working after the parties had reached an agreement.

Examining examples from around the world, we see that Third Eye or Third Side was formed in many dif-

ferent ways. It could be international as well as national, it could be a friendly neighboring nation, or a representative from a powerful country, it could involve a single person or civil society organizations, and it could be official or unofficial. In addition to international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, powerful individuals who have some representative quality, such as Bill Clinton (In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), Nelson Mandela (Burundi), Kofi Annan (Syria), international institutions or states and even regions; for instance Ireland, Cyprus, Iraq, South Sahara, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, ACEH/Indonesia) and local civil society organizations (in Columbia, in the Philippines, in Assam/India for example..) can act as third parties.

It is also important to point out that there are different points of view on the composition of the Monitoring Delegation. Although the leaders of PKK have said publically that they would welcome the presence of international specialists in these envoys, the government has expressly emphasized that it be composed entirely of citizens of Turkey. In a statement made at the end of 2014, the PKK stated that the USA could act as a mediator in the process. Aside from the last proposition, all have emphasized that the delegations should be composed of civilians.

From these debates the following possibilities emerge in the formation of the Monitoring Delegation.

1. A delegation that mediates and plays a reconciliatory role in the discussions, which also has the function of observation, which is reliable and respected and composed of foreign and native specialists.
2. A delegation that mediates, that plays a reconciliatory role in the discussions, and simultaneously has the function of observation, which is a reliable and respected and composed of foreign and native specialists.
3. A delegation that only observes and follows the extent to which the parties keep their promises and which provides independent testimony in situations where the Peace Process is in danger and which is composed of foreign and native specialists.
4. A delegation that only observes and follows the extent to which the parties keep their promises and which provides independent testimony in situations where the Peace Process is in danger and which is composed native specialists.
5. The application of models under (3) or (4) after the parties decide on a calendar and an agreed upon text.
6. A delegation that includes a member from a third party nation who will perform the role of a mediator in addition to the parties in the conflict.

Although each of these alternatives were brought to light, it can be said that the government party, AKP's preference was for a delegation composed of citizens of Turkey. Additionally, the AKP government did not look favorably upon an additional monitoring delegation to act as a mediator and join the talks directly. In this framework it can be said that alternatives (4) and (5) were models that best suited the approach of AKP government, while the PKK and Kurdish politicians had a more flexible approach. In this context, it seems that the first model was the one that the PKK supported most.

In spite of the differences between the parties, the idea of forming a Third Eye was postponed once the

provisional peace and ceasefire ended; in fact, it was no longer a part of the agenda. The responsibility that falls on a Third Eye acceptable to both parties today, would be to procure the conditions necessary to sit down at the negotiating table.

THE İMRALI DELEGATION

On January 3, 2013, BDP parliamentarians Ahmet Türk and Ayla Akat Ata went to the İmrالی Island and talked to Abdullah Öcalan. Then, on February 23, 2013, Pervin Buldan, Sırrı Süreyya Önder and Altan Tan went to İmrالی and had discussions with Abdullah Öcalan. Although there was some tension between the government and the BDP as to the names of individuals who would take part in the next visit, it was finally agreed that they would be İdris Baluken, Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder.

Due to demonstrations against the policies of the government in Kobanê on October 6-7, 2013, the government authorities declared that the “The Resolution Process was put on hold” while representatives of the Kurdish movement claimed, “the process was over/or would be over”. Around the same time the “Iraq Damascus Islamic State’s (IDIS/ IS /ISIS/DAİŞ,) siege of Kobanê¹⁴ , which it had under control for nearly a month reached grave proportions triggering another dynamics in Turkey. The Union of Kurdistan organizations, KCK and the Kurdish Party in Turkey, HDP called for “demonstrations of indefinite duration” and many people went out into the streets to protest. Following events that led to the death of 49 individuals in 40 provinces, in many cities and towns the government forbade people to go out into the streets. Now many groups (the supporters of HDP and HÜDA-Par in the East and the supporters of HDP and the nationalists in the West) confronted each other. Hundreds of individuals were hurt in the skirmishes, while many offices, public and political party buildings and municipality buildings were set on fire. While the Kobanê events continued, the aide to the chief of police Atif Şahin and police officer Hüseyin Hatipoğlu lost their lives in an attack in Bingöl. There was a media blackout concerning the deaths. A short while following the incident, four individuals portrayed as the culprits of the killings of the two policemen were themselves killed by the police in a car stopped in the Genç town of Bingöl. However, it was later discovered that the bullets found inside the guns of the deceased men, were not the same bullets that killed the two policemen earlier. A motion made by the HDP to the Grand National Assembly to search the truth behind the events was rejected by the AKP.

The events taking place in Kobanê were important in bringing out the international dimensions of the Kurdish Issue to the forefront, in showing that the government’s international politics had a direct impact on the Peace Process in Turkey, and in bringing out, into the open the results of PKK’s laying down its arms. It also became clear that in some cases the government’s sole source of information concerning the essence of the incidents was the state bureaucracy and that such information could be wrong or missing in content. It also came to notice that sufficient steps were not taken to solve the problems created by the lack of/or the presence of wrong information. Öcalan’s call ended the protests. Öcalan also reminded

¹⁴ The siege of Kobanê started on September 13, 2014 when the Islamic militants attacked villages that were, at the time under control by the PYD (PYD is the military counterpart of PKK in Syria). On December 2, 2014 , when IŞID captured 350 villages around Kobanê, nearly 300 000 Kobanêans became refugees and immigrated to Turkey.

everyone that the Peace Process and Kobanê were part of inseparable whole.

In the talks between the İmralı Delegation of HDP and the aide to the Prime Minister, Yalçın Akdoğan, the conclusion was “to continue by expediting the process”. The announcement made to the public also included the decision to assign a five-person secretariat to Abdullah Öcalan, and the addition of the head of DTK (Democratic Peoples Congress), Hatip Dicle together with a representative from the Free Women’s Congress (Kongra Jinên Azad), namely, Ceylan Bağrıyanık to the İmralı Delegation. Although the enlargement of the Delegation was realized, there has been a ban on discussions with Abdullah Öcalan since May of 2015.

The Legal Framework of the Process

On January 15, 2010, then Minister of Interior, Beşir Atalay publicized the progress on “Democratization” conducted within the context of the “Project on National Unity and Fraternity” in a press conference, together with a series of new arrangements to facilitate the process. The following elements became prominent in this context:

- The bylaws providing for communication in the native language (mother tongue) concerning visits of kin of the arrested and the convicted to prisons
- The start of broadcasting in different languages and dialects on the state-owned

TRT 6 TV

- The creation of an “Institute of Living Languages” in Turkey following the decision of the Institution of Higher Education (YÖK) on the “establishment of institutes and research centers in different languages and dialects in the universities”
- Measures taken to minimize police controls on the roads and the ban on moving to mountain pastures from the villages in the summer (a practice mostly used by Kurdish tribes with herding animals).
- Although this package was assessed as being “insufficient for the solution” of the Kurdish Issue, it was still a step in the right direction.

THE LAW ON TERMINATION OF TERROR AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

One advance in the process was the passing of Law 6551, "The Ending of Terror and Reinforcement of Social Integration" in the Parliament on July 16, 2012. The second article in the law gave the following mandates to the government:

- To determine the steps to be taken in the process of ending terror and the reinforcement of social integration on political, legal, socioeconomic, psychological, cultural, human rights, safety, disarmament and on other relevant issues;
- To establish dialogue and communicate with individuals, organizations, institutions inside and outside of the country, and to appoint institutions and organizations to realize this task when needed;
- To take the necessary precautions for those members of the organization who have left arms and are returning home and to help in their integration and adaptation to society;
- To make sure that the public is informed accurately and at the right time of the work being done in the context of the law;
- To follow up on the application of precautions taken in the context of the law and to coordinate between related institutions and organizations;
- The authority to make the related secondary legislation, i.e. bylaws, in these contexts.
- The third article of the law gave the authority to the government to make decisions concerning the subject matter of the Peace Process. It also stipulated that the Public Order and Security Undersecretary would execute the function of coordination and secretariat.

The fourth article of the law foresaw that the tasks given in the context of the law would be carried on swiftly by the pertinent institutions and organizations. The fourth article also provided that those persons involved in carrying on the relevant tasks listed under article two will not be under any legal, administrative or punitive responsibility.

Legal specialists interpreting the law have said that the regulation has been written in manner that does not go into any detail on the subject matter and leaves all authority to the government. The broad definition of the scope of jurisdiction also implies that all topics concerning the process can be treated as being within the context of the law. It can be said that going into details in the law would have raised the issue of its unconstitutionality; hence its rather abstract and general configuration is rather positive. The social democratic CHP party did not bring the law before the Constitutional Court due to its structure of having only a few articles and an essence, thus increasing its indirect acceptance. On the other hand, the lack of details in the law implied that the sole authority in its judicial discretion lay with the government. The person responsible for the Peace Process and aide to the Prime Minister, Beşir Atalay, explained that this arrangement was not a law of resolution, but provided a framework on who and how the Resolution Process would be supervised.

As seen in this example of the law, another basic problem in the Peace Process, is that the language used by the politicians, the media, or the legal texts has not been expurgated of the word "terrorism". This impacts the coverage and comprehensiveness of the process negatively. One of the most important impediments to the solution of the Kurdish Issue and Turkey's transformation into a democratic, peaceful country with a comprehensive legal, political and social system at large, is the reduction of the Peace Process to an

issue of security, and of that, to “terrorism”.

GUIDELINES REGARDING PRAXIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LAW ON THE TERMINATION OF TERROR AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF INTEGRATION

Another regulation concerning the process, a Prime Ministerial Mandate, “Guidelines regarding Praxis in the Context of the Law on the Termination of Terror and the Reinforcement of Integration” took effect on October 2, 2014, two-and-half months following the date that Law 6551 took effect.

In this mandate the units to take charge in the Peace Process are given in detail. The 3rd article of the mandate delineates its domain of work as follows:

- a) The domain of politics, political institutions and actors
- b) Legal reorganization and human rights
- c) Social Programs
- d) Economic provisions
- e) Cultural programs
- f) Public support and civil society work
- g) Security and disarmament
- h) Contact and dialogue with actors who are part of the problem
- i) Work to be done in the context of homecoming, joining social life and adaptation
- i) Work on psychological support and rehabilitation
- j) Work on informing the public and public diplomacy

The fourth article of the law had established a Board for the Resolution Process for the purpose of work to be done in the context of strategy and policies, to ascertain the precautions to be taken, to establish coordination between the ministries and to follow up on the end results of the implementation at the highest level.

The Resolution Process Board would be composed of the following ministries under the direction of the Prime Minister, or an aide appointed by the Prime Minister:

- Minister of Justice
- Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Minister of the Internal Affairs
- Minister of Defense
- Undersecretary to the Prime Minister
- Undersecretary to the National Intelligence Organization
- Undersecretary of Public Order and Security

The fifth article of the Prime Ministerial Mandate envisaged the setting up of Inter-organizational Watch

and Coordination Panels for each single area of work. Specialists from the civil society, the ministry, and representatives of the private sector would meet and work under the presidency of the Undersecretary of the related commission. Assembling these panels started and were partly completed. The return to conditions of war nullified the move to the next phase in the development which would have been the step towards delineating the areas of work and its application. In any case, it could be seen that no measures concerning reconciling with the past, inequality towards the Kurds, discrimination, injustice, and violations of rights had been taken, nor any reform work implicated on these structural issues and problematic organizations among the areas of work listed, This a very basic issue. Sustainable peace has not been assured in any country where the structural reforms were not assembled in an encompassing and valid manner. In the area of “security and disarmament”, for example, this situation is related to whether the kinds of changes that need to be made in the structure, regulations and their application and concerning the security forces and the armed forces will be undertaken. Also, it brings home, the issue of whether the title “the legal situation and human rights” covers the culprits of recent massacres, enforced disappearances, torture, rape and other grave human rights violations will be tried in court or not. Will policies of impunity be allowed to end for public officials or not? Will those who have committed crimes continue to stay in office and be promoted or not? Will mechanisms of justice of the transitional era, seen in other examples around the world, be implemented? Will the right to truth, acknowledgment of violations and crimes be realized, --will reparations be a current issue on the agenda?

The Road Map

In the context of the Peace Process, Deputy Premier, Yalçın Akdoğan met with a delegation of Peoples Democratic Party (HDP) in the office of the Prime Minister on February 28, 2015. Attending the meeting were Deputy Premier Yalçın Akdoğan, Minister of the Interior Efkân Ala, AKP Group Vice- President, Mahir Ünal, HDP Group Vice-Presidents Pervin Buldan, İdris Baluken and m.p. from İstanbul Sırrı Süreyya Önder. Following the meeting, Sırrı Süreyya Önder made public the ten items that Abdullah Öcalan had staked out concerning the process and which had constituted the essence of the meeting

Önder listed the ten items on the list thus:

- Democratic politics; its definition and substance,
- The identification of the national and local dimensions of the democratic solution,
- The legal and democratic warranties of free citizenship,
- The relation of democratic politics to the state and society and headings with respect to their institutionalization,
- The socioeconomic dimensions of the Resolution Process,
- The structure of the new security prompted by the Resolution Process;
- Legal solutions and their warranties for policies on women, culture, and ecological problems
- The concept of identity, its definition and recognition within the pledges of building a pluralistic democracy and mechanisms of equality,
- The definitions of democratic republic, common native land and nation with democratic criteria within the context of a plural democratic system with legal and constitutional warranties
- A new constitution aiming the internalization of all democratic moves and transformations including

the new developments

In making the ten-item demand list public, Önder, also read Öcalan's call for an emergency congress:

“While we are in the process of guiding our thirty-year-old conflict towards lasting peace, our main objective is to achieve a democratic solution. I invite the PKK to an extraordinary congress in the spring months to make the strategic and historic decision on the principles of the least common denominators reached concerning the laying down of arms. This call is the declaration of an historical intention to let democratic politics take the place of armed struggle.”

Akdoğan, on the other hand, in a meeting held in the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchange of Turkey, publicized the expectation that the Newroz of 2015 would be a significant milestone in the Process of Resolution.

Following these talks, the Co-Chairman of the Executive Council of PKK, Cemil Bayık said in an interview “Öcalan must join the congress if armed struggle is to end”.

One of the first problems at this stage was that the above list of items had not been transformed into concrete measures. When considered from the perspective of both their wide range and ambiguity, these ten items pointed out to a long and difficult process of negotiation.

The Election Process and its Aftermath

Turkey's entering the election process to be held on June 7 2015, and HDP's joining the elections as a party, rather than with independent candidates as earlier, and the possibility of its passing the 10% national election threshold implying a significant drop in the number of AKP m.ps entering the parliament led to a toughening in the discourse of the two sides towards each other.

Even before the electoral process there had been allegations that reciprocal expectations were not being met. While the government focused on the continuation of the discussions and the infiltration of the Resolution/Peace Process into deeper levels of the society depended on PKK's laying down of arms and moving outside the borders of Turkey, the İmralı Delegation, the HDP administration, the KCK, and the PKK argued that no legal steps had been taken, the Domestic Security Package had not been withdrawn, the democratization process had not hastened, that the mutually agreed on Follow-up Delegation had not been bought to life, and finally that with the preclusion of visits to and talks with Öcalan, the practice of his isolation had restarted.

President Erdoğan's joining the election process as if still a member of his own party (under the parliamentary system of Turkey he is supposed to be equidistant to all political parties) and his statements such as “There is no Kurdish Issue”, “There is no discussion table” and that he is opposed to the consensus reached in Dolmabahçe, and later, even arguing that Dolmabahçe is not a consensus, but a single-sided text, and the endorsement of his position by Yalçın Akdoğan were the first signs that there was a retreat

from the Process of Resolution. During the electoral process there were 53 attacks on HDP headquarters and administrators, while on June 5, 2015, in an HDP open-air-meeting in Diyarbakır held by its co-leader Selahattin Demirtaş, a bomb exploded in the very vicinity killing at least two persons, which coincided with the government's return to the old discourse of "terror" and "terrorist"; hence it would not be wrong to say at this point that the Peace Process came to a stalemate.

The government's policy on the Middle East within the past few years in general, and on Syria in particular has been another factor that gained impetus to impair the peace process. The support claimed to be given to the Sunni-Salafi block, on the one hand, the prevention of autonomy that the Kurds started achieving, on the other, and the consideration of Kurds fighting IS, in the same category as IS itself, have been important areas arousing tension in between the Kurdish movement and the government.

In the elections on June 7, 2015, the AKP secured only 258 m.ps, insufficient to form a government all by itself. The social democratic CHP entered the Parliament with 132 m.ps, the HDP, 80 m.ps and the nationalist MHP 80 m.ps. The most important aspect of the results of the election from the perspective of the Resolution Process has been that the AKP's single-party government regime continuing since 2002 was ended. In addition, this was made possible, in large part by the HDP, seen as the representative of the Kurdish movement, passing the 10% national election threshold. The determinant of the process has been the change in the votes in the Kurdish areas from the AKP to HDP. Losing the possibility of forming its single-party-government, the AKP interpreted this as being a result of HDP's success, and toughened its discourse on the HDP. This has played the role of increasing the tension between the sides involved in the resolution process.

Overall it can be said that elections are a time when the language of politics sharpens; interests focus on the number of chairs in the parliament and thus, the discussion table loses its significance. Although the election period in Turkey can be assessed from this perspective, it is also possible to mention the contribution of the previously mentioned regional reasons and the government party's attempt, in its propaganda, to increase its hold on the base of the nationalist votes.

The Suruç Massacre

On July 20, 2015, a group of 300 young people mostly Kurdish and Turkish university students from different provinces in Turkey, many members of the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations, met in Suruç.¹⁵ A campaign of a few days was conducted in preparation for the meeting and the National Intelligence Agency, MIT, and the security forces had followed the youth throughout their journey.

Their aim was travel to Kobanê, a town located south of Suruç, just across the border, in Syria, which had been nearly demolished by the attacks of IS, to show solidarity with the peoples of Kobanê, to give toys to the children, to build a playground and a library for the children and to plant trees for a forest of remembrance. During their press conference however, the youth were targeted by a suicide bomber, Şeyh

¹⁵ Suruç, located in the southwest region of Urfa province, in Southwestern Anatolia along the border in Turkey, and next to Kobanê, which is located on the Syria side of the border...

Abdurrahman Alagöz, said to be an IS militant, which killed 32 students and injured 100. Following the “IS massacre” two policemen were murdered in Ceylanpınar, a town on the border with Syria, in Urfa. Then Sergeant Yalçın Nan died in an attack by IS on the Syria border, while in Diyarbakır Tansu Aydın, a traffic policeman was killed.

At first the PKK owned up to the murder in Ceylanpınar, however, it later announced that the killing of the two policemen was not a decision of the central PKK administration, but a reaction on the part of the ‘People’s Defense Center’ related to it. In spite of this disclosure, the PKK killed many security personnel in the next 30 days. While in the security operations conducted in reaction, in the following few days, many civilians died. As usual, the number of guerrilla deaths announced by the government and the PKK differed widely. The bodies of those deceased Women’s Defense Union, YPJ, fighting IS in Syria were forced by the government to wait along the border and not given to their families for a long time. In their report on human rights violations during July and August of 2015, the Diyarbakır branch of the Human Rights Association announced that 63 individuals had lost their lives in the clashes.

Following these events, the government decided to take Turkey into war on two fronts. Under the banner of “Struggle against all kinds of terrorist organizations”, it announced that it had started war against both the IS and the PKK, but also against the DHKP-C, whose name had not been pronounced in the earlier events. NATO also joined in the operation. Turkey Started bombing the PKK camps across the border simultaneously with IS localities. Although it had been declared that the culprit of the Suruç massacre was IS, the operations were balanced heavily against the PKK. Tens of individuals were arrested in different parts of Turkey while 52 individuals died within the course of a week.

According to Bianet news portal “Number of Deaths Due to War in Suruç”, in between July 20, 2015 and August 20, 2015, 16 policemen, 2 village guards, 12 drafted soldiers, 23 sergeants and specialized sergeants, 34 guerilla and 8 civilians died. A total of 128 lives were lost in 18 provinces.¹⁶

An Appraisal

The Peace Process had been going on for nearly two years with intermissions and interruptions. Statements made by the two parties, particularly during the election process, revealed that their understanding of peace was quite discordant. The government officials were focused particularly on the laying down of arms by the PKK. The Kurdish side, on the other hand, wanted to concentrate on the Kurdish Issue, the socialization of peace, the total transformation of the milieu producing and nourishing conflict such that comparable occurrences never transpired in the future, and asked for a “Democratic Turkey”. The elections of June the 7th ended in the negotiating and ruling party AKP’s losing its position of power as a single party and the HDP’s entering the parliament in a rather strong position, with 80 m.ps. This situation led the AKP government to believe that the Resolution Process was not benefiting its position of power, while strengthening the Kurdish side. The other side of the equation in the Resolution Process, the HDP had an openly anti-government stance throughout the elections, which further increased the tension between the two parties.

At the time this report is being written the decision was made to have early elections. This seems to be

¹⁶ www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/166963-suruc-tan-bugune-savasin-aldigi-canlar: 20.08.2015.

a strong factor in the AKP's decision to end the Resolution Process. The fact that in an extremely fragile period an unauthorized government is ruling Turkey also increases social tension and leaves the process vulnerable to conflict.

If we take the Dolmabahçe Proclamation as year zero, the fact that the Resolution Process had a legal framework is a constructive advancement in spite of its various deficiencies that need detailing today. However, the fact that the democratic demands outlined in the first road map remain under the shadow of the “Internal Security Reform Law”, in addition to the increased polarization during the election process and the policies of the government on Syria have increased worries concerning the Peace Process.

Overall, it can be said that in the slow and limping progress of the Peace Process, the ameliorations listed below have not taken place leading to serious mistrust amongst the actors.

- In the context of confidence building measures, there has been no improvement in the situation of sick detainees and no positive policies were identified in the cases of grave human right violations waiting on the shelves for years;
- There were no measures taken in the few ongoing court cases concerning changes in the court delegation, changes in the place of the courts, permissions in suing high level government officials, and the prevention of court cases concerning grave human rights crimes defined by international law due to the statute of limitation of 20 years.
- In the rare cases against soldiers who had committed crimes against humanity during the 1990s, able to reach the court, almost all were exonerated. Following the acquittal of Mete Sayar and Musa Çitil, the public prosecutor also asked for acquittal in the case of Cemal Temizöz;
- No initiative has been taken to include women in the process or for social equality between the sexes;
- The demands of relatives of the forcibly disappeared, summarily and/or arbitrarily executed were not included in the process;
- No new mechanisms or structures were established for the socialization of peace, nor was the most important of these, the establishment of Truth Commissions ever proposed as an item to the agenda;
- No structures were created to inform the public at large about peace or truths;
- No work has been conducted for the active inclusion of civil society in the process;
- There were no public or legal discussions concerning native language (mother tongue) and other cultural rights;
- No work was conducted to overcome the perception of the “other” in society;
- The government's policy on Syria has led to a deep mistrust among the Kurds. The consideration of Kurds fighting IS, in the same category as IS itself has weakened the eventuality of peace in Turkey in the near future;
- A Parliamentary Working Group on the Resolution Process with equal participation from the political parties was not established.
- There has been no Follow-Up Commission established to observe the ongoing process.

The Dolmabahçe meeting of February 28, 2015 was a hope that the above list of the specific shortcomings

would be appeased. Due to the developments immediately following this meeting, however, the Process of Resolution came to a de facto impasse as was mentioned earlier. The events following June the 7th, the Suruç massacre, PKK's aggressive acts, and military-political operations have eliminated the existing state of truce. Detentions, arrests, prohibitions, bans, and death have reentered our daily life. After the breakdown of negotiations, the polemics carried on in the media have become less harmful to the Peace Process. There has been a de facto ban on the visits by HDP m.ps to Abdullah Öcalan for months.

Retaliation, power play, policies without human life in their focus end in death at every turn and take us further and further away from the hope of peace. War cannot lead to peace nor be used to achieve it. In this context, unless the civil society organizations', the intellectual elite's, and the ordinary people's call for "taking hands off the trigger" is realized, the possibility of negotiations and peace becomes more problematic.

Peace is the single most important political project of Turkey. Those on the side of peace in Turkey and the political actors owe peace to the peoples of Turkey. The return to the Peace Process and its rapid pace is the single most important topic in the current agenda of Turkey.

Social Peace and the

Socialization of the Peace Process ¹⁷

Ayşe Betül Çelik, Nil Mutluer

Since 2009, the solving of the Kurdish Issue both by the government and the Kurdish side has relied heavily on negotiations as described in detail in sections of the report focused on the legal process and mechanisms. Hence the start of talks by the leaders of both parties is certainly an important step in the direction of peace. However, if peace is only limited to the level of political leaders, if the public at large does not support it, it's overall acceptance and endurance is next to impossible. Lasting peace depends as much on the democratization of institutions and the progress of negotiations, as, on the change of perceptions, the re-establishment of trust between individual-state and between various sections of society, and social change in the direction of the sense that justice prevails overall.

Although the Kurdish Issue has its own idiosyncratic foundations and special projects that need to be developed in this direction, the Republic of Turkey also has important issues of democratization that demand to be talked about in the context of many other ethnic and minority groups who live here. In other words, the Peace Process must focus both on the justice that evolved following the in-fight, confronting the past, group security in the context of the Kurdish Issue, but must also bring together the sections of society that had other kinds of problems throughout the history of the Republic and must also work on the representation of different identities and fulfilling their needs.

According to a Turkey-wide survey conducted by KONDA in the June of 2012, there are various dimensions of the marginalization processes. Perhaps one of the most striking of these is that individuals who define the “other” do not do this on the basis of their own personal encounters, but through what they see in the images reflected in the media.¹⁸ Another study conducted in İzmir showed that Turks and Kurds do have mutual unfavorable images of each other, but their content differs widely. According to the findings, 40% of the Turks say that when they think of Kurds, the adjectives that comes to their mind are “ignorant”, “uneducated, unschooled”, “rough, coarse”, “uncultured”, “backward”; while when Kurds think of Turks, they mostly use unfavorable adjectives referring to nationalism. These findings point out to the fact that even if the necessary constitutional and legal changes are made, new institutional structures implemented, social peace will not be rendered unless intergroup dialogue groups are organized and intergroup trust is built.¹⁹ On the other hand, during the events that took place in the Gezi Park in 2013, a large section of the public came face to face with the fact that the media was not reflecting certain events in a realistic and objective manner for the first time. For many Turks, perhaps, this may have helped in their introduction to the distressing history of the Kurds and to confront their own ignorance and callousness regarding it. Although the acceleration of this consciousness may have lost speed at this point, it is important not to forget the

17 Parts of this chapter were taken from: Ayşe Betül Çelik, “Kürt Meselesi’ni Dönüştürmede Toplumsal Mutabakat İhtiyacı: Neden, Nasıl, Kimle?” (The Need for Reconciliation in Transforming the Kurdish Issue: Why? How? With Whom?) In, Çatışma Çözümleri ve Barış (Conflict Resolutions and Peace), Murat Aktaş (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014.

18 KONDA 2012, Ocak-Mayıs Barometreleri (January to May Barometers) İstanbul: KONDA.

19 Ekin Ok, “Are We Becoming More Distant? Exploring the Nature of Social Polarization Along Ethnic Lines in the City of İzmir”, unpublished MA thesis, Sabancı University, 2011.

influence of certain social events in shaping inter-group perceptions and their role in the Peace Process.

The needs of the Peace Process differ widely in diverse regions of Turkey. In a country where divergent sections of the society suffer incompatible hardships and pain, the democratization process should be structured in such a way to facilitate speaking about the understanding of each groups' history and to meet their different needs. To form new intergroup ties among groups that had destructive relationships, based on mutual respect for each other's honor and legitimacy, it is necessary to get rid of the language of marginalization, to share each other's stories, and imagine a new future. In order for these to take effect, it is essential that different models of social consensus be thought through and planned with various actors for peace projects to succeed. Such projects should start as multi-cultural projects that include not only the peace process (and the Kurdish issue) but also simultaneously other historically marginalized groups based on ethnicity, belief, gender and sexual orientations.

Fears, Threats and Perceptions

The most substantial social barriers to the Peace Process are the fears experienced and threats perceived by various social segments. In the context of the work conducted by the Wise Persons Delegation of 63 individuals, formed in the January of 2013, in all of the seven regions in Turkey, it appears that most of these fears stem from the disparate expectations and mutual mistrust of Kurds and Turks in the Peace Process, but as well, and particularly on what was taught during the armed conflict. For example, one of the most important perils perceived by the Turkish side, "the secession of the country" is not a desire voiced by most Kurds in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. In fact, these groups of Kurds have said that they are unable to understand the roots of this anxiety. On the other hand, it is also important to keep in mind that the discussion of certain topics in the process may also incite such fears. One of the most important demands of the Kurds, the use of mother-tongue (native language) in the education and the service sectors, has been perceived by many Turks, for instance in the discussions of the Wise Persons Delegation in the Mediterranean Region, as if they were asking for the acceptance of Kurdish as a second official language and thus interpreted as the apprehension concerning secession. Likewise, concepts such as autonomy, the state system (such as in the US) not well known by the public at large, also feed upon these anxieties. Referring to different kinds of governance (administration), these terms can be taught and discussed at the national level, greatly aiding the process of overcoming some fears.

Again comparing the Regional Reports of the Wise Persons Delegation it can be observed that there is a mutual fear of each other's nationalisms. Hence, it would aid the progress of a less troubled Peace Process if all parties purified their language of nationalist thought and language and refrained from making declarations that can arouse the fears of the other side during the talks, the process can run more smoothly. One of the frequently mentioned fears of Turks, voiced by different segments of the society, is the Sèvres Paranoia; the belief that "foreign focal points are trying to divide the country". Although this anxiety has an actual historical precedent (The Treaty of Sèvres, 1920), the evaluation of the process from this perspective makes the steps to be taken only more difficult, thus constituting a barrier in the dialogue between the two parties already having unfavorable perceptions of each other. The easiest way to avert these fears is surely the language used by the leaders and those facilitating the process. Analyzing the reports of the

Delegations comparatively again, we can see that although each regional envoy encountered problems at the beginning, they were able to bring together different sections of the public together and have them talk to each other, thus increasing the support for the Peace Process. In the reports it was noted that some progress was made in the area of having groups with different opinions listen to each other. However, it is also necessary to make the process more transparent and for the government to take care²⁰ to refrain from discourse and behavior that would spark off such fears.

One of the architects of the Peace Process in North Ireland, British Diplomat Jonathan Powell, whose father and elder brother were both wounded by the IRA, points out the significance of antagonistic parties' listening to each other's perspective using the example of a dialogue between the Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams and the chief negotiator (on the British side) Martin McGuinness in the meeting held in the Prime Minister's Office: "Gerry and Martin were both very tense. In order to break the ice, as he entered the room where we were scheduled to meet, Martin quipped, 'So, this is where all the damage started.'" I said, "Yes, when the IRA threw the howitzer to the garden of the Residence, this window exploded and, my brother was barely able to take John Major along with him as he threw himself underneath the table". Martin was horrified. He was talking about the agreement between Lloyd George and Michael Collins signed in 1922, which ended the Irish Liberation War and started the Civil War in Ireland. I, on the other hand thought that he was talking about the 1991 operation of the IRA on the Prime Minister's Office. That very day I understood that the understanding of the same historical event by the two parties of the conflict could be very different. However, we had started talking the same language at the end of that day."²¹

As in the example of Northern Ireland, the most important obstacle in the Peace Process is fear, perception and differences in historical memory, and not listening to or talking about these differences. Jonathan Powell, whose father and brother had both been injured by the IRA, said that he had revealed his attitude symbolically by not shaking hands with Adams and MCGuinness that day, but looking back over the incident today, he regrets it, considering it an example of narrow-mindedness and says that he has a different opinion today, adding: "Although it is not easy to forgive when there are victims on both parties, many individuals, in situations worse than myself have accomplished this over time"²². Surely forgiving must be a personal choice, and not a sine qua non of peace. However following Powell's example, it is important for the parties to listen to each other's stories and propagate the social empathy that is a necessary step for peace.

Social Polarization in Peace Processes

²⁰ For example in various reports of the Wise Persons Delegation it is mentioned that the removal of the emblem TC (Republic of Turkey- officially written as T.C.) from official buildings has triggered such fears.

²¹ E. Başaran, "Jonathan Powel, IRA Barışının Yaratıcı Beyni", ("Jonathan Powell, The Creative Mind of the IRA Peace"), 4 Nov. 2010. (www.radikal.com.tr/radikal.aspx?atype=haberyazdir&articleid=1027263).

²² İbid.

One of the genuine issues, generally overlooked in solving the Kurdish Issue, is that the Peace Process has not beset initiatives concerning social polarization, nor has it attempted to realize projects that would make the whole society embrace peace. A serious obstacle to peace perceived by the Kurdish people is that the Turks seem to be totally unaware of the pain and the violations of the rights of Kurds in the Kurdish regions, according to the reports of the Wise Persons Delegation. In the findings of the Wise Persons report from the Southeastern region of Turkey for instance, “One of the most vital issues in the Peace Process is for the Turks to fathom and digest what is being done to the Kurds”.²³ Similarly, in another study conducted by Çelik, Bilali, and Ok, among Kurds and Turks who do not interact much in İzmir, the two sections of society define the Kurdish Issue very differently.²⁴ The same study also produced evidence contrary to the common wisdom of “There are no problems between the Kurds and Turks”. In addition, the study produced some information on the mutual perceptions of Kurds and Turks such that Kurds think of Turks as barbarians, (in other words, having high level of threat against themselves higher level of menace against themselves, more powerful but culturally backward) whereas the Turks thought the Kurds were rogue (having a high level of threat against themselves, but inferior in culture and less powerful than themselves)²⁵ The very different definitions of the problem by the two sections of society, the lack of knowledge/or not wanting to know of the pains and hurt encountered on the one side by the other, the prevalence of very strong (negative) imagery in between the groups are signs that even if the Peace Process gets back on its track, it will be not be sufficiently rooted and the smallest blunder will turn it upside down leading back to violence.

It is for the purposes of lasting peace and social consensus, that different segments of society be brought together to re-establish peaceful and confidence building relationships. In the context of the Kurdish Issue, The Wise Persons Delegation has been a significant impetus in initiating talk about sufferings at the societal level. However, due to its founding principles, the very limited time-span allowed and its general structure, it could not bring diverse sections of society together in a structured, well-planned workshop/dialogue groups and have them listen to each other. Having been socialized with quite different mindscapes for years, it is natural for those sharing their thoughts/feelings about the Kurdish Issue, to only want to talk about their own problems and voice their own opinions; for a continuation of the process however, it is essential to develop a set of listening praxis. The breaking off prejudices that have developed over the course of many years in the context of the Kurdish Issue, will lead to reciprocal listening by the various parties. The Wise Persons Delegation in Eastern Anatolia had the following observations concerning this:

It was observed that the level of tolerance of individuals in listening to each other increased over the course of meetings bringing the different sections of society together. And in this atmosphere the results pointed out to optimum endorsement for the Peace Process. Everywhere we went, people who had joined the meetings with various groups, verbalized this openly and said it was meaningful and important.²⁶

23 UAKM, Akil İnsanlar Heyeti Raporları, (Reports of the Wise Persons Delegation) İstanbul, UKAM Yayınları, 2014, p. 20.

24 Ayşe Betül Çelik, Rezarta Bilali ve Ekin Ok, “Psychological Asymmetry in Minority-Majority Relations at Different Stages of Ethnic Conflict”, International Journal of Intercultural Relations, C. 43(B), 2014.

25 İbid.

26 UAKM, op.cit., p. 39

In order to socialize peace, it is necessary to bring together sections of society with different opinions to talk and listen to the sufferings of the past thirty years. This can only be accomplished with trust-building workshops and dialogue groups. Unlike the work conducted by the Wise Persons Delegation, this must be conducted by employing special methods and long-term planning with academicians and specialists who have worked at a practical level on conflict resolution in different countries. While actors in civil society, have realized a few such projects particularly after 2010, none of these were long lasting. In order for long-running projects to be put into practice, it is necessary to have (expert) teams who know the method and to develop projects that have the political leaders' backing.

In fact, successful societal reconciliation processes are those that can apply different models to various levels of relations and bring together a variety of actors to make them work together. Overcoming social trauma demands confronting the past and leaving it behind on the one hand, but also imagining a new and more beautiful future, on the other.

The Media and Education in the Peace Process

The role of the media in establishing societal trust, familiarizing different sections of the society with each other, and getting rid of mutual wrong perceptions cannot be overemphasized. Earlier we mentioned the fact that the sufferings of the Kurds were not fully understood by the Turks produced an adverse impact on the former. Studies conducted by academicians²⁷ and the Wise Persons Delegation have shown that the unfavorable image of Kurds portrayed in tv series such as Şefkat Tepe, Sakarya Fırat, Kurtlar Vadisi ve Tek Türkiye have supported or aided in forming negative perceptions of Kurds at the country level.²⁸ Similarly, strong language used by the leaders and disseminated by way of the media, harms the favorable milieu created by the Peace Process.

Unfortunately, as elsewhere in the world, stories involving violence are on the front pages of newspapers, while peace news are generally overlooked. This reinforces the reciprocal negative sentiment of the parties, making it seem impossible to listen to each other even in new and more peaceful settings.

Media monitoring, and legalization of fight against hate crimes, as mentioned in the reports of the Wise Persons Delegation, are all important from this perspective. "The Draft Law on Fighting Discrimination and Equality", prepared in 2009, but not yet in force, could be passed in the Parliament to take effect fast, preparing the grounds for the evolution of social perceptions in a more positive direction. Lastly, another important subject that needs to be underlined is the elimination of the alienating, discriminating language from textbooks and school curricula. More specifically, it is necessary to purge the understanding in the textbooks and curricula that "undermines the peoples living in Anatolia (as opposed to Western Turkey), making them invisible, marginalizing them and even turning them into enemies"²⁹; this, would take a long

27 Zeynep Başer & Ayşe Betül Çelik, "Imagining Peace in a Conflict Environment: Kurdish Youths' Framing of the Kurdish Issue in Turkey and Their Peace Imaginations", *Patterns of Prejudice*, C. 48, No. 3, 2014.

28 UKAM Doğu Anadolu ve Güneydoğu Akil İnsanlar Heyeti Raporları, (Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Reports of the Wise Persons Delegation), op.cit.

29 İbid.

time but ensure a strong foundation for securing long lasting confidence between the parties.

The Pluralistic Structure of Turkey and the Peace Process

Peace does not only imply increasing confidence, decreasing prejudice, and lessening fears between the Kurds and the Turks, but also requires the establishment of an order that secures and protects the identities of all individuals in society. It is fundamental from this perspective that, in due course, the cultural rights, in addition to the representation and protection of Alevi, Armenians, Syriacs, Ezidis, Arabs, and the Laz, and those of all diverse identities living in Turkey be recognized, represented and protected on a democratic governance. If and when the state confronts its past, the recognition and redressing of the atrocities committed against these groups would help these groups make peace with the state and the formation of new peaceful relations.

The claims presented to the Wise Persons Delegation, particularly of those Kurds living in regions mostly populated by them, include recognition of their cultural rights as well as those of the Alevi, Syriacs and the Ezidis that cohabit the same space,³⁰ and is paramount from the perspective of re-shaping intergroup relations. In the report of the Delegation from Southeastern Anatolia, for instance, while the Syriacs asked for the return of their churches converted into mosques, the illumination of nearly 40 cases of unidentified murders committed against them in the 1990s, the preparation of conditions for the return of Syriacs from diaspora, the lifting of the ban on their language, the ending of the segregationist language concerning them and broadcasts in their native language (mother tongue) on national tv; the Ezidis demanded a return of their confiscated land, ending of the discriminatory language used against them, and providing opportunities for Ezidis living in diaspora to return back to their own land. As these examples reveal, the two different groups have somewhat similar historical experiences (land left due to repressive identity politics, crackdown on language, the difficulties experienced upon return from diaspora etc.) and similar demands concerning the Peace Process.

On the other hand, each actor employing violence during the conflict has created an empire of fear on a different group in society. From this perspective and for lasting peace it is important that anxieties on the part of Arabs living in Southeastern Anatolia concerning the pressure PKK may put on them also be addressed and dissipated.³¹

Comparison of the Wise Persons Delegation also point to a surprising and gratifying piece of news. In almost all regions it was mentioned that on the way to democratization and peace, it is necessary “to consider and take into account the problems of all victimized groups (Alevi as well as those of women wearing head scarves etc.)”.³²

One of the findings of the Wise Persons Delegation working in the Black Sea Region points to a condition that can help support the Peace Process as well as lasting peace: The Delegation has noted that “those

³⁰ UKAM, op.cit.

³¹ UKAM, ibid.

³² UKAM, Akdeniz Bölgesi Akil İnsanlar Heyeti Raporu (The Report of the Mediterranean Region of the Wise Persons Delegation), ibid.,

regions where various languages are spoken, (people from) different cultures live together and where there is migration from other provinces, are more supportive of the Peace Process and able to evaluate it in a more positive light than homogeneous ones” and that “those individuals who have seen, lived and worked in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions have a more realistic and positive approach in their appraisal and attitude towards the problems in the region and their solution”. This shows that peace can only be realized in Turkey with the participation of those sections of society who do not know each other yet hold prejudices or have wrong information about one another. To move toward a peaceful society, it is absolutely essential to bring together all the social segments in Turkey with a pluralistic approach. Also in this context it is necessary that the Peace Process not be limited to talks among the PKK-Öcalan-State, but it is also of utmost importance that the communication channels be broadened and continued at the local levels, and for civil society opinion leaders to join in on the discussions.

Some of the statements made by the political actors during the process only reflect the marginalization and ambiguity on the part of the state towards the Alevis and Armenians. The discriminating discourse of the government concerning Alevis in the Peace Process and the use of certain historical references that have symbolic value for them has sparked off negative reactions from them. The Sunni-centered political approach disregards belief pluralism in general, but in this context, especially vis. Alevis, as well as being a major obstacle in developing a multicultural secular society.

The Armenians have regarded Abdullah Öcalan’s reference to the Armenian genocide in his letter published during the process positively. Armenian circles have criticized, however, the fact that he minimized the role of the Kurds in the massacre. Another problem was the KCK Executive Council Co-President Bese Hozat’s public statement where she said: “In addition to the official state, there are parallel states in Turkey. For example, the community of F. Gülen is a parallel state. The Israeli lobby, the nationalist Armenian and Greek lobbies are parallel states. Parallel states have no official laws or a constitution... The main aim of parallel states is to prevent the democratization of Turkey.” The Armenians, in turn, interpreted her speech as “massive accusations... that will provoke increased hatred of Armenians already existing in the country...”³³ and a continuation of the marginalizing language of the state. Following this Mustafa Karasu, a member of the Executive Council of the KCK who had participated in the Oslo talks with the Turkish government, in a comprehensive explanation on January 18, 2014 attempted to alleviate the anxieties of the Armenians, saying, Hozat’s sentences were extracted from a long interview and that she was misunderstood. He added: “Armenians, Jews, Greeks, Syrians, and all other different ethnic and religious groups... if they want to live as free individuals and within a democratic system, their greatest ally are the Kurds and the liberation movement of the Kurds. Their best friends are the Kurds.... In fact, Armenians and Kurds have lived together for thousand of centuries. The greatest tragedy for the Kurds, in fact, for all the peoples of the Middle East, has been the Armenian genocide...”³⁴ From newspaper columns written by Armenians and talks with them, however, it was obvious that they were not satisfied with his explanations.

It is an important precondition of lasting peace that the process be developed not only in the direction involving the two parties, but also be enhanced to encompass other diverse ethnic and religious groups living in Turkey, and that they, also, not be marginalized.

³³ www.agos.com.tr, Dec 19, 2014

³⁴ <http://arsiv.marksist.org/haberler>

Women and the Peace Process

Nationalism, militarism and war itself are processes that have been shaped by a gendered patriarchal mindset. In this context the respective duties given to men and women have been hierarchized. Although both sexes are subject to marginalization under the nationalist, militarist paradigm, war impacts women differently, more directly and indirectly and at more levels than men. In the violent setting of internalized militarism, in addition to physical bodily hurt during the war, women are not placed in decision-making mechanisms during and after the war and are faced to work under arduous conditions to be able to sustain themselves and their families.³⁵ Thus for the removal of the causes of war, racism and discrimination, it is important to hold a gender-sensitive perspective as opposed to a paternalistic mindset. Such a perspective does not come from being born a woman, but by perceiving how violent circumstances marginalize women. This, on the other hand, necessitates that women join processes of peace not only because of their biological sex, but also because of the possibility of perceiving their problems from a feminist perspective.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325³⁶ underlines the significance of the transition from ‘seeing women simply as victims of the conflict’ perspective (including aggression and rape) to their taking active roles on a par with men, under equal circumstances in the resolution of conflicts, in the building up of peace and its protection. Although Turkey was one of the signatories to this decision, it has so far not taken any steps in its implementation to this day. As stated in the UNSC resolutions concerning women, peace and security, national action plans, however, are essential to reflect women’s issues to policy-making and to increase the representation of women in the Peace Process.

A study conducted by De la Rey and McKay on sixteen South African female leaders in 2006 shows that women believe peace to be a long road at the end of which the basic needs of humans will be met, in other words, it is a world where structural peace has been established.³⁷ Another very important point is that these women also view peace as a process where the kinds of relations formed between men and women are understood and are of the unanimous opinion that the elimination of violence against women would help in establishing lasting peace. Hence, only the active participation of women in the Peace Process to represent women’s issues has the potential of opening up our imagination to different horizons of the image of a world beyond the uproar of arms where all inequalities are diminished and structural peace established.

71.1 A group from the women’s movement, a relatively robust civil society movement compared to others

35 N. Mutluer, “Tactics in-Between: Gendered Citizenship and Everyday Life of Internally Displaced Men in Tarlabası, İstanbul”, unpublished doctoral thesis, Budapeşte: Central European University, 2012. Normal Şiddet, Normal Ölüm: Tarlabası’nın Güncelliğinde Şiddetin Aile, Siyasal ve Toplumsal Boyutu (“Normal Aggression, Normal Death; The Familial, Political and Social Dimensions of Violence in the Daily Life of Tarlabası”), Paper presented to the International Conference on The Family and Violence. (Aile ve Şiddet: Uluslararası Aile Konferansı II, Tebliğler, 2014, pp. 303-320.

36 UN Security Council decision No. (S/RES/1325) Oct. 30, 2000.

37 C. De la Rey & S. McKay, “Peace as a Gendered Process: Perspectives of Women Doing Peacebuilding in South Africa”, International Journal of Peace Studies, C. 7, No.1, 2006.

in Turkey, has now formed a group called Initiative of Women for Peace (BIKG) organizing from the bottom up, and conducting various activities in this direction. This is a particularly important step at this time where the Peace Process needs not only to be conducted at the political, but also at the social level. Women's partaking in the process, in addition to the work conducted and reports produced by the BIKG will be a guiding light in the direction of peace. These reports point to the importance of constitutional changes, formation of a truth commission as well as the necessity for making gender-based human security reforms and emphasize that women should join all these processes in an active manner.

The approach to women's participation in the Peace Process in Turkey has been ambivalent at best. Although both in the Wise Persons Delegation and in civil society work and reports it is emphasized that women should join the process, at this point both the numbers participating as well as the quality of the participation is few and pallid. In the Wise Persons Delegation reports it was reported that very few women participated in the meetings held in the provinces, while the Black Sea Delegation pointed out two important reasons for this: the few number of women's organizations in the region and the few number of women in the Delegation itself. In a meeting held by BIKG with 12 women included in the Wise Persons Delegation, the latter promised to hold special meetings with women in their respective regions, but in the talks in the aftermath of the Delegation visits, BIKG reported that such visits were not realized and that many of the regional commissions did not have separate encounters with regional women. Although the government has not publicized the Wise Persons Delegation reports, those participating in them have shared their reports and it has become clear that the inequality in the number of sexes was mentioned in the reports.³⁸

On the other hand, although some may think that the Peace Process is a method to take the edge off of the "Mothers don't cry" discourse, confining the role of women in the process to motherhood simply reproduces the nationalist and militarist paternalistic mindset. It is true that the role of women in the formation of empathy between societies and their support in the process are regarded as peculiar except for their role as mothers. The more active and frequent participation of women is fundamental in securing peace and making it last since they have been influenced quite differently from the conflict than men and since they can bring divergent approaches to peace. Another very important point that must be taken into account during the Peace Process is to listen to the demands of the internally displaced persons, the wives of those who have been killed extrajudicially and forcibly disappeared, and others directly affected by the conflict, and to implement policies to minimize their victimization.

In a violent militaristic setting the marginalization of LGBT individuals tends to become more invisible. LGBT individuals are subjected to internalized homophobia, discrimination and other life-threatening aggression. Hence, during the consideration of conflict resolution it is important to be aware that lasting peace is only possible with measures sensitive to sexual orientation.

The Peace Process and the Youth

³⁸ Barış İçin Kadın Girişimi Raporu, (Report of Women's Initiative for Peace), 2013, p.12.

The increased polarization in society and the decades long milieu of war inevitably reverberate on the youth negatively. Youth with multifarious identities perceive their counterparts from different sections of society as “others”, refuse to be informed about them, talk to them and, even, to be in the same environs with them. There are similarities as well as differences in between the problems of Kurdish youth living in the west and east of Turkey.

The ultra-nationalist tendencies in western Turkey tend to produce a chauvinistic discourse concerning the Kurdish Issue, in a manner that also impacts the youth right from the start. The most important peace imagination of the youth living in the Southwestern Turkey are for those Turks who tend to alienate and criminalize them, to visit them in the Kurdish regions and to try to understand them.³⁹ Youth, especially those who are not Turks are otherized and alienated due to prejudice. And this, in turn, leads to the ossification of the status quo of violence and conflict between generations.

In addition, during the Peace Process and in its aftermath the education of the youth in the Kurdish regions must be approached and undertaken seriously for the construction of lasting peace. This demand was also voiced in the Mediterranean Region, where Kurds are not in majority, but one which host a considerable number of internally displaced Kurds. On the other hand, and unfortunately, it has been shown both in the reports of Wise Persons Delegation⁴⁰ as well as in some public opinion polls⁴¹ that the language of youth concerning the Kurdish youth is more negative among the high school and university youth (and among the more educated groups) as compared to the less educated youth. This goes to show that the nationalist discourse in the educational system impacts the youth and reinforces the tendency to alienate “others”.

The youth’s belief in peace has been shaken mainly due to the climate of discriminating discourse and the violent atmosphere in which they grew up. The continuation of deaths to this day has particularly shaken the beliefs of the Southeastern Anatolia youth in peace. Simultaneously, the inadequate infrastructure in Southeastern Anatolia, shortcomings in the areas of education, health, economic difficulties brought about by war, unemployment and worries concerning the future, cause the youth to undertake more radical steps than the past generations. Although they may not witness death first hand, Kurdish youth face similar traumas when they are either forced to move or immigrate to big cities for economic reasons. Where there is a concentration of the Turkish population, and Kurds are labeled as “others”, the identities of the youth are shaped by this alienation and the memory of war carried over to the cities from Southeastern Turkey. Although they may have the chance of attaining the economic, political and social opportunities offered by the big cities, Kurdish youth living outside of Southeastern Anatolia tend to lean towards radical action when tension arises in the regions of their origin.⁴² In order to draw attention to this reality concerning Kurdish youth living both inside and outside of Southeastern Anatolia, some of the actors in the Kurdish

39 Başer & Çelik, “Imagining Peace in a Conflict Environment”, op.cit.

40 UKAM, Karadeniz Bölgesi ve Marmara Bölgesi Akil İnsanlar Heyeti Raporlar, (Reports of the Black Sea and the Marmara Region Wise Persons Delegations), op.cit.

41 KONDA, Temmuz 2012 Barometresi, (July 2012 Barometer).

42 N. Mutluer, “Disposable Masculinities in Istanbul”, *Global Masculinities and Manhood*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012, pp.. 75-105. see also: N. Mutluer, “Militarizme Sahiden Direnebilmek”, *Bölgesel Barışa Doğru: Çatışmalara Karşı Sivil Yaklaşımlar*, (“Actually resisting militarism”, in *Towards Regional Peace: Civil Approaches Against Conflict*), İstanbul, Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği, 2013, pp. 77- 85.

Movement refer to them as “the last generation with which dialogue can be established”. However, this approach itself, reflecting the different demands of the elderly generation, has the tendency to breakdown relations between them and the youth.

It is necessary to understand the apprehensions of the youth, to take steps in ameliorating their living circumstances, to examine and do away with marginalizing materials and methods in their education.

At this point, unfortunately, the Peace Process is considerably deficient in taking significant strides to becoming more social. Although the Delegation of Wise Persons was important in being the first time in the history of the Kurdish Issue where public expectations, fears and dreams were discussed, it remained weak due to the fact that it was not designed and with the willpower to overcome certain issues, the fact that it did not have a long-term operation, that its reports were not shared by the public at large to enrich its basis and, most importantly, that no intention was shown to conduct work in the area of social problems it pointed at. Moreover, there was no determination to work in problematic areas that come to the forefront in all peace processes such as how to solve the issues of women and the youth and to include them in the endeavor, how to repair and re-shape individual-state and society-state and intergroup relations that were harmed during the period of conflict. For the establishment and continuation of peace it is of utmost importance to be persistent in these areas.

Antimilitarist feminist, Cynthia Enloe, emphasizes that the ending of war and the ending of the troubles that it brings along are not simultaneous.⁴³ In addition, the discontinuation of physical violence does not mean an end to the discourse or the politics that feed upon it.⁴⁴ To understand this, it is necessary to look at the history of war and who have been affected by what kind of traumas. While confronting old mentalities in trying to understand the past to build the new, another issue is that it is important to be real and sincere. This also demands, on the one hand, to consider anger, anxiety and doubt felt during the Peace Process a natural part of the continuum, and, on the other, to listen to these concerns and to channel their expression in a peaceful manner.

Human Security in the Peace Process

43 C. Enloe, Bananas, Beaches and Military Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics (Muzlar, Plajlar ve Askeri Üsler: Feminist Bakış Açısından Uluslararası Siyaset, tr.. B. Kurt & E. Aydın, İstanbul: Çitlembik Yayınları, 2003) and C. Enloe, Manevralar: Kadın Yaşamının Militarize Edilmesine Yönelik Uluslararası Politikalar, (Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives tr.. Serpil Çağlayan, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2006.

44 27. N. Mutluer, “Militarizme Sahiden Direnebilmek” (Actually Resist Militarism), ibid. see also: . N. Mutluer, , Çözüm Süreci Söyleşileri Serisi , (Talks on the Process of Resolution series) 14, Mayıs 2015, Uluslararası Kültürel Araştırmalar Merkezi. <http://www.ukam.org/AnalizlerDetay.aspx?id=40#.Ve- iooYbXerU>.

Evren Balta

In the earlier sections of the report we noted that the Peace Process in Turkey was progressing in a fashion that is focused on legal procedures and mechanisms. In the part where we underscored the socialization of peace, we stated that one of its important bearings would be missing should the emphasis of the Peace Process be limited to the level of leaders and the basic mechanism of peace is perceived as formal talks and legal operations. Taking off from this point we explained that lasting peace encompasses not just the democratization of institutions and the continuation of negotiations, but also the re-development of trust between the state and the society and between peoples, in addition to social change that includes the serving of justice. This section will concentrate on one of important foundations of justice, namely, staying alive and being protected from “the interruption of daily life in painful and unexpected ways”.⁴⁵ In fact, the end of long years of armed conflict is possible, only if the wounds of the massive and encompassing human crises created by it are relieved and the conditions producing the emergence of new ones removed.

Right to Life and Nonviolence

One of the most important dimensions of human security is the right to life and the right to lead one’s life in a setting of non-violence. First and foremost, the processes of conflict take away the individual’s right to stay alive. It is estimated that nearly 40 000 individuals lost their lives in the armed conflict between the PKK and the government which started in 1984.⁴⁶ According to the unofficial statistics of the Hafıza Merkezi, the number of enforced disappearances is around 1387 persons.⁴⁷ Besides, human rights violations were administered in an extremely widespread fashion.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) has stated that in between July 2011 and December of 2012, deaths due to armed conflict had reached their highest level since 1999. According to the unofficial statistics collected by the ICG, there were 298 deaths from among the soldiers, police and village guards, 491 from among the PKK, and 89 civilians amounting to a total of 880.⁴⁸ The start of negotiations between the PKK and the State, and the ceasefire declared in March of 2013 has been significantly positive in decreasing these numbers radically. Although truce and associated lack of violence have impacted the perception of security in the area positively, some have also expressed their impression that conflict had sashayed over to other areas.

Another factor impacting the Peace Process negatively and leading to tension has been the continuation of the construction of the fortified and enlarged police/gendarmerie stations (kalekol). The events that

45 United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 22.

46 “28 Yılın Acı Bilançosu” (The painful balance sheet of 28 years), Milliyet newspaper, Aug. 16, 2012, siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/28-yilin-aci-bilancosu-35-bin-300-kisi-teror-kurbani-oldu/siyaset/si-yasetdetay/16.08.2012/1581690/default.htm (10.12.2014).

47 Calculated using the data base of the Hafıza Merkezi on the imprecise record of enforced disappearances. (www.zorlakaybetmeler.org/)

48 Didem Akyel Collinsworth, “Demokratik Müzakere Yöntemleri”, Kürt Meselesinin Çözümüne İlişkin Algılar, Aktörler ve Süreç (Methods of Democratic Negotiation, Perceptions, Actors, and the Resolution Process of the Kurdish Issue), ed. Nihal Boztekin, İstanbul, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association, the Representation of Turkey, 2013, tr.boell.org/sites/default/files/kurt_meselesinin_cozumune_iliskin_algilar-aktorler_ve_surec.pdf (10.12.2014).

took place in the Lice township can be given as an example. On June 29, 2013, in the Kayacık village connected administratively to Diyarbakır and Lice, demolishing the existing police station and the building a fortified and enlarged one instead, led to the protests of some groups during which a young man of 18 years, Medeni Ayhan was killed by shots from the station. Then again on June 8, 2014, in the same township, two protestors lost their lives due to shots fired from the station. The aggressive assault of the police on the protestors led to the spreading of protests to other towns and cities and to long lasting street fights. One of the important preconditions for peace in the region appears to be the discontinuation of the use of disproportionate/extreme/and immoderate force by the law enforcement agency.

Another issue creating tension is that dams are being constructed in spite of the opposition of the regional administrations and the Kurdish people living there...⁴⁹ It is alleged that the dams will change the subsistence economy of the people without providing an alternative and will lead to new out-migrations. Also, it is commonly reasoned that the dams are not economically feasible and that the government is constructing “security dams” to prevent the through roads used by the PKK. Demonstrations against the dams have become one of the important areas of conflict in the region thus threatening security. The PKK’s deeds of intimidating laborers working on the dams, harming heavy construction equipment⁵⁰ kidnapping engineers working on the dams also increase tension. Civil Society organizations working in the area warn the government that the work on dams endangers the peace process. To minimize violence in the region it is important to take the desire of the people living there into account and, hence, for the parties in the Peace Process to reach an agreement on the construction of dams along these lines.

A turning point for the escalation of tension in the region were the events that took place in Kobanê (a canton in northern Syria) on the 6th and 7th of October 2014. Following IS’s siege of Kobanê in Sept. 2014, nearly 60 000 people attempted to come to Turkey via Suruç. The government’s lenient attitude toward IS, simultaneously with its discriminatory attitude toward the Kobanêans desperately needing to come to Turkey, mobilized large groups of people in the country. Fifty individuals lost their lives in the events that spread to many provinces in Turkey in between October 6-12, 2014.⁵¹

Following the escalation of events, the government declared curfew in the totality of Diyarbakır and Batman provinces, in the Dargeçit, Derik, Kızıltepe, Nusaybin Mazıdağı, Ömerli and Savur townships of Mardin, in the Erciş township of Van, and in the Kurtalan province of Siirt.⁵² In the process 2495 individuals were detained, and 700 individuals, one third of whom were children, were arrested. Following the events, military presence and military container exports to the area increased. Allegations were made that police from Western provinces of Turkey were transferred and appointed to positions in the Hakkâri, Şırnak,

49 “Bölgeden baraja itiraz: ‘İlisu, barışı tehdit ediyor” (The Region objects to the dam: The Ilisu dam threatens), Radikal newspaper Dec. 11, 2014, www.radikal.com.tr/cevre/bolgeden_baraja_itiraz_ilisu_barisi_tehdit_ediyo-1248970 [14.12.2014].

50 “PKK iş makinelerini yaktı” (The PKK has burned the heavy construction equipment), Dicle News Agency, June 8, 2014, (DHA) www.dha.com.tr/pkk-is-makinelerini-yakti_691453.html (10.12.2014).

51 “6-7 Ekim’in Acı Bilançosu: 50 Ölü”, (The bitter balance sheet of Oct.6-7: 50 deaths), Hürriyet Newspaper, Nov 6, 2014, www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/27525777.asp (10.12.2014).

52 “Altı İlde Sokağa Çıkma Yasağı”, (Curfew in six provinces), Hürriyet newspaper, Oct. 8, 2014. www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/27344130.asp (10.12.2014).

Batman, Diyarbakır provinces and townships.⁵³ The increased tension following the events of October 6-7, 2014 made its impact felt in the region for a long time. Together with the events that started in Cizre in the December of 2014, and which ended with the death of many individuals, including children, this has been interpreted as the attempt to solve the tension in region using police *modus operandi*.⁵⁴

It can be said that the events of 6-7 October had two significant repercussions on the Resolution Process. Firstly, these events have increased the necessity felt for taking regional dynamics into account in the Resolution Process much more seriously. Secondly, the violence that prevailed during and after in the protests in Kobanê has bruised confidence in the Resolution Process based on claims by those living in the region that the government is continuing its policy of using increased military/police methods of control.⁵⁵ Immediately following the events in Kobanê the government submitted a legislative proposal to the Parliament referred to as the “Package on Domestic Security” which reinforced the climate of mistrust.⁵⁶

At this phase, it is essential to stop violence (including those committed by the law enforcement agencies) wherever it is committed, whenever possible, to help heal wounds of all sections of society no matter what the source, whoever the culprit, and, to support the implementation of constructive methods respecting differences, all of which will provide a strong and extensive basis for lasting peace. Particularly in places like Lice, Cizre, Yüksekova where tension easily turns into violence, it is essential for all public officials to be informed and experienced in peaceful settlement of conflicts and to give such officials on-the-job-training concerning conflict resolution for the progress of the Peace Process.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration to Social Life (DDR)

The most substantial items on the agenda of the Peace Process are disarmament, demobilization and re-integration to social life. Disarmament requires the collection of weapons in the hands of the armed troops and the building-up of an extensive system of arms supervision. Demobilization of armed troops is the removal of the armed individuals from the military hierarchy. Re-integration on the other hand, is re-uniting those individuals from the disbanded military troops with social life.⁵⁷

One of the most important targets of the Peace Process, no doubt, is that all those groups (including militia) that have taken up arms be disarmed; but to view the Peace Process solely as the disbanding of arms is its Achilles heel. Currently a similar weakness can be seen in the Peace Process. The government itself has voiced the opinion that the major criterion of success of the Peace Process has been the disarmament of the PKK. Another point that needs to be emphasized here is that the lack of fighting and disarmament

53 web.tbmm.gov.tr/gelenkagitlar/metinler/363633.pdf

54 İrfan Aktan, “Neler Olmuştu?”, (What had Happened?) tr.boell.org/tr/2014/11/13/neler-olmustu, (10.12.2014).

55 Aktan, İbid

56 ‘İç güvenlik paketi’ açıklandı” (‘The Package on Domestic Security’ made public) Ntvmsnbc, Oct 21, 2014, www.ntv.com.tr/arsiv/id/25545355/ (10.12.2014).

57 Ayşegül Elif Sofuoğlu, Süreç Araştırma: SDE (DDR); Silahsızlanma, Demobilizasyon ve Yeniden Entegrasyon” (Research on the Process: DDR; Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration) www.surecanaliz.org/article/s%C3%BC re%C3%A7-ara%C5%9Ft%C4%B1rma-sdeddr-silahs%C4%B1zlanma-demobilizasyonveyenidenentegrasyon (15.12.2014).

do not point to the same process. Since 2013, and until fairly recently, direct fighting between the PKK and the military had, to a large extent, stopped. The cease of conflict, however, did not imply an all out disarmament and the disbanding of armed troops.

Processes of conflict and negotiation are unique to each country; hence it is necessary that each country shape its the program of disarmament around its idiosyncrasies.⁵⁸ Earlier such disarmament programs were applied in many countries such as El Salvador, Haiti, Mozambique, East Timor, Liberia, Nicaragua and Somalia. What all these disarmament programs had in common, which in other respects possessed special unique features, was that they were put into practice following the implementation of confidence building measures and at the last stage. A majority of the examples show that armed organizations can perceive negotiations as processes to divert their attention and do not disarm before they are given the final warranties. In Sudan, for example the SPLM/A has indicated that they would not disarm unless given the warranty of power sharing with the government. Likewise in Guatemala, the process moved in a similar fashion until the last phase. In fact, although the suspension of hostilities is the first target in the initial phase of peace processes, DDR is possible only after concrete steps are taken, mutual confidence building measures established, the legal framework is formed and operating and the society's preparation for peace have all been realized.

It is possible to understand why the talks between the state and PKK have been locked, precisely, from this perspective. Since 1999 various methods have been tested to incorporate the PKK militants into political life and democratic social existence. Following the decision of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, the PKK withdrew its armed forces from Turkey to outside its borders for the first time. Concurrent with the process of retreat, the Turkish Armed Forces, TSK, inflicted heavy casualties on the PKK. According to columnist Cengiz Çandar,⁵⁹ those circles that emphasize the necessity and priority of the PKK's withdrawing its forces from within the boundaries of Turkey, tend to overlook this episode that took place in 1999.

A serious obstacle to taking a comparable step today is the experience of 1999. Another adverse experience that took place due to lack of social and institutional preparedness, is the entry of 34 PKK militants coming down from the Kandil Mountain and the Mahmur camp, to Turkey via the Habur border check-point on October 19, 2009.⁶⁰ They were met with a large crowd carrying PKK flags, which were perceived by the majority of the Turkish society as unacceptable. These events show that the conditions for armistice should be last phase in the Resolution Process, following the implementation of confidence building measures.

However, with the regionalization of the Kurdish Issue, total disarmament is becoming more difficult for the PKK. Particularly since important regional Kurdish actors are fighting radical Islamic organizations such as the IS in Iraq and Syria, it has become more difficult to include the PKK's all out laying down of arms in the negotiations. Thus, a process of negotiation with more realistic targets should focus on the PKK's

58 İbid.

59 Cengiz Çandar, "Dağdan İniş-PKK Nasıl Silah Bırakır? Kürt Sorunu'nun Şiddetten Arındırılması" (Descending from the Mountain- How Can the PKK Lay Down its Arms? The Purging of Violence from the Kurdish Issue), İstanbul: TESEV, 2011.

60 "34 PKK'lı Habur Sınır Kapısı'ndan girip teslim oldu", (34 members of the PKK Surrendered After Entering through the Habur Border Gate), Milliyet, Sep. 19, 2009, www.milliyet.com.tr/acilim-da-kritik-an/siyaset/siyasetdetay/19.10.2009/1151953/default.htm (10.12.2014).

moving its armed forces outside the borders of Turkey as has been mentioned by Dilek Kurban and Yılmaz Ensaroğlu. For those PKK militants who want to continue living in Turkey, legal arrangements should be made concerning their laying down of arms, integration to civilian life, in addition to amnesty provided for the criminal records of all militants who had received sentences.⁶¹ The success of the transition process depends on the eventual expansion of disarmament to various other phases and its progression, parallel to comprehensive peace accords.

An important principle brought to life by successful peace processes around the world is that disarmament should come to fruition through the protection of the extant leadership structure of the militant group. The main factor in the success story underlying the Northern Ireland process has been preserving, to a large extent, the leadership structure of the IRA. Hence the leaders could administer the disbanding of the IRA armed troops, thus including many young people in the peace process, who otherwise, might have joined groups with a tendency to violence. Similarly in the Republic of South Africa, the fact that the outstanding leaders in the movement also conducted the peace process played a significant role in the transition to non-violence and disarmament and the disbanding of the armed troops. In short, it is vital that the former militants, especially those in the position of leadership, take on significant roles as subjects of change in the process of transition.⁶²

The last and the most important development on the subject of disarmament is the road map of ten items put forth by Abdullah Öcalan and shared with the public in a meeting attended by the Aide to the Prime Minister, Yalçın Akdoğan, Minister of the Interior Efkân Ala, Aide to the Head of the AKP Group, Mahir Ünal, Aide to the Head of the HDP Group, Pervin Buldan, İdris Baluken and m.p from İstanbul, Sırrı Süreyya Önder. Abdullah Öcalan's call for the meeting of an extraordinary congress to discuss disarmament was made public in this meeting, as was stated in Section 2 of our report where we discuss the negotiations and the legal mechanisms. In this statement Abdullah Öcalan expressed his view on disarmament as follows:

“Since a consensus was reached on principles, as per the requirement of the declaration, I think it necessary and historical that the PKK end its armed struggle against the Republic of Turkey, which it has been waging for nearly forty years and to determine its political and social strategy and tactics in this new period. I hope that we can reach a consensus on principles and with the endorsement of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission consisting of members of the Parliament and the Monitoring Delegation, we can successfully realize this congress. Finally, with our congress, a new era will start.⁶³

The mood of optimism that prevailed in the Newroz of 2015, started to dissipate before, but particularly right after the elections of June 7, 2015, with the Peace Process and disarmament falling off the national

61 Dilek Kurban & Yılmaz Ensaroğlu, *Kürt Sorunu'nun Çözümüne Dair Bir Yol Haritası: Bölgeden Hükümete Öneriler* (A Road Map Concerning the Resolution of the Kurdish Issue: Suggestions from the Region to the Government), TESEV Publications, 2008, p. 5.

62 Angela Mickley, “Kuzey İrlanda'da Barışa Giden Yollar”, *Kürt Meselesinin Çözümüne İlişkin Algılar, Aktörler ve Süreç* (The Road to Peace in Northern Ireland in Perceptions, Actors and Process in the Solution of the Kurdish Issue), Nihal Boztekin, ed., İstanbul: Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association, Turkey representation, 2013, pp. 89-99, tr.boell.org/sites/default/files/kurt_meselesinin_cozumune_iliskin_algilar-aktorler_ve_surec.pdf (10.12.2014).

63 Öcalan, “Silahlı Mücadele dönemi sona ermiştir” (The Era of Armed Struggle has ended”), *Sabah Newspaper*, March 21 2015. www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2015/03/21/ocalan-silahli-mucadele-donemi-sona-ermistir (10.12.2014).

agenda. Right before the elections there were a total of 168 raids, attacks, and threats against the election headquarters, vehicles, candidates, meetings and workers of the party handling the negotiations, the HDP, in addition to bombings of its election offices in Adana and Mersin on the same day.⁶⁴ In many provinces those who wanted to help the HDP in the process of elections were lynched, while two individuals lost their lives. Just two days before the election, on June 5th 2015 there was a bomb attack in Diyarbakir, known as the fortress of Kurdish politics, right near the spot where the leader of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtaş was making a speech; four people died and hundreds were wounded. Furthermore, to assure right wing voters, the ruling AKP party totally overlooked the ongoing Peace Process, while the President of the Turkish Republic (formerly prime minister and head of the ruling AKP) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made statements such as, “There is no Kurdish Issue”.⁶⁵ All these have strengthened the perception on the part of the Kurdish voters that the AKP is not decisive about the issue of peace.

The AKP won 40.9% of the votes in the 2015 elections, becoming the first party, but did not get the sufficient number of m.ps to form a government all by itself. At the time this text is being written, the ongoing preparations for the repeat (or early) elections will play an important role in the future of the peace process. The refusal of the government to aid the Kurds fighting IS in Kobanê, the Kurds belief in the allegations concerning the government’s support of IS and the claims of a possible military operation against Syria all have the function of increasing suspicions concerning the Peace Process.

84.2 VILLAGE GUARDS

If lasting peace is aimed, the disarmament of paramilitary forces armed by the government cannot be overlooked. If anything, these groups must be considered to be a part of the DDR Process and handled accordingly. Although disarmament has entered the agenda as the disarmament of the PKK in Turkey, discharging those persons armed by the government in the process of fighting the PKK is also a substantial issue. In other words, the elimination of the system of village guards armed against the PKK appears to be just as important in the peace process as the liquidation of the PKK. One of the first steps taken in this direction was the declaration of a decision by the Council of Ministers in 2000 that the government had stopped the hiring of temporary village guards.⁶⁶ In spite of this, the hiring of village guards has continued (though in lesser numbers) throughout the 2000s.

The temporary village guard system (GKK) was passed on March 26, 1985, by an amendment to article 74 of the Village Law no. 442, (in accordance with Law number 3175), and went into effect on June 27, 1985.

64 “Haziran 2015 Genel Seçimleri Nedeni ile Siyasi Partilere Yönelik İhlaller” (Violations against Political Parties on account of the June 2015 General Elections”), June 3 2015, www.ihd.org.tr/23-mart-3-haziran-2015-tarihleri-arasinda-7-haziran-2015-milletvekili-secimleri-nedeni-ile-siyasi-partilere-yonelik-ihlaller/ (10.07.2015).

65 Erdoğan: “Kürt Sorunu Yoktur, Kürtlerin Bazı Sorunları Vardır” (There is no Kurdish Issue; Kurds have some problems), Sabah newspaper, May 2, 2015. www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2015/05/02/erdogan-kurt-sorunu-yoktur-kurtlerin-bazi-sorunlari-vardir (10.07.2015).

66 Dilek Kurban, “Bir Güvenlik Politikası Olarak Korucu Sistemi” (The Village Guard System as a Security Policy), 2006-2008 Güvenlik Sektörü ve Demokratik Gözetim, Almanak Türkiye, 2006-2008 (The Security Sector and Democratic Surveillance, Turkey Almanac) 2006-2008), Ali Bayramoğlu and Ahmet İnel, eds. İstanbul: TESEV, 2009, s. 257.

In addition to temporary village guards paid regularly by the state, there are also voluntary village guards. These voluntary village guards have also been armed and put to work by the state in fighting the PKK, just like the temporary village guards. However, in contrast to the hiring of temporary village guards based on the decision of the Council of Ministers, this latter group can be employed based on the decision of the local government authority.⁶⁷

It is quite difficult to find data concerning temporary village guards or to reach the exact number of village guards in total. It appears that the number of village guards were about 62 000 in 1995, going up to 90 000 towards the year 2000. It has been claimed that the numbers fell following the armistice called for by the PKK. Although the Council of Ministers (the Cabinet) claimed that it had ceased hiring temporary village guards in 2000, the numbers continued to increase throughout the twenty-first century. In response to a written question addressed to the Parliament by Diyarbakır m.p. Mesut Değer on May 26, 2003, the Ministry of the Interior replied that there were 58 511 temporary, and 12 279 voluntary village guards, amounting to a total of 70 790. According to information provided by the Ministry of Interior on March 2009, on the other hand, there were 48 000 regular (staffed) and 23 000 voluntary village guards, a total of 71 000. That same year 10 000 new openings were⁶⁸ announced in the temporary village guard system. The latest openings were announced in 2013. That year there were 280 positions for temporary village guards in the Çatak and Gürpınar townships of Van; 600 in Bitlis, 110 in Hakkâri, 95 in Muş, 25 in Ağrı, 120 in Siirt, 250 in Diyarbakır, 100 in Batman, 80 in Mardin, 1800 in Bingöl and 90 in Urfa.⁶⁹

These numbers show that there was no significant change in the total number of temporary and voluntary village guards. In fact, the rise in the number of voluntary village guards hired is noteworthy. In other words, it is as if the government authorities have wanted to balance the fall in the number of temporary village guards by increasing the number of voluntary village guards. This practice is under the control of regional administrators since it is the local government administrators that appoint/employ the voluntary village guards. It can be said that the voluntary village guards may play a role in increasing the potential for more aggressive conflict. More significant is the fact that the attitude of the voluntary and temporary village guards towards the Resolution Process will not be the same.

In spite of the fact that the system of village guards was put to work as a security measure by the government, those who joined in, have on occasion utilized the guns given by the government for their private interests, while, due to the support they received from the government forces in the region, they were able to become the sole authority in the village.⁷⁰ When this situation of authority was united with the macro dynamics of the conflict, new tensions arouse between the guards and non-guards.⁷¹ In a 2004 report

67 Ibid.

68 “AKP’nin silahlı oy birlikleri” (Armed vote troops of the AKP’s), Taraf newspaper, Feb. 12, 2009, arsiv.taraf.com.tr/haber-yazdir-27672.html (10.12.2014).

69 Göç-Der, Türkiye’de Koruculuk Sistemi: Zorunlu Göç ve Geri Dönüşler (The Village Guard System in Turkey, Enforced Dislocation and Returns, Migr-Assoc., 2013, www.gocder.com/sites/default/files/proje-photo/koruculukraporu2013.pdf (10.12.2014).

70 Joost Jongerden, Türkiye’de İskân Sorunu ve Kürtler, (The Settlement Issue and the Kurds in Turkey) tr. Mustafa Topal, İstanbul: Vate Yayınevi, 2008, p. 365.

71 Evren Balta Paker & İsmet Akça, “Askerler, Köylüler ve Paramiliter Güçler: Türkiye’de Köy Koruculuğu Sistemi” (Soldiers, Villagers, and

prepared by the Office of the General Staff, it was explicitly stated that the village guards had been involved in many crimes such as extortions, pillaging, robbery, pickpocketing, forcing people to sign checks and cashing promissory notes not their own, selling articles of crimes, rape, incitation to rape, smuggling narcotic substances and human trafficking.⁷² Although it was determined that the village guards had been involved in widespread crimes, Ministry of Interior data show that between 1985-2003 legal proceedings were started only against 4804 village guards. While 2376 of these were common crimes, 2375 were aiding and abetting the PKK.⁷³

Temporary village guards, not protected under any social security institution, their wives, children and parents, were placed under the protection of the Social Security Institution in 2005 through an amendment to the Village Law (Law number 5443).⁷⁴ With the addition of a clause to the Village Law and arrangements made to retire those who had passed the age of 55, on June 2, 2007, the village guards were given the right to retire; of this group, those who had worked 15 or more years by then, would be given a monthly salary by the Social Security Administration.⁷⁵ This same law provides the government with additional authority to hire more temporary village guards. According to Kurban, this prepared the legal grounds for restarting the employment of new village guards, a decision that had been frozen by the Council of Ministers.

In spite of the criticism brought against the village guards system both at the national and the international levels, the rationale for not having abolished it, is explained by the PKK's not yet having disarmed and that the liquidation of the system would put the lives of the village guards at risk. The village guards, on the other hand, express their dismay at having served the government for so many years, yet are being cast aside. It is absolutely necessary to point out, at this point, that the village guards are continuing to work not for reasons of safety, but because they have no other means of livelihood.⁷⁶ Many of them have expressed that should they be employed in other jobs or retired, they would be willing to leave their position as village guards. No doubt this is applicable only to temporary village guards; for the disarmament of voluntary village guards, a different route needs to be taken. In fact, the primary and single tie voluntary village guards have with the government is via the ownership of guns; they have taken up the position only to be able to use guns. Hence it may be argued that the disarmament of voluntary village guards would be more difficult than temporary ones.

Not distressing the guards may be seen to be an important priority in confidence building measures in the initial phases of the Resolution Process. The system of guards deepens the atmosphere of mistrust pre-

Paramilitary Forces: The System of Village Guards in Turkey), *Toplum ve Bilim*, No. 126 (2013): 7-35.

72 "Korucular 24 yıldır suç işliyor", (The Village Guards have been committing crimes for the past 24 years), Haberlink, 25 May, 25, 2009, www.haber-link.com/haber.php?query=39939 (July, 28 2011).

73 Kurban, op.cit., p. 257.

74 Köy Kanunu Madde 74, ek fıkra, (Village Law, Article 74, additional paragraph), Dec. 28, /2005-5443/1md, www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin.Aspx?MevzuatKod=1.3.442&sourceXmlSearch=&MevzuatIis (Aug. 12, 2011).

75 "Köy Kanununda ve Bazı Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun", (Law concerning changes in the Village Law, no. 5673), June 02, 2007 tarihli Resmi Gazete, Sayı: 26540.

76 Şemsa Özar, Nesrin Uçarlar & Osman Aytaç, Geçmişten Günümüze Türkiye'de Paramiliter Bir Yapılanma Köy Koruculuğu Sistemi, (From the Past to Today: The Village Guard System as a Paramilitary Structuring), Diyarbakır: DİSA, 2013.

vailing in the region and is an important barrier to the establishment of trust in the post-conflict period. Most consequentially, the system of village guards is perceived as an important obstacle by those forcibly displaced persons who want to go back to their villages.⁷⁷

Another issue is that the guards are perceived by the other Kurds as groups that have “betrayed”. Currently all the village guards mention the fact in talks between the government and the PKK, they are caught in between, and that neither side has confidence in them. Should they leave the guns, they can participate in the peace process in a dignified manner. No doubt for the establishment of just peace and instituting the feeling of fairness, it is necessary that those guards who committed crimes be brought before justice and tried in an impartial manner. The healthy progress of the legal system will resolve the tension stemming from conflict and prevent it from turning into new clashes today.⁷⁸

Cleaning up the Landmines

Another important aspect of the right to stay alive and live in security is the clearance of the landmines. Landmines that have been implanted during the war can cause the death of many innocent people and particularly children who are not aware of the dangers. A high school student, the 17 year-old Nazar, for example, was killed in 2012 when collecting wood in the area surrounding the Şenoba Village in Cizre.⁷⁹ Eighteen year-old Mahmud Şego died when he stepped on a mine attempting to cross the border to Turkey.⁸⁰ To live in a region that has been cleaned-up from landmines and other residue of war, is not only a significant item in the processes of resolution/ peace, but a basic human right.

The cleaning up of landmines emplaced during the conflict is an important problem. Before anything else, the fact that mines are buried in the ground means that they will change their location with the earth underneath, and other seasonal movements making it difficult to determine their exact location. Those mines placed in the earth during conflict and then forgotten (because no records were kept as to their exact location or because the responsible persons have changed) constitute the other substantial problem of concealed landmine areas. Persons-in-charge in Turkey say that the most important hassle in cleaning up landmined areas is the lack of sufficient information concerning them.⁸¹

Cleaning up the landmines in the conflict regions in Turkey is not an issue directly related to the Resolution Process. As a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty, otherwise known as Mine Ban Convention in 2003, Turkey has the legal obligation to mark all the mined areas in the shortest duration possible, to check on them, to

77 Göç-Der, (Migr. Assoc.) op.cit.

78 İbid.

79 “Şırnak’a Mayınlı Tuzak: Bir ölü” (A landmine trap in Şırnak: one person dead), Timeturk, Oct. 7, 2012, www.timeturk.com/tr/2012/10/07/sirnak-ta-mayinli-tuzak.html#.VLz8JUesW3p [12.09.2013].

80 “Sınırdaki büyük dram: IŞİD’den kaçarken mayına bastı” (Big tragedy on the border: He stepped on a mine when trying to escape from IS), Ajans Haber, Sep. 27 2014, www.ajanshaber.com/sinirda-buyuk-dram-isidden-kacarkan-mayina-basti-haberi/123749 (10.12.2014).

81 “1 milyon 150 bin metrekarelik alan temizlendi” (An area of 1 million 150 thousand square kilometers has been cleaned up), Hürriyet newspaper May, 4 2013, www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/23202275.asp [15.06.2014].

perimeter-mark and fence them.⁸² According to the Mine Ban Convention the deadline for cleaning up all the mines in Turkey was March of 2014. Turkey, however, was not able to realize this completely and hence the deadline has been extended to March of 2022.⁸³

As was indicated in the Forced Migration Report of TESEV, one of the main reasons why those victims of enforced migration cannot return to their villages is the presence of landmines.⁸⁴ Another major problem is that those individuals running away from the civil war in Syria have to pass through the mined areas and may lose their lives in the process. Turkey must clean up all the mined areas in the region starting with those where the refugees have to pass through and with land that can be cleaned safely by demining personnel.

Protecting Persons on the Move

One of the important consequences of periods of combat is the displacement of persons. Many people move from their habitual place of residence due to the mutual pressure of the parties to the conflict, fear created by the surrounding violence, and the impossibility of continuing economic activities. Numerous studies conducted specifically on Turkey have shown that many victims have been enforced to move when they refused to become village guards. In some cases, however, even those villages that accepted to be guards were required to vacate the village and enforced to migrate. According to Göç-Der (Migration Association or Migr. Assoc.), during the wide-ranging clashes in the '90s, 3448 habitats were vacated, and nearly 4-4.5 million Kurds were displaced. According to the Population Studies Institute of Hacettepe University (HÜNEE) the numbers migrating were in between 953 680 and 1 201 200.

Some of those forcibly displaced in their own country during the conflict, living in various places may choose not to go back to their habitual place of residence. The decision of individuals and groups to stay or move back must be up them, based on their own volition. Hence it is vital not to concentrate only on policies concerning moving back, but to focus both on meeting the needs of those returning home as well as of those who prefer to stay where they have arrived. Making it possible for people to go back, on the other hand, is necessary for normalization, for the revival of economic life in the areas of conflict, for people to re-acquire the lands and property they have lost, to rejuvenate intangible relations with the land, and is one of the requirements of the success of long-term peace. Moreover, Turkey's resource for the subject, The United Nations' "On the Subject of Internal Displacement"⁸⁵, 2nd paragraph of article 28, "Principles

82 Akyel Collinworth, op.cit..

83 "Suriye/Türkiye: Mayınlar Kobani'den Kaçan Sivilleri Öldürüyor", (Syria/Turkey: Landmines are killing the civilians running away from Kobanê), Human Rights Watch, Dec. 2, 2014, www.hrw.org/tr/news/2014/12/02/suriye-tuerkiye-mayinlar-kobaniden-kacan-sivilleri-oelduerueyor (10.12.2014).

84 Dilek Kurban, D. Yüksek, Ayşe Betül Çelik, Turgay Ünal and A. T. Aker, "“Zorunlu Göç” ile Yüzleşmek: Türkiye’de Yerinden Edilme Sonrası Vatandaşlığın İnşası", (Coming to Terms with Forced Migration: Post-Displacement Restitution of Citizenship Rights in Turkey), İstanbul, TESEV, 2006.

85 One of the most important problems in conflict processes is the polarized language of the conflicting sides. A striking example of this

for Showing Place” requires that special care should be taken in involving the displaced themselves in their return, resettlement, planning and management of reintegration.⁸⁶

The most substantial step taken by the government for the forcibly displaced was the enactment in 2004 of Law 5233 titled “Law on the Compensation for the Damages of Terror and the War Against Terror” (Law of Compensation) which aimed to retrieve the loss and cost of enforced displacement.⁸⁷ As shown in a comprehensive study by Kurban and Yeğen, however, the long-awaited hope on the side of the Kurds, that the enactment of this law would finally relieve and repair the wrongdoing done them and that justice would finally be realized, was totally nullified. The Law of Compensation does not incorporate the state’s will and decisiveness in areas such as, assuming the responsibility for gross breaches of the rights of civilians, the expression of regret, and reparations for material and nonmaterial damage. The law was enacted simply for those people who had to vacate their villages, but the potential beneficiaries from it are far from being limited to the forcibly displaced. A long process awaits those who want appeal for compensation, while a significant percent of the applications remained inconclusive.

Furthermore, there are still obstacles in the way of those forcibly displaced that want to go back. Some of the impediments concerning the returns were discussed in the earlier sections of the report under different headings. The first of these is the perception that skirmishes are still going on (or can flare up any moment) and that armistice has not been realized. That human habitats should be totally purged of residue of war is a sine qua non for return. The second obstacle is the presence of the village guards system. Many individuals have pointed out that they do not want to live together with village guards even if the system was totally abolished. For the return of the forcibly displaced, it is essential that the village guard system be dismantled, the guards employed elsewhere, not housing any guns, and that land confiscated by the village guards returned to their owners. Another subject we dealt with under the subheadings and that constitute a barrier to return are the landmines. Those pieces of land where mines have been placed during conflict must be demined. Furthermore, the ongoing construction of dams causes new waves of forced migrations.

In addition to these main areas discussed under the subheadings in this report, the reconstruction of the evacuated villages must a target of priority. For this purpose the villages must be furnished with full-fledged infrastructure facilities. Under the Metropolitan Law villages gain legal status to become city neighborhoods, which creates important problems, particularly for evacuated villages. Although the transfer of services to municipalities may be seen as a step towards decentralization, with the present situation of insufficient funds, the municipalities will hardly be able to take on the job of rehabilitating the vacated villages. Presently, those who were forced to migrate in the ‘90s and are recently returning back to their villages point out that they are faced with difficulties due to the fines the government forces them to pay,

is the term used by the state: “being displaced”, referred to as “enforced dislocation” by civil society organizations. This polarization also points to difficulties and obstacles in the voicing of truths and the acceptance of faults.

86 Walter Kalin, Ülke İçinde Yerinden Olma Konusunda Yol Gösterici İlkeler, Açıklayıcı Notlar, (Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: Explanatory Notes), Ankara: İmaj Yayınevi, 2005, p. 93. www.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/AnnotationsTurkish.pdf (10.12.2014).

87 For an extensive evaluation of this law based on the example of Van see. Dilek Kurban & Mesut Yeğen, Adaletin Kıyısında (On the Edge of Justice), İstanbul: TESEV, 2012.

although the government itself has not done its part in providing any of the essential infrastructure.⁸⁸ It is important to have a sub-commission under the Truth Commission mentioned in the earlier sections of the report, devoted solely to enforced migration. The work conducted in this area shows that the priority wish of those forcibly displaced in their own country is the acceptance of rights' violations committed by the security forces and official apology. This process has not only shaken the trust between the government and the citizen but has also made the internally displaced feel like second class citizens in their own country, hence an official apology encompassing these groups would assist in dissipating such negative feelings.

⁸⁸ "Yıllar sonra döndükleri köyde elektrik borcu engeliyle karşılaştılar", (After returning to their villages they were forced to pay electricity bills for the years they were not living there"), Diyarbakır Haber, Dec. 28 2014, www.diyarbakirhaber.gen.tr/diyarbakir-haber/yillar-onra-dondukleri-koyde-elektrik-borcu-engeliyle-kar-ila-tilar-h5617.html (05.01.2015).

5

94 The Peace Process and Dealing with the Past

Murat Çelikkan

Following 30 years of war, a substantial development in Turkey has been the period of non-conflict, followed by the start of talks in the Peace/Resolution Process. As events of the last few months have shown, however, non-conflict does not imply peace or resolution. To establish peace it is necessary to face violations of rights, antidemocratic practices that led to discrimination and inequality and the devastation produced by the years of conflict. Reconciling with the past is not independent of historical reasons and must include structural discrimination, state violence, racism, lawlessness, extra-democratic practices, state of emergency, recognition of past victims, actualizing their political demands, circulating and publicizing their stories and the creation of rehabilitation programs.

Both in those countries transiting from totalitarian to democratic regimes as well as in those starting peace processes following long years of civil war, dealing with the past human rights violations and facing the inheritance of atrocities have come to the forefront in the last 35 years. Successful examples have been known to bring lasting peace and democracy. Without dealing with past wounds, bringing the offenders before the courts and changing those laws and practices that have created structural discrimination, in other words, it is not possible to write off mutual “debts”.

When those wounds are not reconciled, discussed and irritated, they will stay open throughout the years. If there are no initiatives for reconciliation, the way to novel injuries is left open and a fresh start based on the search for the roots of the problem cannot be achieved; as long as the perpetrators of the violations are not tried and penalized, it is not possible to prevent the occurrence of new ones. In addition, it is not in anyone’s domain to ask for forgiveness or for an authority to forgive in the name of those victims whose rights have been violated. Today in many countries around the world, from Argentina to South Africa, Colombia to Morocco, the transition from dictatorships and racist/discriminatory regimes to democratic processes, as well as from wars to peace and democratic process, the totality of mechanisms applied, are referred to as “Transitional Justice”. Also known as “Restorative Justice” or “A New Social Consensus”, these processes generally start before the start of political change. The serving of justice, everyone’s equality before a democratic legal system, beyond being the responsibility of states, are also ways of preventing the rebirth of wars, conflict and rights’ violations or dictatorships and point the way to the vision of present and future we imagine. The road to a new consensus based on human rights and democratic values in societies where social cohesion is damaged by conflict and polarization also passes through dealing with the past.

The essence of coming to terms with the past, should be based on democratic values and human rights and the acknowledgment of the atrocities inflicted on the victims no matter which section of society they come from, bringing the perpetrators before justice, to making new political agreements based on the acknowledgement and, establishing equal citizenship and preventing all kinds of discrimination on these foundations.

When we look at the implementation of Transitional Justice mechanisms around the world at large the

following can be listed:

1. Criminal justice and the establishment of justice
2. The right to truth, seeking for and circulating the truth and the establishment of Truth Commissions
3. Memorialization
4. Reparations
5. Structural reforms, changes in legal regulation
6. To base all such work on gender and women's participation in the process

Research conducted on countries which have attempted to apply these methods show plenty examples of the boomerang of different forms of violence and antidemocratic practice each time such work was not done with an eye to detail and a holistic approach. In addition, one of the important shortcomings appears to be overlooking the root causes and the historical background of the conflict. Thus, in dealing with the past, it seems important to add historical dialogues and “Historical Reconciliation Commissions” to the list on Mechanisms of Justice of the Transitional Period.

Commissions on Historical Reconciliation

The subject of dealing with the past is a set of praxis, which started following World War II and gained momentum following the end of the Cold War. History Commissions established in between Germany-France, Germany-United Kingdom, France-Italy, Poland-Ukraine, have not only corrected mistakes in historical knowledge, but have also led to the re-writing of history textbooks in these countries such that new generations can learn about these truths.

In this context, historical dialogue should lead to re-writing the history of the Republic of Turkey by the parties to the conflict and, within this frame of reference, work on the historical injustices committed due to problems such as Turkish racism, the monolithic outlook of Sunni Turkishness and aim the solving of historical problems through a common perspective on the past. The formation of an independent history commission in Turkey, discussing particularly the inequalities, discrimination and historical demands concerning the Kurdish Issue must be taken as being fundamental. In addition, the need felt for a new historiography in teaching historical truths to new generations can only be met by an independent commission composed of diverse sections of the public and historians from Turkish, Kurdish and other groups in society since official history of the nation-state in the Republic of Turkey was built on the basis of excluding all identities except that of Turks.

96.3 Transitional Justice Mechanisms

TRIALS AND THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF JUSTICE

One of the outstanding reasons of social conflict and the weakness of democracy in Turkey is the lack of fast, fair, independent and reliable justice mechanisms. Especially in those crimes where state officials are involved, the practice of impunity can be seen violating both the principles of equality before the legal system, and the rule of law.

To give an example, it would suffice to look at enforced disappearances in Turkey, which under international human rights law is considered a crime against humanity. Perusing the record of rights organizations in Turkey, there were anywhere from 1500 to 2000 cases of enforced disappearance in between the years 1980 and 2000 (unverified statistics). In a study concerning the legal processes of 262 cases of enforced disappearances conducted by the Hafıza Merkezi, it can be seen that many petitions for redress were handed to the prosecutor's office and did arrive at the office of the investigating prosecutor. However, our research revealed a striking picture of impunity and the situation of justice in Turkey.

Of the 296 applications concerning the forcibly disappeared persons, only 69 could reach the court phase, of which in 19 cases the decision was acquittal; in 2, conviction; with 48 cases still pending. Apart from those 69 cases, 16 were not accepted as lawsuits, 9 exceeded the statute of limitations (of 20 years) and 202 are still pending. The duration of the lawsuits is, on the average, around 19 years. Enforced disappearance is not defined in any of the articles of laws in Turkey, nor are they contained in crimes committed against humanity, as is the case in international law⁸⁹; hence the statute of limitations that apply to them is 20 years.

If we look at the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR or AİHM) concerning these cases, on the other hand, we note that the cases of 125 persons, out of a total of 296 were brought to court. In 97 of these, the decision was that indeed, there were violations of human rights, while amicable settlements were reached in 11, with 17 cases rejected due to misleading. The 97 cases of violation were decided against the state of Turkey. Turkey did not hold re-trials for any of the offenders, and thus none were punished. Furthermore, the state made no attempt to find the bodies of 213 forcibly disappeared out

89 The Criminal Code of Turkey: Crimes Against Humanity, Article 77.

ARTICLE 77- (1) Execution of any one of the following acts systematically under a plan against a sector of a community for political, philosophical, racial or religious reasons, creates the legal consequence of an offenses against humanity. a) Voluntary manslaughter, b) To act with the intension of giving injury to another person, c) Torturing, infliction of severe suffering, or forcing a person to live as a slave, d) To restrict freedom, e) To make a person to be subject to scientific researches/tests f) Sexual harassment, child molestation, g) Forced pregnancy h) Forced prostitution

(2) In case of execution of the act mentioned in paragraph (a) of first subsection, the convict is sentenced to heavy imprisonment; in case of commission of offenses listed in other paragraphs, the convict is sentenced to imprisonment not less than eight years. However, if the offense is caused by voluntary manslaughter or intentional injury of a person, then the provisions relating to physical joinder are applied in consideration of number of victims.

(3) The court may adjudicate imposition of security precautions upon the legal entities due to such offenses,

of the total of 364 present in the database of the Hafiza Merkezi.⁹⁰

From the perspective of victims, the above portrayal is one of the important indicators of the fact that justice is not served in Turkey. This situation can be extended to murders, extrajudicial and arbitrary executions, crimes against women including rape and sexual violence, torture and maltreatment, enforced displacement and crimes of war.

PRACTICES OF AMNESTY

The concept of justice vis-à-vis the peace process in Turkey is understood either in the context of amnesty or that of security. Security, furthermore, is interpreted solely as the disarmament of the PKK. Although Disarmament or the Disbanding of the Armed Units and Reintegration to Social Life (DDR - Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) are important aspects of peace processes, many examples from around the world show that, in fact, disarmament is actually realized as the last phase of the process.⁹¹ The creation of an environment of non-violence is sometimes accomplished by the guerrilla disarming itself, joining social life and amnesty; in others by legal arrangements. Naturally, neither security, nor justice is limited to the guerilla. However, it is also true that amnesty which comes up in the agenda of the peace processes is also used in the name of preventing the culprits from being punished, and to enhance the armor of impunity. This is a situation that can be defended neither in the name of democracy nor of peace. In order to establish lasting peace, it is necessary that those who have committed grave human rights violations be tried and punished. Even in countries that applied amnesty, there have been cases of litigation and punishment against the perpetrators although it may take years to cut through the armor of those amnesties.

90 www.zorlakaybetmeler.org/victims.php

91 See: The section of this report on “Human Security in the Peace Process, Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration to Social Life.

In Argentina⁹² for instance, charges were pressed in 700⁹³ cases against state officials, all at once, when the struggle against those amnesty laws (1986, 1987) that provided impunity for the culprits were finalized in 2003. The number of court cases concerning crimes against humanity committed during the military junta period amounted to 922 in 2007, and 1926 in 2012. Even the South African Truth Commission, which has been criticized heavily for giving amnesties for the sake of “truth” at the end of its assignment, rejected 5932 out of a total of 7112 applications for amnesty. During the peace process in East Timor, Indonesia was criticized most heavily on the subject of criminal justice. In El Salvador, although 200 top level administrators were drummed out of the army, the fact that individuals at the highest level of command kept all their rights at retirement was criticized both in the international arena as well as in El Salvador. In Chile, dictator August Pinochet, responsible for many of the crimes against humanity in between 1973-1990, could not face justice due to the amnesty law enacted in 1978. He was arrested in 1998 in London, but set free due to health problems and returned back home where he was kept under house arrest. When he died in 2006, there were 300 lawsuits pending against him, including massacre and torture, in addition to misappropriating 28 million dollars.

In Turkey, on the other hand, 23rd Brigade Commander in the Gendarmerie, Mete Sayar, was acquitted on July 3, 2015, in the trial of the enforced disappearance of six villagers in the village of Görümlü (administratively connected to Silopi, in Şırnak province) in 1993.

Gendarmerie Commander Captain Musa Çitil, (to become gendarmerie regional commander in Ankara in

92 In Argentina the army came to power in 1976. This was part of the USA ploy, referred to as the “Condor Plan”, of staging successive coup d’états in Latin America to clean up its own “backyard” from the dangers of communism . The power hold of the military extended until 1983 when the junta had a conflict with the United Kingdom over the sovereignty of the Malvina (Falkland) islands when it lost the war thus ending its day as the sole authority in the country. In between 1976-1983 those with leftist political leanings and those associated with the Peronist youth organization were hijacked by the army and intelligence units, were tortured in clandestine detention centers and were forcibly disappeared. The total number of the forcibly disappeared is estimated to be around 30 000 persons.

93 This may have been the most important decision concerning the struggle to end impunity in Argentina. The decision was also in harmony with international practice that neither the statute of limitation, nor amnesty could be applied in cases of crimes against humanity. In the case of the enforced disappearance of a young couple where two police officers were tried, Judge Cavallo decided that laws of amnesty were unconstitutional and its clauses null. The subject of the trial was the loss of two individuals, Chilean citizen José Poblete Roa and his wife Gertrudis Hlaczik, hijacked by the police on Nov. 28 1978. Their 8-month-old daughter, Claudia Victoria was also with them. They were kept in one of the clandestine detention centers known as the Olimpo Garage and tortured. Their daughter, Claudia was taken away from them to be placed with her grandmother. The couple and their daughter were lost. After 22 years of search, the grandmother discovered that Claudia was living in the home of a high level police official with the family, as their daughter. Cavallo convicted the two police officers responsible in the enforced disappearance of the couple for hijacking the daughter and hiding her identity. This decision, like many other cases where the children of the forcibly disappeared were given to the families of the military junta and police forces could be passed and glossed over due to laws of amnesty. However, in the October of 2000, CELS (El Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales/The Center for Legal and Social Research) applied to Judge Cavallo for the trial of seven policemen responsible for the enforced disappearance and torture of the couple in addition to the two aforementioned ones, and for laws of amnesty to be considered null. Cavallo decided that both laws of amnesty were null and void since they were unconstitutional and violations of international agreements Argentina was a party to. Following this, many cases on torture and enforced disappearance were brought before the courts and verdicts of conviction given to the culprits as well as other responsible individuals.

2013 with the title Brigadier General) was acquitted on May 21, 2014 of the crime of extrajudicial killing or enforced disappearance of 13 civilians in the township of Mardin/Derik during the years 1992-94.,

In the case of senior colonel in the gendarmerie, Cemal Temizöz where he was tried in court with the accusation of the killing/enforced disappearance of 20 civilians in between 1993-1995, the prosecutor

asked for acquittal on June 18 2015 due to lack of sufficient evidence.,

These successive sentences of acquittal in crimes against humanity committed during the '90s, has the effect of not only shaking confidence in the rule of law in Turkey, but also harms the peace process.

This policy of impunity leads to an increase in the number of deaths caused by summary executions, whose culprits are actually known, but, also, simultaneously to numerous deaths and severe injuries due to the use of excessive force by the security officers in Turkey. As a result, Turkey has turned into, not only a geography of murders committed by unknown assailants, but also, such executions without due process are repeated over and over again, in Roboski (Dec. 2011), during the protests in the Gezi Recreational Park (May-June, 2013), in Reyhanlı (May, 2013), in Diyarbakır (June, 2015).

Without settling accounts with crimes committed in in the '90s in Turkey, it is not possible to speak of criminal justice, or the ending of military tutelage, nor, for that matter, to establish a lasting peace. In the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights it is predicated that in cases where there are sufficiently credible allegations that grave human rights violations have occurred, the state has the responsibility of carrying on investigations to dig out the truth. In this context the state has the responsibility for carrying out its investigation on the allegations, on time and in full and punish those who are found to be responsible.

Christine Bell in an article in the book titled *Building a Future on Peace and Justice*,⁹⁴ lists the following particulars that must be included in the search for justice during processes of peace:

- a. Blanket amnesties that cover serious international crimes are not permitted.
- b. Some amnesty, however, is required, as conflict-related prisoners and detainees must be released, demilitarized, and enabled to reintegrate.⁹⁵
- c. Mechanisms should be creatively designed, aimed at marrying the normative commitment to accountability, to the goal of sustaining the ceasefire and developing the constitutional commitments at the heart

94 Building A Future On Peace and Justice, eds. K. Ambos et.al., Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2009.

95 The II Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relates to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977. In addition the Statute of Rome and the International Criminal Court, in the decisions of the criminal courts in former Yugoslavia (ICTFY) and in Ruanda (ICTR) there are references to crimes that must be brought before justice. These are, namely, assault on the right to live, attacks against physical and mental health, especially murder, torture, mutilation, maltreatment such as bodily punishment, crimes against humanity (murder, destruction, enslavement, exile, imprisonment, torture and rape). In addition there are also war crimes committed against civilians as well as soldiers and armed militants that are covered in detail particularly in the decisions of ICTFY.

of the peace agreement. The following approaches may be used:

- 1) Quasi-legal mechanisms, which deliver, forms of accountability other than criminal law processes with prosecution, such as truth commissions.
- 2) A bifurcated approach whereby international criminal processes for the most serious offenders, coupled with creatively designed local mechanisms aimed at a range of goals such as accountability and reconciliation, for those further down the chain of responsibility, and general amnesty at the lowest level.
- d) Where new mechanisms are innovated, they should be designed with as much consultation with affected communities as possible.
- e) Should any party evidence lack of commitment to the peace agreement, and in particular return to violence, any compromise on criminal justice is void and reversible through the use of international criminal justice.

In sum, it is not possible to speak of a democratic order and peace where justice does not rule. Peace processes of different countries abound in examples of interruption due to amnesty laws and the practice of impunity. Hence it is necessary to give priority to making sure that criminal justice is served in cases of crimes against humanity and to make the necessary legislative regulations.

THE RIGHT TO TRUTH

Truth or the right to reach the truth is a comprehensive area including the right to know the truth about the abuses the victims or their relatives have suffered, including the identity of perpetrators, the causes that gave rise to the violations, and, if appropriate, the ultimate fate or whereabouts of the forcibly disappeared.

According to the European Court of Human Rights, the right to truth is the reason behind the purposes of conducting an effective investigation including the principles of the right to truth, transparency, care, independence, accessibility, and the announcing of truths. In addition, the right to know the truth reflects the desire to safeguard the society's confidence in public institutions and the rule of law.

Historically, this concept's roots lie in humanitarian law and international human rights law and are based on the right to know the fate of kith and kin and the missing/disappeared persons of the parties of conflict. The United Nations Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which came to the agenda in the 1970s when states started using the methods of repression and intimidation/dominion, considers the right to know the truth as a right unto itself.

Guatemala, Brazil and Peru⁹⁶ have openly recognized the right of its citizens to know the truth. The Guatemala Peace Agreement of 1994, has openly recognized and asserted the right of its people to know all the

⁹⁶ The Nation has the right to know the truth about unjust and painful facts and incidents brought about by the myriad forms of State and non-State violence. This right entails the possibility of ascertaining the circumstances of time, method, and place under which they occurred and the motives behind the perpetrators' actions. The right to truth is, in this sense, an inalienable collective legal interest. In addition to the collective dimension, the right to truth has an individual dimension, which corresponds to the victims and their relatives and friends.

truths about events that occurred in the past, and has recognized that bringing truth out in the open would prevent the recurrence of tragic and painful events and that it would provide a powerful contribution to the process of democratization in Guatemala.

Neither the Constitution of Turkey, nor in its body of current national legislation has the right to truth been recognized. Civil rights organizations' legal standpoint presented to the Constitutional Court gives an idea about the situation and as to what needs to be done.⁹⁷

This right is derived directly from the principle of human dignity, since the harm inflicted upon the victims not only constitutes a breach of such important legal interests as life, liberty, and personal integrity, but also creates a situation of ignorance about what really happened to the victims of the crimes committed. Not knowing where the mortal remains of a loved one are located or what happened to him or her, is, perhaps, one of the most perversely subtle, yet no less violent ways of damaging the psyche and dignity of human beings. In this regard, the State has a specific obligation to investigate and to inform, which not only entails facilitating the access of relatives to documents in the possession of the State, but also means investigating and corroborating the events that have been reported.

Even if a political solution is reached in the events of the past 30 years through a process of macro-level negotiation, discovering the truth is also essential in the “social disaster” dimension, in somewhat soothing the pain of a social group caused by summary executions, enforced disappearances, enforced displacement, persecution and loss of kith and kin. In this process, not only the victims, but also the society at large must be able to reach the lies that it, here-to-fore knew as truths.⁹⁸

97 The following is an excerpt from the legal opinion, in capacity of amicus curiae, co-signed by the following organizations concerning the case of the enforced disappearance of Hasan Gülünay whose case is being examined in the Constitutional Court, following the decision of the European Court of Human Rights: Hafıza Merkezi, Economic and Social Studies Foundation of Turkey, The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, and from the Human Rights Joint Platform: Human Right's Association, The Association of Human Rights Agenda, Human Rights Research Association, and Helsinki Citizens Association.

98 To give an example. The killing of 11 villagers in the Koçyurdu village, township of Güçlükonak, in the province of Şırnak on January, 1996, was attributed by the Office of the Chief of Staff as being due to an attack by the PKK on a minibus carrying passengers. Following the event a group of journalists from the national and international media were brought to the area via a helicopter, with Aide to the President of Internal Operations at the General Staff, Oğuz Kalelioğlu as host. Here Kalelioğlu who was head of Psychological Warfare at the Chief of General Staff during the Feb. 28 (1997) events, explained to the press “the second ceasefire of the PKK, like the first, turned out to be a deception”. One day later, the PKK explained that it had nothing to do with the event. Years later we were faced with a different truth when an officer narrated the events in an investigation: 10 persons being detained in the battalion command in Taşkonak were killed under torture. Their dead bodies were placed in a minibus and put on the road to the accompaniment of a soldier. Upon reaching a certain point, the gendarmes in the minibus got off, moved away while a special team which blocked the road, raked the minibus; as a result the rockets they threw the minibus and the 10 bodies inside turned to coal. The driver of the minibus who tried to run away was also raked and killed. Those bodies that had nearly turned to ash were buried en masse without conducting any identification procedures and performing religious obligations. Also in the 1993 Lice incidents, when 30 people in addition to General Bahtiyar Aydın was killed, the events were explained as being due to a PKK raid; however from the reports of Delegations who went there and in a documentary made on the event in 2014 it was determined that the PKK was not present in Lice at the time, and that he possible culprit was JİTEM (gendarmerie intelligence and anti-terror unit).

There are over 40 truth commissions established around the world today to realize this necessity. The work of these commissions has helped both in democratization and in procuring lasting peace.

Truth commissions have made it possible to limit the extent of lies, to recognize the victimization of victims, to take the perpetrators to court, to make human rights and democratic values a reference in the formation of social memory, and to realize reforms to assure that the crimes committed do not recur.⁹⁹

Memorialization

Memorialization is defined as a comprehensive area covering the building of monuments, museums, rituals and archives to honor and remember the pain and/or death of those due to conflict. By probing the past, work in this area is also intended to prevent the recurrence of such events in the future. It also helps in social and personal healing and contributes to bringing up healthier future generations.

Those who observe countries in the transitional period reason that, unless these countries confront the past in an honest manner they are not able to leave behind periods of repression and violence. When at least two and sometimes more parties meet in the setting of conflict and repression, each has a different view of historical "truth". Victims and delinquents have different narrations concerning their experience. While victims concentrate on the pain they suffered, the offenders deny their role in the pain and refer to their own victimization. These reactions become even more complicated in cases where the same group or individuals are portrayed both as victims and as perpetrators.

Memorialization is the fundamental way of presenting these memories, and facing the truths of those memories. Memory monuments and public memorial activities may reflect a wide variety of styles. Sculptures, parks, museums are memory monuments; or among the less permanent commemorations are demonstrations, theater productions or travelling exhibits. Educational activities, shared learning and communication work must be added to these. When manipulated by political powers, memory monuments may accentuate or sublimate conflict. As a result they may blow up new hostilities. However, memory monuments may also play a more constructive role in processes such as educating new generations in thinking, recovering, ending exclusion and aiding reconciliation and may even play a role of atonement thus serving a constructive cause.¹⁰⁰

There are many examples of memory work in the world performed in the name of peace and democratization. Among examples from Germany are, the "Monument to the Roma and Sinti Massacred During the Nationalist Socialist Regime", to memorialize killing of the Roma by the Nazis; to symbolize the repression and massacre of homosexuals, "The Monument to Homosexuals Oppressed During the Nationalist Socialist Regime"; and for example, "The Bebelplatz Monument". Bebelplatz is the name of the square in front of the Humbolt University in Berlin. On May 10, 1933, members of the Nazi student organization burned

⁹⁹ To examine the structure, process of formation, and work of Truth Commissions see the book prepared by the Hafıza Merkezi titled, Hakikat Komisyonları. . www.hakikatadalethafiza.org/images/UserFiles/Documents/Editor/Hakikat%20Komisyonları.pdf

¹⁰⁰ For Memorialization work in Turkey see the "Memorialization" web site of the Hafıza Merkezi in Turkey: www.memorializeturkey.com.tr

ten thousands of books in university towns in Germany. That same day, nearly 20 000 books were burnt in Bebelplatz. Today in the same place there stands an empty underground library (shelves) designed by Micha Ullman for the 20 000 burnt books.

In Argentina, there are many centers for the memory of massacres and repression committed during the Military Junta period. One of these is the “Buenos Aires Parque de la Memoria”. The park that is a reminiscence of the victims of state terror covers a large area. In addition to one built in honor of the forcibly disappeared, there are also many other monuments. Another example is the “Olimpo Garage” in Buenos Aires. Olimpo was an illegal and clandestine detention center and was converted into a memory/social center in 2005. Similarly in South Africa, “The Robben Island Museum”, a few sea miles away from Cape Town, is a prison where black opponents of the white supremacist regime were imprisoned. Nelson Mandela was kept a prisoner here for 27 years. Today it has been transformed into a museum. In Cambodia today there are monuments and a museum in the Killing Fields. One of the torture centers in Chile, Villa Grimaldi, has been turned into a museum today. In the lands of former Yugoslavia, in Srebrenitsa there is a museum and a cemetery where the recognizable bodily remains in the genocide of 8000 unarmed men and male children are buried. In Uganda a monument has been built to remember the victims of the April 20, 1995, the Atiak massacre and every year since 2005 reunions are held here to reminisce them.

Let us remember here once more that the monuments should be built in honor of the victims; those built to honor heroes of the conflicting parties usually become sources of tension for the opposite side; also, heroes do come to the forefront in the establishment of nation states as official state monuments most of the time, in any case, reminding us of the root causes of the conflict itself. Another important principle in the creation of such places and monuments is that they must be done with the participation of local representation. International Sites of Conscience is an umbrella organization, which tries to assure that such places remain active and alive in trying to inform and educate young people in its continuing educational activities.

Restitution Programs

Restitution programs can be organized in many different ways. In addition to material reparation for individuals and groups, social services such as health and education, examples may also include various practices and applications all the way from symbolic compensations like official pardons to public commemorations, to giving priority to the victims of conflict and their families in employment and education (which today in Turkey includes only families of martyrs and war veterans).

One of the most important critiques regarding restitution is that unless supported by mechanisms of justice, they serve to keep the victims silent. In Turkey some such approaches may be rejected on account of being “blood money”. Hence compensations become meaningful only in a holistic context, including other mechanisms of recognition and justice, and with the assurance that the atrocities will never recur. Another aspect of the applicability of compensation programs is that they must be assembled only in consultation with the victims.

To look at some of the practices of compensation:

- Between 1996-2008, the Chilean state paid over 1.6 billion dollars to victims of the Pinochet regime and provided a special health program for those who survived the violations. In addition, Patricio Aylwin, the newly elected President of the Chilean State after the military junta in March of 1990, in making public the report of the Chile National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, known as the Rettig Report (1991), “begged for forgiveness from the victims” and asked the armed forces ‘to make gestures of recognition and of the pain caused’¹⁰¹ in his talk broadcast on the national television.
- For the past 50 years the Moroccan government has been applying compensation programs to individuals and certain groups for wide violations of rights. For instance it gives material compensation to those groups that have been left outside the development programs for political reasons.
- In 2010, the president of Sierra Leone officially apologized to the female victims of the ten year long armed conflict. This was accompanied by compensation, rehabilitation programs, and other aid to be given to the victims.
- In its first decision concerning crimes against humanity, The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), commonly known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, suggested symbolic and collective reparations. The court’s decision also included placing the names of former inmates of a prison famous for its torture in the website of the court and apologizing to those who were convicted.

The road map¹⁰² of the reparations program developed by The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) for the kith and kin of the forcibly disappeared in Nepal consist of the following:

- An emergency compensation program must be established for the most urgent socio-economic needs of the victims: 1) A rehabilitation program in addition to a compensation and financial support program for the victims
2) Medical aid including operations for sexual crimes and for those who have injuries and are unable to work
3) Scholarships and material support for the school-age children of victims.
- The issuing of regulations for the partners (husbands/wives) of the forcibly disappeared concerning their legal interests and problems of property ownership.
- The creation of psychosocial programs for victims of torture, rape, sexual assault and gender related violence
- To be in close contact and consultation with the victim groups while determining their long term needs, expectations, and the kinds of victimization they suffered
- To have a program that would make the amount and goals of all kinds of compensation transparent
- To combine material compensation with non-material clemency programs such that victims of human rights violations and their right to compensation are recognized
- To establish a dialogue with the victims and other actors so as to create a relation between the compensation and the roots of the problem.

101 www.library.illinois.edu/ias/cgs/class_guides/HumanRights/Five_Illustrative_Truth_Commissions.pdf. p. 37.

102 “To Walk Freely with a Wide Heart”, A Study of the Needs and Aspirations for Reparative Justice of Victims of Conflict Related Abuses in Nepal, ICTJ.

TURKEY

On the subject of compensations, the example that comes to the forefront in Turkey is Law 5233, “The Law on Terror and Reparations for Loss Due to Terror”. The Law on Reparations was enacted on July 27, 2004 and the regulations which made it executable, on October 20, 2004. According to a report by the Ministry of the Interior including the current numbers, by the end of May 2006 there were 195 463 applications in total. Of the

27 011 applications that were concluded, 11 899 were granted compensation, while 15 112 were rejected. The total amount to be given to the right holders was 113 256 430 million TL; of this 69 606 961 TL were paid by the end of May 2006.¹⁰³

International organizations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) as well as national ones such as the Human Rights Association, Migration Association for Social Cooperation and Culture, and the Economic and Social Studies Foundation of Turkey, TESEV have appraised the law and its application in their comprehensive published reports. The bases of these evaluations lie in the criticism that the legislative intention of the law, in particular, has been far from removing victimization or serving the demands for peace.

When the European Union included the Law of Compensation as a part of the political criteria it expected Turkey to fulfill in the process of membership, the government, in its “National Program on the Adoption of European Union Legal Acquis“ committed itself to passing the law in 2004. The liaison between the acceptance of the Compensation Law and the process of Turkey’s membership in the European Union is noteworthy, particularly in the law’s General Preamble. As also mentioned in the General Preamble, another reason is the political anxiety over decreasing court cases ending up in the European Court of Human Rights.

As mentioned in the TESEV report on Coming to Terms with “Forced Migration”¹⁰⁴, the Law of Compensation, is not limited to those enforced to displace, but includes all victims of terror and the fight against terror.¹⁰⁵ In this context, the law excludes the state’s liability *ex delicto* (fault liability) in cases of evacuation of villages, murder by unknown assailants, enforced disappearances and hence is far from meeting the demand for social peace in the region.

On the other hand, Turkey has received a large number of convictions from the European Court of Human Rights in cases of human rights violations where the state was delinquent and has paid the compensations thereof. However, it not only has failed to realize any structural reforms made necessary by these convictions, but also, no legal proceedings were conducted on the assailants.

103 In May of 2006, 1 dollar= 1.45 Turkish lira, approx. <http://paracevirici.com/doviz-arsiv/merkez-bankasi/gecmis-tarihli-doviz/2006/amerikan-dolari>

104 Dilek Kurban, Deniz Yüksek, Ayşe Betül Çelik, Turgay Ünal, A. Tamer Aker, “Coming to Terms with Forced Migration: Post-Displacement Restitution of Citizenship Rights in Turkey“, TESEV, 2007.

105 Op.cit.

Structural Reforms and Modifications in Legal Statute

Those countries where conflict has ended and are building peace or where there is a transition from authoritarian regimes to democracy, must also deal with public officers that were involved in human rights violations and the institutional structures that allow this.

In this context, in Turkey it is necessary to change the procedures of appointing to office from conducting investigations in official personal records and security searches to the standing of the candidate in human rights standards and his/her fit to the particular task. In other words, unlike the situation today, i.e. instead of the persons' being subject to the state, or the position of being close to circles of power, the criteria that must be taken into account are those such as, merit, the person's record on human rights violations and her/his respect for human rights. Particularly in those institutions that gave way to human rights violations, the appointments and promotions must be made based on such examination procedures.

This implementation in post-conflict societies has particularly been valid for members of the security forces and the mechanisms of justice. Following the 12 years conflict in El Salvador, such examination procedures were applied in the 1990s in the formation of a new civilian police force. After the Dayton Agreement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the police's partiality in the application of the law and the injustice of the justice institution has made it necessary to examine the members of both institutions from this perspective. In former Czechoslovakia such screening and removal from office was made for a large section of those in public office, including judges, prosecutors, the army, police, intelligence officers, civil servants, and those working in universities.¹⁰⁶ In Argentina, human rights groups taking advantage of national human rights mechanisms, play a role in in the promotions of military personnel and particularly in the employment of security forces. Naturally such programs must go hand-in-hand with the restructuring of those state institutions that reproduce inequality, discrimination, and violence.

LEGAL STATUTES

In order of priority, the first thing that must be changed in Turkey is to amend the article in the constitution, which designates that "Everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk." (Article 66). Some demands have been made to alter this in the context of equal citizenship. The meetings of the Constitutional Reconciliation Commission formed in October 19, 2011 by the four parties represented in the Parliament went on for two years. Reconciliation was reached on 57 articles excluding those that lie at the root of the problem; however, the commission was disbanded on December 4, 2013, and no change was made even in those articles of reconciliation.

Other laws that need to be changed include articles of the Election Law, Law on Political Parties, Basic Law of National Education, and some articles of the Criminal Law. In addition, a legal arrangement is needed for teaching in the mother tongue.

¹⁰⁶ In these countries criteria such as genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, extrajudicial and arbitrary executions, torture and maltreatment, enforced disappearance were applied and those involved were forbidden from public office.

State institutions which have been organized in a considerably centralized fashion must be restructured to become decentralized by giving more power and authority to local administrators.

Legal arrangements must be made, particularly in those state institutions responsible for security, with the participation of civil society organizations in review processes for the employment of those individuals not involved in human rights violations and those who respect human rights. The peace agreement must also include legal arrangements to eliminate gender inequality.

Gender and the Representation of Women

Concerning the impact of armed conflict on civilians, it can be said that the gross breaches and unjust suffering of women is more than men all around the world. Women may die, may be injured, forced to disappear, tortured and sexually abused or assaulted. In the absence of men, they are also expected to protect family property, take care of the aged, infirm and the children. They are also responsible for searching the disappeared family members, visits to police headquarters and prisons. When the male breadwinner in the family dies, disappears or leaves, they must take on economic responsibility as well.

Recent history shows that a peace based on discrimination and inequality cannot be sustained. Thus, it is not only crucial to conduct a separate study on the oppression of women, but for a sound and sustainable peace process it is indispensable to overcome the structural and cyclical reasons for this, and to empower and mobilize women for active participation.

CHRONOLOGY

3 January 2013

Türk and Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) Batman Member of Parliament Ayla Akat held a meeting with PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) leader Abdullah Öcalan at İmralı Prison.

4 January 2013

Interior Minister İdris Naim Şahin announced that military operations against the PKK would continue.

5 January 2013

Republican People's Party (CHP) Chairperson Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu declared his support to the government in its negotiations with Öcalan: "Despite all its mistakes in the past, we offer the Justice and Development Party (AKP) a new credit. Solve the problem".

6 January 2013

Prime Minister Erdoğan's statement: "It is out of the question for us to cease our struggle against the separatist terror organization without disarmament." The same day, Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) carried out an air operation on the Pülümür Valley in Dersim and its environs.

9 January 2013

Sakine Cansız, a leading figure of the PKK, was massacred in Paris alongside Fidan Doğan and Leyla Söylemez.

24 January 2013

The right of self-defense in one's mother tongue became law.

Muammer Güler has been appointed as the Ministry of Interior. The reassignment took place as part of the AKP cabinet change, in which previous minister İdris Naim Şahin was replaced with former Governor of İstanbul Province.

3 February 2013

Prime Minister Erdoğan's statement: "It is out of the question for us to cease our struggle against the separatist terror organization without disarmament." The same day, Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) carried out an air operation on the Pülümür Valley in Dersim and its environs.

8 February 2013

Erdoğan announced that MİT (National Intelligence Organization) Undersecretary Hakan Fidan had held a meeting with Öcalan at İmralı.

19 February 2013

In the Diyarbakır/Amed KCK (Group of Communities in Kurdistan) Main Trial, ten detainees including Fırat Anlı, who was elected Diyarbakır/Amed Co-Mayor while in prison, were released.

23 February 2013

The BDP delegation (Pervin Buldan, Sırrı Süreya Önder, Altan Tan) went to İmralı.

28 February 2013

Minutes of the BDP delegation's meeting with Öcalan were published in the daily Milliyet newspaper.

13 March 2013

The PKK released eight public officials it was holding captive as a display of good will regarding the solution process.

15 March 2013

Murat Karayılan, acting leader of the PKK, announced their decision to strongly participate in Öcalan's solution perspective.

22 March 2013

Prime Minister Erdoğan announced that they were working on forming a delegation of "wise persons".

PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's letter calling on the PKK to declare ceasefire and withdraw from within Turkey's borders was read out at the Newroz celebration in Diyarbakır/Amed. Abdullah Öcalan's letter included no call for disarmament.

A verdict of non-prosecution was declared regarding five MİT staff including MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan. On 7 February 2012, Hakan Fidan, and two high-ranking staff who had played an active role in the Oslo negotiations had been summoned to testify as "suspects" by a specially authorized prosecutor. Erdoğan had blocked this attempt by the prosecutor and police officers, who were allegedly allied with the Hizmet Movement. This incident was to become one of the main points of rupture between the [formerly closely aligned] AKP and the Gülen Community.

23 March 2013

The PKK declared ceasefire.

29 March 2013

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that the process was developing as planned. Prime Minister Erdoğan responded to criticism from the opposition by saying that no concessions at all would be made to Öcalan and the PKK in the process, that the conditions of Öcalan's cell had been improved, and that it was not possible to take any further step.

Erdoğan added that house confinement for Öcalan was out of the question, and that claims that there would be transition to autonomous administration in the Southeast did not reflect the truth.

Umbrella organization KCK, which also includes the PKK, announced that it was necessary to form the legal ground for armed PKK members to withdraw from Turkey, and that concrete steps had to be taken.

30 March 2013

Prime Minister Erdoğan announced that PKK members would not be allowed to withdraw from Turkey with their arms, and that therefore organization members had to first disarm and then withdraw.

1 April 2013

The PKK reacted to the Prime Minister's announcement for it "to disarm", and stated that "disarmed withdrawal was not part of their agenda".

2 April 2013

Government spokesperson Bülent Arınç commented on the PKK's withdrawal process: "This is under the authority of the government. There is no ground for this to be discussed in parliament, and there shouldn't be."

KCK Executive Council member Cemil Bayık made a statement saying, "Guerrillas the Guerrilla force cannot take a single step back without receiving legal assurance".

3 April 2013

The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) delegation, formed of Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş, and also Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder, travelled to İmralı for the fourth time.

The government formed a "Wise Persons Delegation" to contribute to the solution process, featuring artists and writers such as Orhan Gencebay, Kadir İnanır, Yılmaz Erdoğan and Baskın Oran among its members.

Öcalan sent a letter to the PKK asking it to comply with the instruction to withdraw to positions beyond Turkey's borders.

4 April 2013

Prime Minister Erdoğan met for the first time with the Wise Persons' Delegation at the Prime Minister's Office in Dolmabahçe, Istanbul. Here, Erdoğan announced his message, "The solution process is a process in which arms will be set aside, and politics will be put to use".

Erdoğan said, "Now is not the time to settle accounts, but the time for both sides to give each other their blessings," and went on to add, "Now is the time to realize the law of fraternity. Now is the time to emphasize not differences but shared values, the time to bring to the fore not sorrows, but shared victories and shared joys. Now is the time not to separate, but to celebrate. Now is the time to initiate a period of social restoration, and to follow it through with determination".

4 April 2013

At a parliamentary vote, which the main opposition party CHP, and the other opposition party MHP (National Movement Party) did not attend, the "Solution Process Commission" was formed with votes in favour from the AKP and the BDP.

11 April 2013

Known publicly as the fourth judicial reform package, the "Draft Law on Amendments to Certain Laws in the Context of Human Rights and Freedom of Expression" was accepted at the General Assembly of the Parliament and became law. According to this new law, in sentencing those who carried out propaganda for a terror organization, or printed and broadcast their announcements and declarations, 'legitimizing and praising methods involving force, violence or intimidation, or the encouragement of the employment of such methods' was set as a condition.

14 April 2013

The BDP delegation travelled to İmralı for the fifth time. The delegation included BDP MPs Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder.

The BDP presented a legislative proposal for the abolishment of the village guard system at the same date. Stating that the village guard system had turned into a 'small army', the BDP argued that this system had to be disestablished as part of the normalization process.

18 April 2013

The BDP delegation conveyed PKK Leader Öcalan's five-page letter on the solution process and withdrawal to the PKK's headquarters in Qandil, Northern Iraq.

21 April 2013

News appeared on media that the construction of kalekols – fortress-like high-security military stations – and regular military stations have accelerated since the beginning of ceasefire and solution process.

23 April 2013

During the reception held at TGNA on the occasion of the National Sovereignty and Children's Day, President Abdullah Gül said "For the resolution process to continue and end with success, the terrorist organization must lay down its arms both in and out of the country," in response to a question as to whether there are any drawbacks to the resolution process.

25 April 2013

KCK Executive Council Member Murat Karayılan held a press conference at Qandil with the attendance of a large group of journalists from Turkey and international press organizations. Karayılan announced that PKK members within the borders of Turkey would begin to gradually withdraw on May 8.

Murat Karayılan stated that the organization would take the decision to disarm only as part of a process in which constitutional changes were made, and Abdullah Öcalan was freed completely. Karayılan added that the village guard system had to be abolished, and that the Special Forces and similar organizations operating within the body of the security forces of Turkey had to be disestablished.

30 April 2013

The Ministry of Justice announced that 200 suspects under arrest in the KCK trial had been released in the last two months.

1 May 2013

Nechervan Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, announced that they supported the solution process.

8 May 2013

As it had announced previously, the PKK began to withdraw from within Turkey's borders. The first phase was to involve groups exiting via the Şemdinli District of Hakkari Province to reach Iraq within a week.

The withdrawal was to be carried out in secret, and was also to be observed by the Turkish Armed Forces. At this point, the Prime Minister made a statement announcing that there were around 1500-2000 PKK members in Turkey.

9 May 2013

The Iraq Foreign Ministry announced its opposition to the entry into Iraqi territory of PKK members withdrawing from Turkey.

11 May 2013

KCK Executive Council Chairperson Murat Karayılan announced that the PKK was disturbed by the new military station and dam constructions.

16 May 2013

President Barack Obama announced their support to the solution process during Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan's official visit to the US. Obama said, "I want to take this opportunity to commend you and the Turkish people for your courage in seeking an historic and peaceful resolution of the PKK violence that has plagued Turkey for so long. And just as the United States has stood with you in your long search for security, we will support efforts in Turkey to uphold the rule of law and good governance and human rights for all."

25 May 2013

The first of the four conferences Öcalan proposed for the solution process, Democracy and Peace Conference, was held in Ankara on 25-26 May

28 May 2013

The Gezi resistance began.

8 June 2013

PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan announced that he saluted the Gezi resistance and added: "However, no one should allow themselves to be used by nationalist circles, or circles favouring a military coup." BDP MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder, who became a symbolic figure of the Gezi resistance, was excluded from the delegation to travel to İmralı.

12 June 2013

BDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş and BDP Parliamentary Group Deputy Chairperson Pervin Buldan met with PKK executives at Qandil to discuss the process. The delegation that last met with Abdullah Öcalan at İmralı on 7 June, thus conveyed Öcalan's messages to Qandil.

14 June 2013

A PKK group of 15 members that had withdrawn from within Turkey's borders reached the Metina camp in Northern Iraq.

15-16 June 2013

The "Northern Kurdistan Unity and Solution Conference" also recommended by Abdullah Öcalan in his Newroz letter, was held in Diyarbakır/Amed. The final declaration of the conference demanded freedom for Öcalan. The declaration also added that 'the peoples of Kurdistan have the right to national self-determination (such as autonomy-federation-independence) on the basis of only their own decisions and approval'. The conference also repeated the call on all international organizations and states to remove the PKK from the list of terrorist organisations.

20 June 2013

The continuing construction of kalekols, or fortress-military stations, was protested in many cities and towns. Security forces continued to apply excessive use of force and carry out executions in targeting the continuing Gezi resistance.

21 June 2013

BDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş announced that the first phase of the solution process, consisting of the declaration of ceasefire and withdrawal had concluded, and that the second phase had begun. The government was expected to take legal steps in the second phase.

25 June 2013

Wise Persons' Delegation member writer Murat Belge criticized the government's stance regarding the Gezi Park protests that began during the solution process, and resigned from his position.

26 June 2013

The final meeting of the Wise Persons' Delegation was held in Istanbul. The "Wise Persons" presented Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan the reports they prepared on the process following their work in seven regions across Turkey. Members Murat Belge, Kürşat Bumin and Baskın Oran had by this point resigned from the delegation at different times in reaction to AKP's stance against protestors during and after the Gezi resistance, and to the AKP's policy regarding the Kurdish Question.

Prime Minister Erdoğan announced that only 15% of PKK members had withdrawn from Turkey to date.

28 June 2013

Soldiers murdered Medeni Yıldırım during a protest in Lice against the construction of a kalekol [fortress-military station].

30 June 2013

The crowd gathered for a rally organized in Diyarbakır/Amed by the BDP with the slogan "Government, time to take a step!" was attacked by the police with water cannons and pepper gas, demonstrators responded by setting off fireworks and throwing stones.

5 July 2013

BDP Co-Chairperson Gültan Kışanak, speaking on behalf of the delegation visiting Qandil, stated that they were concerned about the progress of the process.

The PKK and the KCK, with the participation of around 200 people attending from Europe and other regions, held the 9th General Assembly of Kongra-Gel (Kurdistan People's Congress) in Qandil from 30 June to 5 July.

At the assembly, KCK Executive Council Chairperson Murat Karayılan was appointed as head of the HPG (People's Defence Force), the armed wing of the organization. The procedure of appointing co-chairpersons to the Executive Council was approved. Cemil Bayık and Bese Hozat became co-chairpersons.

25 July 2013

Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç stated that the withdrawal percentage of the PKK was around 20%. However, the PKK stated that the withdrawal process had been completed, and that it was necessary to initiate the second phase.

29 July 2013

PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan held a meeting with his sister Fatma Öcalan at İmralı, and pointed to the date October 1 with the words, "The government must take a step until October 1. I am not saying that I will withdraw from the process after October 1, but if no step is taken by that date, it is clear that we cannot develop the process".

12 August 2013

PYD (Democratic Union Party) - of Rojava, the de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Northern Syria - Co-Chairperson Salih Muslim visited Turkey for the second time upon an official invite from the Foreign Ministry.

15 August 2013

Head of the HPG and PKK executive Murat Karayılan announced they were preparing for a transition to “professional guerrillas”. Karayılan also said, “If the negotiations do not progress, a dangerous process will begin. The Turkish government has put too much emphasis on the importance of Rojava. The plan is to end the Kurdish people’s rule in Rojava. If Turkey were to abandon this policy, the war would end in 2 days”.

At this point, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan had not met with his lawyers since 27 July 2011. The uninterrupted sit-in action commenced by the Freedom for Öcalan Initiative in front of the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg entered its 416th day.

Preparations for the establishment of an autonomous administration in Rojava gathered speed. The project involves the establishment of a temporary administration in the region at first, and later an assembly comprising all components. PYD Co-Chairperson Asya Abdullah stated that they had entered the second phase in preparations for autonomous administration, adding, “We are including every social section in the preparations”.

16 August 2013

PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan requested that the 5 imprisoned alongside himself on İmralı Island be replaced by 8 high-ranking PKK members being held captive so that he could hold more sophisticated discussions on the solution process, and carry out an exchange of ideas.

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık said, “The Turkish State should stop coming up with excuses, and come to reason. Attacks continue on the Rojava revolution from multiple fronts”.

BDP Co-Chairperson Gültan Kışanak said, “A package prepared without taking the needs of the people into account, without addressing the people, and with an attitude of ‘I know best’ behind closed doors, will not be the remedy for the problem”.

The BestaNuçe television channel announced that the Turkish army had increased its military concentration in the Varto rural area of Muş despite the peace process, and had increased the frequency of road checks in Beytüşşebap.

16 August 2013

PYD Co-Chairperson Salih Müslim said, “Autonomy or independence are definitely not on the agenda. In Turkey, we will discuss the future of Kurds within the integrity of Syria.”

Kurds were attacked in Aydın. 10 people were injured.

17 August 2013

Jabhat al-Akrad leader Hajji Ahmed Kurdi drew attention to the fact that attacks in Rojava targeted the 117 Kurdish villages in the region, declaring that in clashes that took place yesterday and the previous day around Aleppo 2 MiT members were killed, and that they would announce their identities in the coming days.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, claimed that the percentage of guerrillas who had withdrawn following PKK Leader Abdullah Öcalan stood at 20%. Erdoğan also commented on the native divide split our country. If you do not get the timing well, then it will be a shame for our beautiful country. If you clear the way for education in native language, then you will damage the official language”.

IHH officials, facing claims that they provided support to gangs that realized the attacks and massacres in Rojava, held a meeting with BDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş and claimed they had been misunderstood and were being accused unjustly because of disinformation.

18 August 2013

The BDP delegation returned from İmralı Island, where it held a meeting with PKK Leader Abdullah Öcalan. According to the delegation’s announcement, Abdullah Öcalan said, “Our meetings and discussions with the State delegation continue. From our viewpoint, the process continues in this aspect. Until this phase I found it meaningful that my position was ascribed an instrumental value, however from this point on, my position must evolve from an instrumental to a strategic position. For me to contribute to a solution to both Turkey’s domestic problems, and also problems in the region with Syria first and foremost among them, my position must be treated strategically. I also think that for the process to progress in a healthy manner, it is necessary for the government to take practical steps regarding democratization via democratization packages to be prepared with a participatory method”.

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık stated that the AKP government displayed an unserious approach to the democratic solution process, saying, “What the AKP is preparing are not democracy packages but packages of trickery and diversion. Turkey is imposing demobilization in Rojava. If it were to succeed in that in Rojava, it will impose the same in Northern Kurdistan”.

YPG (People’s Protection Units) announced the outcome of last month’s clashes that ensued following attacks initiated by Al-Qaida affiliated groups in mid-July. According to the report, while more than 800 gang members were killed, around 80 YPG fighters lost their lives, 700 Kurdish civilians were abducted.

Following the ruling of a Denmark court to cancel the licences of Roj TV, MMC and Nuçe TV, it was announced that the broadcast of these channels would cease.

18 August 2013

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan, announced that [the issues of] native language and general amnesty would not be included in the new constitutional package.

19 August 2013

Cemil Bayık argued that Turkey was not serious about the peace process, saying, “If the process collapses, let alone the PKK’s withdrawal, those who have withdrawn to the south could return to the north. Then there may be an even greater war”.

HPG made a statement, saying, “The announced statistics constitute a complete distortion of facts. Our forces have fulfilled their task for the current period. The statement of the Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan claiming, ‘promises have not been kept, only 20% have withdrawn’ do not reflect the truth”.

20 August 2013

PKK Leader Abdullah Öcalan was transferred to a larger room in İmralı Prison.

HPG made a statement, announcing, “The Turkish army and Turkish State have taken no steps whatsoever to stop its operations aiming at destruction”.

It was announced that the Kurdish National Congress would be held in Hewler/Erbil on 15, 16, 17 September. It was stated that 600 delegates and 300 guests would participate in the congress.

A delegation, formed during the Congress, went to Rojava to carry out examinations. The Rojava delegation carried out its first contacts yesterday in Dêrik, in areas bombed by the regime’s helicopters.

Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan said, “the steps that have been taken are being overlooked. We are conducting the solution process with determination and patience”.

21 August 2013

Rallies were held in Yüksekova, Siirt, Batman, Mersin and Adana to draw attention to the prison conditions of Abdullah Öcalan and seriously ill prisoners.

22 August 2013

Wise Persons Delegation member Celalettin Can travelled to Qandil, where he held a meeting with KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık. Bayık said, “Skepticism regarding the process has increased. We are trying to draw the AKP towards democracy. We are a movement that has a discourse and determination. We do not need to blackmail anyone. We want the problem to be solved not by war but politics. We are not considering armed struggle at present”.

“We Want Justice” actions for the 3 women massacred in Paris on January 9 continue.

23 August 2013

The KCK Executive Council Directorate issued a call to the people of Rojava to not abandon the country. In a statement, the Directorate said, “The stance of the South Kurdistan government encourages the gangs attacking Rojava, and Turkey, that urges them to attack. Instead of taking steps, the government has opted for diversion and demobilization”.

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan stated that they would announce the democratization package in 1-2 weeks. Erdoğan said, “We will never end operations in this country before disarmament takes place. We endured certain intolerable incidents in order not to carry out operations”.

24 August 2013

In the Taşdelen village of the Uludere district of Şırnak, the people rallied to the dam construction site where work recently began.

25 August 2013

Local media reports stated that special forces units were carrying out ‘OHAL’ [Emergency State] practices in Van’s Çatak district, and that the people reacted especially against checkpoints and controls.

The BDP Bitlis Provincial Organization and local NGOs announced that mass graves of guerrillas murdered in Bitlis in 1993 were destroyed following an attack by an armoured police vehicle and a digger.

26 August 2013

HPG made a statement, saying, “We are withdrawing, however, we have taken no steps other than halting our operations. The forces that have withdrawn are not elderly or sick”.

The final declaration of the Language Conference held in Diyarbakır/Amed stated the decisions, “TZP-KURDÎ [Kurdish Intellectuals and Linguists from Turkey and Northern Iraq, the Kurdish Education and Language Movement] perceives education in the native language as an inalienable right. All Kurdish institutes and institutions must hold a collective debate on education in the native language. In Kurdish language education, history, literature, geography and culture courses will be presented in addition to grammar courses”.

27 August 2013

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık announced that they were going to stop the withdrawal if they did not see a concrete step from the government by September 1, and that the armed forces that had withdrawn to positions outside Turkey's borders would return. Cemil Bayık said, "If they fulfill their responsibilities, I hope this process can be saved from collapsing. That would be to the benefit of all. Otherwise, we might witness terrible consequences".

The request of PKK Leader Abdullah Öcalan's lawyers for a meeting with their client was refused.

In Mardin's Nusaybin district, thousands of women from both sides of the border came together. The vigil held at the Nusaybin-Qamişlo border was ended in the morning.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that they would on no account make concessions regarding the first three articles of the Constitution. It was announced that the AKP would withdraw its proposal for the relevant article to declare, 'The official language is Turkish' and support the proposal of the CHP and MHP, which declares, 'The language is Turkish'.

29 August 2013

Interior Minister Muammer Güler announced that the expected outcome from the first phase of the solution process could not be achieved.

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık said, "the Hizmet Movement is opposed to a solution".

30 August 2013

BDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş stated that the government was informed about the dates the PKK had given, but that they no longer had any hope that this calendar would be met.

PKK made a statement, saying, "AKP is preparing for war. They want to expel Kurds from Rojava".

1 September 2013

KCK Executive Council Directorate issued a message on the occasion of September 1, World Peace Day, stating that wars for power have left the Middle East facing a blind alley in the full sense of the word. The statement read, "The just peace project initiated by Leader Apo is about to be cut off by an 'integrated strategy'. Forces of democracy must prevent this. We will respond to the AKP's diversion policies on September 1".

9 September 2013

PKK announced that it had stopped its withdrawal because the government was not taking steps on democratization and the solution of the Kurdish question. On the same day, the BDP announced that it was going to participate in the 2014 local elections under the People's Democratic Party (HDP) banner as well as BDP.

10 September 2013

PKK announced that since May 8 when they initiated withdrawal, 29 groups composed of around 600 people had withdrawn to positions outside Turkey.

Following a Security Summit on the solution process held at the Prime Minister's Office, the government's determination in the continuation of the process was emphasized.

15 September 2013

A BDP delegation featuring Selahattin Demirtaş and Pervin Buldan made a critical visit to İmralı following the stalling of the solution process and PKK's announcement that it had stopped withdrawal. Öcalan had met with intelligence officials during the same week. Following this tenth meeting, the BDP delegation announced Öcalan's messages: "My opinion is that it is necessary to continue the dialogue process we initiated a year ago with a new format from now on, in other words, by evolving and deepening the process into meaningful negotiations. I have communicated the means and tools necessary for meaningful negotiations to both the State and Qandil. It is of utmost importance for the progress of the process for especially the State to create the adequate tools and means for in-depth negotiations. At this stage, I would like to declare that I find it worthy of mention that the state of reciprocal ceasefire is being observed. We are all aware that the process is highly meaningful. However, we all also know that it will be tough and arduous as much as it is meaningful."

30 September 2013

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced the "Democratization Package". BDP and DTK stated that the package had turned out to be empty.

17 October 2013

BDP Co-Chairperson Gültan Kışanak, commenting on the wall to be built along the Rojava border, said, "We will not allow that wall to be built, even if it costs us our lives".

20 October 2013

Cemil Bayık demanded the improvement of Öcalan's conditions, the establishment of a legal platform, and the inclusion of a third party for the continuation of the process.

3 November 2013

BDP voiced its reaction against the detentions and arrests of its members. The BDP Diyarbakır/Amed Provincial Organization announced that "the process would come to an end if things continue in this manner".

9 November 2013

Sırrı Süreyya Önder was re-included in the İmralı delegation. Önder announced that at their meeting Öcalan had said, “The solution process has come to a serious stage. Although the process is continuing, it is now on the narrow bridge of judgment. Despite all the negative developments, we are determined to sustain the will for peace, even if it is unilateral”.

10 November 2013

The Kurdish National Congress, the last of the four conferences proposed by Öcalan, and the most critical stage, was postponed for the third time.

12 November 2013

A Constituent Assembly of 82 members was formed for the Western Kurdistan Interim Administration in progress in Rojava.

16 November 2013

Şivan Perwer, the singer from Urfa who had lived in exile for 37 years, and Masoud Barzani, the President of the Iraqi Kurdistan [autonomous] Region came together in Diyarbakır/Amed. Barzani declared his support for the solution process. Şivan Perwer duetted with singer İbrahim Tatlıses on the song ‘Megri’ (Don’t Cry).

Prime Minister Erdoğan visited the Diyarbakır/Amed Metropolitan Municipality for the first time in the 11 years he has been in power, where he held a meeting with Mayor Osman Baydemir.

20 November 2013

Erdoğan stated that it was impossible for them to accept Osman Baydemir’s definition of “Kurdistan of Turkey”.

2 December 2013

The Solution Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) presented its report to parliament. Commission Chairperson Naci Bostancı said, “it has been determined that the solution process has established a negative peace, and that something needs to be done to orient it towards a positive peace”.

3 December 2013

Cemil Bayık stated that they had given the government time until Spring 2014, and if no steps were taken, clashes could resume.

4 December 2013

Leyla Zana, speaking at the conference on 'The European Union, (EU) Turkey and the Kurds' held at the European Parliament, stated that the peace process initiated during the AKP's term in government was different than others. Zana said, "The difference of the İmralı peace process from previous attempts at peace is that it is being carried out personally by the two people with a real say in the question, by two powerful leaders. Esteemed Mr. Öcalan's influence over Kurdish public opinion is indisputable in the same way that Prime Minister Erdoğan's influence is over Turkish public opinion".

17 December 2013

HDP co-chairpersons Sebahat Tuncel and Ertuğrul Kürkçü and members of parliament Levent Tüzel and Sırrı Süreyya Önder began a hunger strike in Parliament in protest of the failure to release imprisoned BDP members of parliament.

24 December 2013

For the first time in 12 years, new photographs of PKK Leader Abdullah Öcalan were broadcast by Dicle News Agency (DİHA). In photographs of Öcalan alone, and with BDP delegation members, it was seen that his hair had turned grey and that he had put on weight.

8 January 2014

The Presidency of General Staff announced that an operation had been carried out in Bingöl's Genç district in order to determine the location of and neutralize PKK members.

11 January 2014

Pervin Buldan and İdris Baluken from BDP, and Sırrı Süreyya Önder from HDP held the 14th meeting with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan at İmralı Prison. The visit of the BDP-HDP delegation was the first visit after the corruption and bribery operation on 17 December which led to the escalation of the clash between the government and the Hizmet Movement. Öcalan, commenting on the clash between the government and the Hizmet Movement, said, "Those who want once again to turn the country into bedlam by igniting the fire of a coup, should know that we will not pour gasoline onto such a fire. We will stand in the way of every attempt at carrying out a coup, as we have done until now". Having met with the State delegation on 7 December, and his niece Dilek Öcalan on 23 December, Öcalan had said, "Our meetings with the State delegation are continuing. Our most recent meetings have been positive. The progress of meetings bodes well for now".

17 January 2014

Abdullah Öcalan's new photographs were shared on social media. In the photographs, Öcalan posed with members of parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Pervin Buldan and İdris Baluken, who were visiting him. The photographs of Abdullah Öcalan and the İmralı delegation were taken by a prison official.

20 January 2014

Letters Abdullah Öcalan wrote to organization administrators in Europe and Qandil were delivered by the BDP delegation. The letters in which Öcalan provided detailed information about the withdrawal of armed forces to positions beyond the border were delivered to Qandil by BDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş and HDP Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder, and to Brussels by Pervin Buldan.

Kongra-Gel Chairperson and former DEP Member of Parliament Remzi Kartal stated that PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan granted the government time for the solution of the Kurdish question until the end of the election period. Speaking to the Hawlati newspaper published in Iraq, Kartal criticized relationships between Turkey and the Iraqi Kurdish Autonomous Region.

21 January 2014

PYD declared autonomy in the Rojava region in the north of Syria where the majority of the population is Kurdish.

25 January 2014

Leyla Zana became the first person other than BDP delegations and HDP MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder to hold a meeting with Abdullah Öcalan at İmralı Island. HDP Istanbul Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder and Independent Member of Parliament Leyla Zana travelled to İmralı Island. BDP Group Deputy Chairperson Pervin Buldan announced that there would be no change in the composition of the delegations that regularly visited İmralı Island.

26 January 2014

BDP Group Deputy Chairpersons Pervin Buldan and İdris Baluken travelled to the Iraqi Kurdish Autonomous Region to hold a meeting with the KCK administration. Details of the meeting held on January 11 with the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was on the agenda of the meeting in Qandil. The BDP delegation also took delivery from KCK executives of the response to the 20-page letter Öcalan gave them to be conveyed to Qandil in their January 11 meeting.

8 February 2014

Members of parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder, İdris Baluken and Pervin Buldan travelled to İmralı Island to hold a meeting with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. Qandil's demand for 'a legal ground to be established for the solution process' was discussed at the meeting.

11 February 2014

PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's letter was delivered to Iraqi Kurdistan Autonomous Region President by members of parliament Leyla Zana ve Sırrı Süreyya Önder. Leyla Zana said, "We witnessed that Barzani and Öcalan's views regarding the freedom of the peoples of the region and the Kurdish people were close".

A court issued a verdict for the removal from billboards of posters hung up in Diyarbakır/Amed featuring a new photograph of the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. The poster featured the BDP's call for participation in events to be organized on the anniversary of 15 February 1999, the date when Öcalan was captured in Kenya and brought to Turkey.

13 February 2014

Abdullah Öcalan voiced his demand for the government to form a delegation for negotiations, the acceleration of legal steps, and increase of the frequency of visits to İmralı. His proposals were announced by members of parliament in the İmralı delegation.

2 March 2014

The Democratization Package was accepted at the General Assembly of Parliament. The package enabled private schools to provide education in Kurdish, and election propaganda in Kurdish at elections. Parties receiving over 3 percent of the vote will qualify for State benefit.

9 March 2014

İdris Baluken, Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder held the last meeting with Abdullah Öcalan before the local elections to be held on 30 March. Öcalan told the BDP-HDP delegation that the last meeting he held with the State delegation had been positive, and that he retained his hope. Öcalan described the 30 March elections as a referendum for peace, and announced that he would issue a new letter on Newroz.

15 March 2014

Prior to Abdullah Öcalan's upcoming announcement on March 21 for Newroz, a message in contrast to Öcalan's most recent positive message was issued by Qandil. KCK announced that the government 'was no longer the addressee of the democratization move'.

17 March 2014

Murat Karayılan, PKK executive in Qandil, stated that the government had not fulfilled its responsibilities in the solution process for the Kurdish question. According to Karayılan, the PKK will not disarm as long as Abdullah Öcalan remains in prison. Murat Karayılan argued that the process for the solution of the Kurdish question would end if the government did not take steps immediately after the election, saying: “The plan was for the declaration of ceasefire, and the withdrawal of the guerrilla forces -this has been done. We declared ceasefire and initiated the withdrawal. The process has not ended completely, but it is being implemented unilaterally. It is Chairperson Apo and we who are carrying out the process. The process has reached an impasse. It cannot continue unilaterally until the end. If steps are not taken within one or two weeks after the election, everyone should know that the process has ended.”

18 March 2014

The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that Turkey had ‘partly violated’ the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) following PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan’s complaint about his conditions of detention. The Court in Strasbourg, investigating the complaint regarding Article 3, held that there had been a violation as to the conditions of his detention up to 17 November 2009, the date until which Öcalan had been kept in social isolation. The court held that there had been no violation in the subsequent period. The ECtHR also held unanimously that there had been a violation of Article 3 as regards his sentence to life imprisonment without any possibility of conditional release. The ECtHR saw no need for compensation, and held that Turkey was to pay Öcalan 25,000 Euros in respect of costs and expenses.

Speaking to Al Jazeera Türk, the television news channel, BDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş described the KCK statement that contrasted with Öcalan’s statement, as a ‘stern warning’ to the government, adding, “It was Mr. Öcalan who initiated the process, and any statement that will end it can also only come from him”.

Following the coming into force of the new law that abolished Specially Authorized Courts and restricted the maximum period of detention to 5 years, 9 lawyers and one writer detained within the scope of the KCK trial were released. This meant that no defendants in the ‘KCK lawyers’ trial remained in detention.

26 April 2014

The Law on Amendments to the State Intelligence Services and National Intelligence Organization [MIT] Law, alleged to have been introduced to protect MIT officials assigned in the solution process, was published in the Official Gazette. The new law included the clause, “MIT members, in carrying out their duties, may communicate and may order meetings with detainees and convicts in penal institutions on condition that they provide advance notice, and may as part of the requirements of their duty, contact all structures threatening national security, including terror organizations”.

28 April 2014

All BDP members of parliament other than Selahattin Demirtaş and Sırrı Sakık transferred to the HDP. This was followed by the Peace and Democracy Party [BDP] changing its name to 'Democratic Regions Party' [DBP], withdrawing from parliament, and reorienting its activities to Kurdistan. The Kurdish movement, and socialists of Turkey entered the 30 March local elections with candidates supported by the BDP in the east, and by the HDP in the west. The Peoples' Democratic Party [HDP] had been spearheaded by the Peoples' Democratic Congress, realized on 15-16 October 2011 in Ankara jointly by the Kurdish movement, and socialists of Turkey. A year after the HDK's foundation, on 15 October 2012, the HDP had announced its foundation, and BDP members of parliament had gradually transferred to the HDP.

29 April 2014

Minister of Justice Bekir Bozdağ said, "We are not working on, nor do we have any plan to allow home confinement for Abdullah Öcalan".

4 May 2014

In Lice, the public ended its 12-day vigil action after it was promised that military/police station constructions would end.

7 May 2014

European PKK trial lawyers held a press conference in the Netherlands for the lifting of the ban on the PKK. At the conference, the lawyers stated that it was necessary for the EU to lift the ban on the PKK for a solution to be possible.

Lice Co-Mayor Rêzan Zoroğlu was sentenced to 4,5 year imprisonment on grounds of 'membership of a terror organization'.

8 May 2014

Abdullah Öcalan's lawyers' petition, presented to hold a meeting with their client, was rejected by the Prosecutor's Office.

PKK Executive Council Member Duran Kalkan criticized the AKP government that had taken no concrete steps whatsoever despite a year having passed since the beginning of the solution process. Kalkan said, "A lack of solution to this problem is a threat to everyone. The AKP is exploiting the continuation of this contradictory situation of clashes. The AKP uses its own press to make it appear as if it has done things it hasn't. Everyone is aware of everything that was promised to be done after the elections, however, 40 days have passed since the elections, nothing has been done, and their approach displays a complete lack of seriousness. The legal regulation passed for MİT is aimed at attacks on PKK personnel. The conditions to provide truce are absent. We saw what happened on May 1, and how the AKP's police attacked the people. The recent process has shown nothing but efforts to consolidate the AKP's position in power. In the new year, there has been no ceasefire, but actual circumstances. If no steps are taken, if there is no response to Leader Apo's projects, and if the oppression of the people continues, then both the guerrillas and the people will intervene in the process".

8 May 2014

The number of Syrian refugees in Turkey passed 1,5 million.

9 May 2014

An ISIS ring-member arrested by YPG public security forces made confessions stating that Al Qaida had a military recruitment bureau in the Reyhanlı district of Hatay, and that ring-members hosted there for a few days were then sent to Rojava.

Local newspapers reported that as the Peace Process and the withdrawal of guerrillas continued, the Turkish State had built 341 new military stations and 900 km.s of military roads, and that 2 thousand new village guards had been trained.

10 May 2014

Sending a letter to the Democratic Islam Congress held in Diyarbakır/Amed, Abdullah Öcalan stated that a pluralist, equal and democratic Islam was a necessity, that an interpretation of Islam on the side of the government and the State contradicted the essence of Islam, that Islam represented universality in a manner befitting the last religion, and that a just democracy had to be the main reference point in keeping with the essence of Islam, adding, “Our movement is a contemporary synthesis of Saladini and Husayni movements”.

In a written statement, the KCK Executive Council Co-Directorate condemned gang attacks carried out on Êzidis in South Kurdistan.

10 May 2014

Reacting against the construction of a new military station in the Silvan district of Diyarbakır/Amed, the people demolished the station.

12 May 2014

7 journalist under arrest within the scope of the Free Press trial were released.

In a written statement made on the occasion of Kurdish Language Celebration Day, the KCK Language Council Co-Directorate said, “Our Kurdish People must build education in its own mother tongue”.

14 May 2014

HPG made a statement announcing that 2 soldiers had died and 1 soldier had been injured in clash that took place in Diyarbakır/Amed between guerrillas and the army.

17 May 2014

HPG made a statement announcing that a clash took place between guerrillas and soldiers in Dersim. An HDP Delegation travelled to South Kurdistan to hold a meeting with KCK officials.

19 May 2014

The vigil held in Yüksekova in protest of military station constructions entered its 28th day.

23 May 2014

The Human Rights Association announced that there were 641 seriously-ill convicts and detainees in prisons.

HPG made a statement announcing that they had carried out an arson attack on vehicles at the site of the İlisu Dam, and that they had fired warning shots on a military station in Şemdinli.

The BDP Istanbul provincial organization sent 37 trailer trucks full of aid it had collected to Rojava. 10 people were released in the KCK Batman trial.

24 May 2014

13 of the 14 defendants arrested in 2011 in the Dicle district of Diyarbakır/Amed on charges of “aiding and abetting an illegal organization” within the scope of the KCK investigation were released.

Ultra-nationalists attacked Kurdish students at Kayseri Erciyes University, injuring 2 students.

27 May 2014

Abdullah Öcalan’s lawyers filed an application at the prosecutor’s office to hold a meeting with their client.

Clashes that ensued following protests against the construction of a military station in the Lice district of Diyarbakır/Amed continued for 4 days. The Bingöl road motorway was sealed off.

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan, addressing the BDP, said, “You will go and bring back the young people who have taken to the mountains, if you do not do that, we will launch our B and C plans”. The HPG General Headquarters Command issued a written statement responding to Tayyip Erdoğan’s words, ‘The PKK is abducting children,’ saying, “Everyone who joins the ranks of the PKK and the Guerrillas volunteer to do so, we cannot keep anyone by force who does not volunteer, and the age limit to join our ranks is set. As the HPG, we abide by the agreements we have made, the Turkish State is trying to prevent participation in the guerrilla movement. It is impossible for us to enter into war persons who are under the age limit, all our patriotic families must be sensitive against psychological warfare. This is a smear campaign, the Special Warfare Bureau is carrying out a new campaign of psychological warfare, we urge our people to be vigilant”.

Clashes took place between police and youth protesting kalekol constructions in the Cizre district of Şırnak, and Nusaybin district of Mardin.

27 May 2014

Construction of 4 new towers began at the Gölyazı Battalion in Roboski.

As secrecy order was brought for the lawsuit launched regarding the trailer trucks intercepted at the Rojava border and reportedly belonging to MİT and carrying weapons to gangs, a broadcast ban was also imposed on the subject.

29 June 2014

Hatip Dicle was released. Dicle had been elected Diyarbakır/Amed Member of Parliament as a candidate of the Labour, Democracy and Freedom Bloc in the 12 June 2011 general election, however his mandate was rescinded by the Supreme Electoral Council, handing over the mandate to AKP candidate Oya Eronat, who had received a significantly lower number of votes. Hatip Dicle had previously been detained on 2 March 1994 after his immunity as DEP Member of Parliament was removed, and after remaining imprisoned for ten years, had been released in 2004 along with Leyla Zana, Orhan Doğan and Selim Sadak. Once again arrested on 24 December 2009 within the scope of KCK operations, Dicle had won the parliamentary election in prison.

8 July 2014

HDP Co-Chairperson Figen Yüksekdağ stated that the release of all political prisoners including Öcalan, the abolishment of the Anti-Terror Law, and the urgent facilitation of education in native language were necessary for the establishment of peace.

10 July 2014

The TBMM General Assembly accepted and passed into law the “Draft Law on the Termination of Terror and Strengthening of Social Integration”, also known as the “Framework Law”.

11 July 2014

No detainees remained in the scope of the Main KCK Trial held in Diyarbakır/Amed following the release of two detained defendants.

5 August 2014

Öcalan, in a meeting with his lawyer, declared that he was troubled by the failure to begin negotiations in the solution process, and that he had reached the end of his patience.

18 August 2014

A military operation was carried out in the Lice district of Diyarbakır/Amed on a statue of Mahsum Korkmaz, and soldiers demolished the statue. A person named Mehdi Taşkın was murdered during the operation.

20 August 2014

MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan travelled to İmralı Island where he held a meeting with Abdullah Öcalan. Deputy Prime Minister Beşir Atalay stated that it was their desire to now broaden meetings to include Europe and Qandil.

23 August 2014

Responding to Deputy Prime Minister Beşir Atalay's statement, "It is my desire to hold direct meetings with Qandil," KCK Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık said, "We are always open to such meetings. It could be done via the press, or via delegations, or international institutions".

27 August 2014

Ahmet Davutoğlu became AKP Chairperson and Prime Minister. Tayyip Erdoğan claimed that he would be closely involved in the solution process during his term as President as well.

29 August 2014

Beşir Atalay was not named in newly appointed Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's cabinet, while Yalçın Akdoğan, claimed to be one of the first advocates of the "Sri Lanka model", became Deputy Prime Minister. BDP Member of Parliament İdris Baluken announced that the solution process would enter the "negotiations" phase in the coming days, and that they wanted the agreed outcomes reached in the negotiations to also become a written agreement.

30 August 2014

Chief of General Staff Necdet Özel made a statement, saying, "The government did not ask us our opinion regarding the road map, we are finding out about it from the press. We wish that our view had been sought. The government said the problem would be solved without arms, we do not want mothers to cry. If the red lines of the solution process are transgressed we will give the necessary answer".

2 September 2014

The Kurdish public is preparing for a 1-week school boycott demanding the right for education in native language.

The martyrs' cemetery built for guerrillas in the Mawan town of Siirt was demolished by the soldiers. The people held a vigil at the martyrs' cemetery through the night.

7 September 2014

The HDP delegation travelled to İmralı Island to hold a meeting with Abdullah Öcalan.

The 7th Ordinary Congress of the Democratic Society Congress continued. Calls for National Unity, and freedom for the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan were emphasized. Hatip Dicle and Selma Irmak became the new DTK co-chairpersons. DTK Co-Chairperson Selma Irmak said, “We have continued our freedom march for 30 years, and we no doubt owe this freedom march to Esteemed Mr. Öcalan and our People”.

KCK made a statement, saying, “Opening private schools in Kurdistan constitutes no progress. Our people should collectively boycott Turkish schools”.

10 September 2014

The KCK Executive Council Directorate issued a statement assessing police operations on the newly opened schools that carried out education in Kurdish, saying, “The AKP does not miss an opportunity to display its intolerance towards the values of the Kurdish people”.

11 September 2014

The Peace Mothers issued a call, saying, “Do not send your children to Turkish schools”.

Military units carried out an operation on a school carrying out education in Kurdish in the Lice district of Diyarbakır/Amed, a clash ensued with the crowd [that had gathered]. In Cizre, all preparations were completed for a school to begin carrying out education in Kurdish.

12 September 2014

Mahir Çetin was beaten to death in Antalya for speaking Kurdish in public.

14 September 2014

The KCK Education and Language Committee made a statement, saying, “A people that loses its language, also loses its culture, history and identity. All families in Kurdistan must support the boycott on schools”.

15 September 2014

ISIS laid siege on Kobani, a town across the border from the Suruç district of Urfa.

20 September 2014

At least 60 thousand civilians entered Suruç, following the Kobani siege of ISIS. On the same day, as a result of “diplomatic negotiations” the AKP carried out with ISIS, 49 hostages including Turkey’s Mosul Consul were handed over. Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmuş travelled to Suruç, where he announced that the number of people entering Turkey from Kobani had reached 60 thousand. Kurtulmuş said, “We would like to express once again that ISIS is not a cause but an effect. If you do not allow masses in Syria and Iraq that form the great majority of the people to be included in political participation processes, if you pave the way to all manners of instability in Syria and Iraq, and if you do not allow means for people to express themselves, then you may defeat ISIS today, but God forbid, tomorrow you will face something else”.

30 September 2014

Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç announced that a Solution Process Council would be formed for the solution process to succeed.

30 September 2014

Öcalan granted the government time until 15 October 2014 for it to take new steps in the solution process.

6-12 October 2014

As ISIS’s siege of Kobani entered its first month, a new dynamic was triggered in Turkey. In response to the KCK and HDP’s “call for permanent action”, people took to the streets. Following incidents that led to the deaths of 49 people in around 40 cities, curfews were imposed in many cities. Many groups clashed with each other (followers of HDP-Free Cause Party (HÜDA PAR) in the east, and followers of HDP and nationalist groups in the west). In clashes, during which many people were also injured, many workplaces, public buildings, party headquarters and municipal buildings in city centres were arsoned. The killing of two police officers in an attack on the Bingöl Police Department, and an attack carried out on a military post in Tunceli, led to a questioning of the future of the Solution Process, which is about to enter its second year. The protests were ended by a call from Öcalan. Öcalan reminded that the solution process and Kobani were parts of an inseparable whole.

9 October 2014

As the Kobani protests continued, Bingöl Police Deputy Chief Atif Şahin and superintendent Hüseyin Hatipoğlu lost their lives in an attack that took place in Bingöl. A broadcast ban was imposed on the incident. A short while after the attack, 4 people, claimed to be the perpetrators of the incident, were murdered by the police in a vehicle stopped in the Genç district of Bingöl. However, it emerged that the bullets that killed the police officers did not belong to the firearms of discovered in the possession of the 4 murdered persons. The parliamentary inquiry proposed by the HDP was rejected in parliament with countervotes from AKP MPs.

10 October 2014

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu made a statement regarding the 4 persons killed in Genç: “Terrorists, in a position of being the perpetrators of the attack, were punished within one-or-two hours”. Davutoğlu’s words were criticized as a sign of the government adopting extrajudicial killing as a method of punishment.

11 October 2014

Cemil Bayık held the government responsible of incidents in Kobani and Turkey, adding that the resolution that the Parliament had passed was a declaration of war, and that therefore they had sent back all the units they had withdrawn from Turkey.

12 October 2014

In a speech he made in Gümüşhane, President Erdoğan also commented on the 4 persons executed in Genç, saying, “The murderers of the security forces were immediately tracked down and captured dead”.

19 October 2014

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu held a meeting with the Wise Persons Delegation. At the meeting, after which only Davutoğlu’s speech was shared with the public, the Prime Minister stated that “the solution process had 3 characteristics”, naming them as: “It is national, it is local domestic, it is unique”.

21 October 2014

Having held a meeting with the HDP delegation, Abdullah Öcalan was expected to make a critical statement. After the meeting, the delegation conveyed Abdullah Öcalan’s words, “The stage we have arrived at in the solution process has suffered a rupture. The most important reason of this rupture is the government’s attempt to set the form of relationship it has tried to develop with me within a mechanics of instrumentalization. It has now been realized in its full reality that this is not an approach suitable to the gravity of the issue we are trying to solve. At this point, all parties to the solution have adequately comprehended the narrowness of this approach, and that it won’t serve a solution. I would like to express that, as of October 15, we have entered a new phase regarding the process that closely concerns the democratic future of Turkey, and permanent peace in our region, and that my hope for a successful practice in the process has increased in this sense”.

23 October 2014

Gendarmerie units of the Turkish Armed Forces killed three PKK members in a moving vehicle in the Kağızman district of Kars.

25 October 2014

In the Yüksekova district of Hakkâri, three soldiers were killed by masked persons in the market place. The PKK announced that it had not issued an order for attack. A broadcast ban was imposed on the incident.

28 October 2014

Government Spokesperson Bülent Arınç, making a statement following a Cabinet meeting, said, “From our point of view, the solution process continues. They should not expect us to remain silent regarding recent incidents of violence because this process is continuing. Those who have close ties with İmralı and Qandil are turning a blind eye to the nation’s pain. In contrast, they are accusing the government with failing to take precautions. As if these incidents have not taken place in Turkey, he says there will be a secretariat, and what not. At a time when public sensitivity is so intense, when the blood of our soldiers and our police is still on the ground, we will not hold a person in esteem who says there should be a secretariat. We are taking steps in accordance with the decisions we have taken and by the authority vested in us by Parliament. (...) We do not take the dates given to us by the organization into consideration. We do not like to issue threats. When this business is over, we shall say so, and end it. We are not obliged to carry out the solution process. We attach great importance to it for the sake of Turkey’s future. We want to conclude this business. It will be concluded in Parliament. But if it is made out to appear as if it is only us who wants the solution process, or that we are obliged to carry it out, and everyone else will harm it at will, then no, that’s not how it is going to be. If the solution process fails, then everyone will bear the blame, including the person on the island. We are acting in a very subtle and sensitive way. Everyone has to act as sensitive as us. We won’t be the party to end this. These meetings are carried out by the mediation of MIT. We are not about to issue information to the public every day, on the hour. We should not be facing questions about information exploited by TVs and radios affiliated with the organization. We are determined, but it is also our right to expect others to share this determination”.

29 October 2014

Van Independent Member of Parliament Aysel Tuğluk, in an article she published on an internet site, stated that the AKP was no longer a partner in the solution process.

3 November 2014

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, when reminded of HDP Group Deputy Chairperson Pervin Buldan’s statement that they would issue a call to the government to get back on track the solution process that had been suspended by the government because of public order issues and to reopen channels of dialogue, said, “Our negotiations will continue if the HDP continues to act within the framework of the laws. We will address them only if they remain outside incidents involving violence, terror, unpermitted actions, and actions that lead to the loss of life and property, and take a stance against such actions”.

In a press conference they held at the TBMM, HDP members of parliament Pervin Buldan, İdris Baluken and Sırrı Süreyya Önder responded to Davutoğlu. Önder said, “We have done everything in our share for the peace process, and we declare to the whole world that we are prepared to continue doing so. We rejected this manner of speech, and all such approaches. It is no one’s right, and it oversteps the limit to comment on what any of our institutions involved in politics in this field resemble, or to determine what they should look like”.

4 November 2014

A person entering the HDP Ankara Provincial Headquarters seriously injured Party Caucus member Ahmet Karataş. Ahmet Davutoğlu announced that the attacker had been captured a short while after the incident.

5 November 2014

Selahattin Demirtaş became the target of a verbal attack on a Diyarbakır/Amed-Ankara flight, carried out by a person who was later revealed to be a member of HÜDA PAR. HÜDA PAR is stated [claimed] to be an extension of the State-supported Hizbullah, infamous for murders carried out in the 1990s. A law change that reduced periods of detention and came into force on 31 December 2010 had led to the release of imprisoned Hizbullah administrators, who later disappeared. Widespread public opinion exists regarding the AKP's support for HÜDA PAR against the Kurdish movement.

9 November 2014

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan responded to questions as to whether the Solution Process continued. Akdoğan stated that the Solution Process was experiencing turbulence in the aftermath of the 6-12 October Kobani protests, saying, "I assume meetings between the State and İmralı are continuing".

12 November 2014

HDP Honorary President and Mersin Member of Parliament Ertuğrul Kürkçü stated that the process had suffered congestion because of the government's failure to take tangible steps, and that the return to a security policy on the pretext of the Kobani protests had increased oppression, adding, "We are nevertheless making an effort to revive the process".

15 November 2014

AKP Deputy Chairperson Mehmet Ali Şahin stated that their expectation was the PKK's disarmament and withdrawal from Turkey.

16 November 2014

HDP Group Deputy Chairperson Pervin Buldan stated that the solution process meetings, suspended by the government because of the 6-12 October Kobani protests, would restart.

17 November 2014

Meetings suspended because of the 6-7 October Incidents restarted with a meeting held between a HDP delegation formed of Pervin Buldan, Sırrı Süreyya Önder and İdris Baluken and Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan. At the meeting, the matter of the formation of an Observation Committee that would act as a third eye [party] in the process was also discussed.

18 November 2014

Prime Minister Davutoğlu commented on KCK Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık's recently voiced demand for an inclusion of a foreign State in the Solution Process, saying: "There will be no foreign eye, or in other words, a third eye. The solution process is a natural outcome of the democratization process. We already have the wise persons committee. There can be no external eye. We already tried that at Oslo. Oslo was a mediated process and we saw how that concluded. It did not work."

19 November 2014

Making a statement to the Kurdish language daily Azadiya Welat, KCK Executive Council member and People's Defense Central (HSM) Headquarters Commander Murat Karayılan, commented on Abdullah Öcalan's 2013 Declaration, saying, "It could be said that it was announced upon being accepted by both parties". Karayılan pointed out that this was followed by the guerrilla withdrawing to positions outside the border following the declaration of ceasefire, and that in the second phase the State had to take certain steps in the context of legal measures, and that this would be followed by the third phase, normalization. Karayılan indicated the State's failure to fulfill the requirements of the second phase was the reason the withdrawal had been halted, revealing the AKP's intention with the following words: "They only did a single thing. They passed a law. The AKP, as a whole, approaches the issue with the election in mind. The Presidential elections were coming. It wasn't clear whether he would win. They wanted the truce process to continue. However, the Kurdish side demanded that a step was taken. So they passed a law. They developed no legal measures other than the framework law. They did not fulfill requirements in practice either. They did not comply with ceasefire conditions either."

Karayılan underlined that the government's aim was to "dissolve the process by extending it over a period of time," listing the conditions the State had to fulfill in the ceasefire process as follows: "First, no new military stations must be built. Second, the construction of dams that flood the lands of Kurdistan, and that aim in essence to restrict the guerrilla's room for maneuver must be stopped. And again, the construction of military roads must be given up".

Karayılan also responded to Arınç's statement, 'We are not obliged to carry out a solution process' saying: "As if we are desperate for it. That is not the case. The hand of Kurdish politics is stronger than it ever has been. Bülent Arınç and all state officials should now that the PKK has many options. Especially in this period when the Kurdish question has entered the agenda in all its aspects and has gained public support, all barriers of the past have been demolished. The PKK needs no one in this period. However, there can be no doubt that the Kurdish people and the people of Turkey feel the need for peace, fraternity, friendship and coexistence. Yet everyone should know that no one needs the AKP".

21 November 2014

HDP Group Deputy Chairperson Pervin Buldan stated that the visit to İmralı Prison would from now on be carried out by a delegation of five persons, and a total of 25-30 persons would work on the process including the observation committee, an expanded negotiations delegation and a secretariat.

Selahattin Demirtaş stated that the CHP, too, should be included in the process.

28 November 2014

AKP Deputy Chairperson Beşir Atalay stated that the road map of the solution process would sooner or later inevitably involve disarmament, and the legal regulation by the State of the return home of guerrillas. “Then comes a period without arms and violence, and everyone’s involvement in politics. That is the ultimate target.”

29 November 2014

CHP Chairperson Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, speaking at a CHP Regional Meeting in Diyarbakır/Amed, said that the Kurdish question was one of the main issues Turkey faced. The CHP leader added that they had stated before that the problem could not be solved with security measures. Kılıçdaroğlu said, “We are going to solve the problem with democracy and freedom. I am asking you to give me power for 4 years. I promise you democracy, freedom, factories and food”.

30 November 2014

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan made a statement on the progress of the solution process, saying, “At the moment, we are on track, but what will determine the speed of the process? Steps that will be taken, sincerity and honesty will. In such processes, one has to be sincere; one has to be honest, committed and courageous”. Akdoğan added that there were red lines in the Solution Process, saying, “We will never compromise public security and order. We will never take a step back from Turkey’s unity and integrity, we won’t compromise. We will not allow an operation to be carried out on Turkey. That is the main line”.

1 December 2014

In a document described as the “Draft for Peace and Democratic Negotiation Process” PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan proposed four main headings for the solution of the Kurdish question. The first main heading, titled Method, explained how democratic politics would be applied to the process. The second main heading, titled History and Philosophy, developed a viewpoint extending from the past into the present and future regarding the solution of the problem. The heading titled Main Agenda Articles included around forty main questions, assessments and proposals. Sırrı Süreyya Önder, who announced the details of the draft, did not provide any information regarding the contents of the fourth heading titled Action Plan.

4 December 2014

Davutoğlu stated that a new environment had emerged in the solution process, and that they wanted to reach an outcome by the general election in June 2015.

9 December 2014

The HDP Delegation formed of İdris Baluken, Pervin Buldan, Sırrı Süreyya Önder and Hatip Dicle held a meeting with Yalçın Akdoğan. Önder announced that they would hold further meetings with the government on Öcalan's draft. However, Yalçın Akdoğan made a statement via his Twitter account to refute claims that the draft had been discussed, saying, "At the meeting with HDP members, a general assessment of the process was made; and issues such as autonomy, a general amnesty or İmralı's draft were certainly not discussed".

HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş commented on the draft law that proposed amendments to the Law on Police Duties and Powers and a number of other laws and legislative decrees, saying, "This is a law that they are trying to bring into force on the pretext of the Kobani incidents. It carries the potential to gravely undermine the negotiations process. If the draft becomes law, then the Prime Minister will order "shoot", the police will shoot a person in the head, and then say, 'his face was covered, he was carrying a Molotov cocktail, or had a stone in his hand,' and our children will be murdered in the street in their numbers. We will oppose it both in Parliament, and raise cain to try to prevent it in rallies and marches in the streets".

10 December 2014

The HDP Central Executive Board condemned in a written declaration Prime Minister Davutoğlu's statement targeting Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş, in which he said, "Demirtaş will be responsible of the blood that will flow". The HDP Delegation that travelled to Qandil, announced that KCK executives had unanimously accepted the "Draft for Peace and Democratic Negotiation Process". The delegation made a statement, saying, "KCK executives stated that they had assessed the Draft for Peace and Democratic Negotiation Process" prepared by Mr. Öcalan in detailed meetings held by all their structures and units, and that they had reached a number of historical conclusions in these meetings".

At the 11. Kurdish Conference held at the European Parliament, ISIS and the solution process were discussed. A call was made on the government of Turkey for the release of PKK Leader Öcalan, and on the EU to remove the PKK from the list of terrorist organizations.

11 December 2014

Speaking at the TBMM General Assembly, HDP Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder once again criticized the internal security draft law, saying, "You cannot achieve peace by preparing for war. This is worse even than martial law legislation, it is a law fit for a coup".

12 December 2014

The claim that the negotiations draft prepared by Öcalan included a heading on "autonomy" led to a new argument between the government and the HDP. According to a report by Al Jazeera, the draft does not include 'autonomy', but a heading titled 'strengthening of local administrations'. The reason for the argument is thus how the two parties interpret this heading.

13 December 2014

Speaking at the 1st Ordinary General Assembly of the Democratic Society Congress, Co-Chairperson Hatip Dicle spoke about Öcalan's draft for negotiations, and the recent meeting they held, conveying that Öcalan had said, "All phases of the Peace and Negotiations Draft must be completed in a 4-5 month process, until April 15, otherwise I am at the end of my patience".

18 December 2014

When polemical arguments taking place via the press began to hamper issues agreed upon between the parties, the government and the HDP took the decision to launch a new period in the solution process from the beginning of this week. The agreement is described as a "more controlled period of communication to prevent polemical arguments taking place via the press". It was also agreed upon to not share with the press any steps to be taken regarding the process before they had been clarified.

19 December 2014

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan stated that "significant developments could take place" in the solution process for the Kurdish question before the 2015 general election. Akdoğan said, "The main issue here is reaching a solution. Many dimensions of the issue have been dealt with. Thus, compared to the past, we are a step closer to an outcome. We are now in the home stretch".

Deputy Prime Minister visited Bülent Arınç HÜDA PAR within the scope of his visits of political parties representing the Kurdish movement. Arınç said, "In this process, we have to be together with everyone who has something to say, wants to voice an opinion, has an idea and wants to communicate it. The HDP is not the only representative in the solution process, or of the problem of the Kurds, or the Kurdish people. The whole world should know this. They may say so themselves, but that is not how it is".

20 December 2014

KCK Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık commented on claims in the media that the PKK would lay down its arms by 15 March, saying, "We will on no account lay down arms before we discuss the negotiations draft, finalize it according to dates we have determined, and reach an agreement on this subject. No conditions for us to lay down our arms have been met. Which problem has been solved for us to consider laying down our arms? Neither arms can be laid down, nor can the guerrilla abandon its positions before the democratic political solution of the Kurdish question is realized".

22 December 2014

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, commenting on debates on autonomy, stated that the Solution Process was being carried out on the principle of the 'unitary State'. Davutoğlu said, "However, in relation to the increased prevalence of local administrations and matters related to local administrations, it is readily obvious how our government prioritizes local administrations and the steps it has taken in this context, exemplified first and foremost by the Metropolitan Law. It is not right to discuss such issues along a false axis in public".

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan held a meeting yesterday morning with İmralı delegation members HDP Group Deputy Chairperson Pervin Buldan and Istanbul Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder. Akdoğan took to social media site Twitter to provide information about the meeting, saying, "The process is progressing with a strong political will and determination. Meetings have accelerated on the basis of trust and good will to secure the ultimate outcome," signalling the onset of a new period. Buldan and Önder also made a statement to the press, stating that they were trying to form their own precedents in the course of the solution process, saying, "We suffered a rupture that began with the Kobani resistance, but we would like to declare that we have left behind an important crisis process. We would like to state that after this stage, within the scope of the solution process, we have entered into a new process which mainly focuses on İmralı". Önder stated that certain consensuses had been reached to keep channels of dialogue open, adding, "That does not mean that all issues have been resolved. We will assess the matter with our authorized committees and then travel on to İmralı. We will also discuss the issue with KCK executives. After that, these meetings will progress in a more in-depth, fruitful and outcome-oriented manner".

24 December 2014

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu stated that there were positive developments regarding the solution process for the Kurdish question: "We made two important inferences after the 6-7 October incidents. The solution process is a new process of integration, crowned with democracy, in order to revive natural unity and integrity. The 6-7 October incidents led to a temporary standstill. Under no condition can we compromise public order. If you do, the solution process is rendered inoperative. We will make sure democracy strikes deep roots. No restriction whatsoever will be imposed on anyone. We will not allow this nation to become enemies of each other. There are positive developments. God willing, we will progress with this process with determination."

KCK Executive Council member Murat Karayılan, in an interview to the Rojnews Agency based in Iraq, stated that if the solution process concluded successfully, Öcalan would attend the 12th Congress of the PKK planned to be held in April 2015.

25 December 2014

Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Hatip Dicle and Leyla Zana held an 11-hour meeting with KCK executives in Qandil on the most recent state of progress in the Solution Process. It was stated that because of the increased frequency of meetings held at İmralı, from now on the HDP delegation would make statements only when it deemed necessary after visits to İmralı and Qandil, and that they could make joint statements with the government in line with the article on 'Informing the public' in the law passed regarding the Solution Process.

CHP Chairperson Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu stated that the government did not share with them information related to the process carried out regarding a solution for the Kurdish question, and that they received detailed information from statements made by Qandil. Kılıçdaroğlu said, "A negotiations process is continuing. It is said that İmralı is the main actor. A bargain is being made. Then they take the results they have reached to Qandil. They make a statement. At the point we have arrived at, a process of which members of parliament and the opposition are informed of nothing is being carried out. Only the HDP, İmralı and a few persons in the cabinet know. We receive the most detailed information from Qandil. We see a framework that is insincere, displaying no mutual trust". Main opposition party CHP Leader Kılıçdaroğlu then said, "It is also our desire that blood does not flow, this problem must be solved. It must be solved by social consensus. It must be solved in Parliament. We pointed to Parliament as the address to solve this, but none of this was done".

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan posted a tweet regarding statements by KCK executives which stated, "Untruthful, untimely, uncalled-for, provocative statements made by Qandil will not benefit the process. An anachronistic state... They either get stuck in the past, or they are driven towards an inconsequential future or dream...".

26 December 2014

In a meeting it held in Qandil from 21 to 24 November, Komalên Ciwan (Youth Assembly), which includes the PKK's youth structure, the Patriotic Democratic Youth Movement that made headlines with street actions in recent years, took a decision to implement a change in its forms of action. In a statement, it was announced that a decision had been taken to reject forms of action such as the covering of faces in mass actions, carrying out provocations from within the crowd, causing damage to the life and property of the public, the burning of public buses, and ordering the closing of shops for every mass action.

27 December 2014

The funerals of 4 YPG members, killed in clashes in Syria's Kobani and Iraq's Shingal regions, were brought from Habur to Cizre. First a fight, then an armed clash took place between YDG-H members keeping guard at the condolence tent set up in the Nur Neighbourhood and persons affiliated with HÜDA PAR. The fight that begun after midnight grew into a clash involving long-barrelled firearms around 3 am. Clashes continued until the morning, homes belonging to persons affiliated with HÜDA PAR were attacked with firearms and many homes were arsoned. Abdullah Deniz (65), a person affiliated with HÜDA PAR, was injured in the clashes, and later lost his life. Towards the morning, Yasin Özer (19), a person affiliated with YDG-H and in the afternoon Barış Dalmış (15) were killed.

27 December 2014

DTK Co-Chairperson Hatip Dicle, after holding meetings with DBP and HÜDA PAR executives regarding the incidents in Cizre in which 3 people lost their lives, said, “These incidents are the result of a provocation of deep forces that cannot digest developments related to the solution process and benefit from marginalizing society”.

28 December 2014

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu made a statement on clashes that took place in Cizre, saying, “I call on everyone for calm regarding the incidents in Cizre. Our security forces have prevented the violence. Turkey has taken precautions against all types of provocateurs. Whenever the solution process has progressed on track, elements that try to use it have appeared. These provocations will have no impact on the Solution Process. This is why the internal security reform package is important. We will not allow persons wearing masks to set the place on fire”. Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan, in a statement on the PKK-HÜDA PAR clash that took place in Cizre, declared that provocations targeted the Solution Process. Akdoğan said, “Just when we were saying everything is on track, Qandil made a statement, saying, ‘If anyone covers their faces during an action and throws Molotov cocktails, they are not on our side, they are agents’. A day later, incidents took place in Cizre. Some persons covered their faces and went and threw Molotov cocktails, they tried to burn down people’s homes. They were clearly cocking their snoot at Qandil, saying ‘I don’t recognize you’. So what I mean is, whenever we get close to an outcome, provocateurs enter the frame and immediately want to disrupt the process”.

30 December 2014

YDG-H and YDGK made a statement, saying, “It was the State itself that we faced in Cizre. An operation jointly launched by Hizbul-Kontr, DAESH and JİTEM faced the resistance of the youth movement. This operation, sought to be carried out in a highly coordinated and planned manner, was entirely coordinated by the hand of the State. Minister of Special Warfare Yalçın Akdoğan’s provocative statements such as, ‘the youth are cocking their snoot at Qandil’ reveals how strained the colonialist Turkish State is in the face of the serhildans [rebellions, uprisings] of the youth. It is well known that this and similar statements are the language of desperation, and a lack of solution”.

AKP Spokesperson Beşir Atalay, speaking following a MKYK (Central Executive Board) meeting, said, “The framework law, which we could accept as the constitution of the solution process, was ratified in Parliament in July. It passed with the support of 80% of Parliament. Now they ask, ‘What is on the road map, what is being discussed?’. Turkey is a major State, and it is a State of law. If a law has been passed by Parliament, and it received 80% support there, then that must be taken as the basis, and that is what the government is taking as its basis”.

HDP Co-Chairperson Figen Yüksekdağ criticized AKP Spokesperson Beşir Atalay declaring that the government’s road map was a “framework law” in his statements on the ‘solution process’. Yüksekdağ said, “There is a mistake regarding content. The solution process and our work for it has reached a much more advanced stage. We are now speaking of a road map. There is a negotiatio draft prepared by Mr. Öcalan. Meetings are being held in İmralı Island on the basis of this draft. A process involving the addressees, Qandil, the State and our party is being carried out”.

31 December 2014

Lütfü Taş, a member of the Peace Group who came to Turkey from Qandil in 2009 following Abdullah Öcalan's call, and who was arrested in 2010, suffered a fatal heart attack at the Diyarbakır/Amed D-Type Prison.

Following clashes between HÜDA PAR and PKK in the Cizre district of Şırnak on 27 December which resulted in the deaths of 3 people and 5 injuries, the District Police Chief was relieved of duty.

3 January 2015

The HPG announced its annual statement for 2014. The statement declared that HPG and YJA-STAR forces had abided by the ceasefire, providing the following details: 513 reconnaissance flights by the Turkish army, 81 ground offensives by the Turkish army, 153 aerial mobility incidents, 15 Kobra (infantry mobility vehicle) attacks, 75 tank and artillery attacks, 60 clashes, 31 actions carried out by guerrillas, 9 inconclusive clashes and actions, 35 soldier casualties, 9 injured soldiers, 29 vehicles hit, 1 detention-arrest carried out by guerrillas, 12 guerrillas lost their lives.

Musa Azma and Zeki Alar, who were critically wounded in an armed assault carried out by the police on a group of young people carrying out an action in Silopi in protest of the recent incidents in Cizre, have both passed away. They were being treated in Malatya İnönü University Hospital and Dicle University Faculty of Medicine consecutively.

The broadened HDP delegation that had set out for İmralı Island to hold a meeting with Öcalan was forced to return because of adverse weather conditions.

4 January 2015

The Supreme Court of Appeals ratified the sentences of 16 Kurdish politicians, 4 of which were held under arrest, who were given prison sentences in the lawsuit filed against them following the operation titled "KCK City Assembly" carried out in Cizre in 2010.

5 January 2015

Batman Co-Mayor Gülistan Akel, municipal assembly members Hülya Baltaş and Hamide Çelik, and a group of municipal workers were detained for taking part in the "Freedom for Öcalan" campaign. Kızıltepe Co-Mayors İsmail Ası and Leyla Salman, detained on the same grounds, were released the same day.

6 January 2015

Council of Europe (CoE) Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, on an official two-day visit to Ankara, met with HDP executives led by Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş. Jagland's spokesperson Daniel Holtgen, in a statement to ANF, announced that the 'solution process' was discussed at the meeting, and that the government's actions on the issue were also addressed.

7 January 2015

14-year-old Ümit Kurt died following fire opened from armoured vehicles that entered the Cudi neighbourhood immediately after the ditches dug to prevent the police's entrance to Cizre's Nur and Cudi neighbourhoods had been filled.

A rocket-launcher attack was carried out on an armoured police vehicle parked in front of the Dicle Police Station at the Silopi exit of Cizre district.

On 28 December 2014, HDP Member of Parliament Faysal Sarıyıldız presented a parliamentary question to Parliamentary Speaker Cemil Çiçek regarding the rejection by the Parliamentary Printing House of a request to print New Year's cards in Kurdish.

8 January 2015

HDP Deputy Group Chairperson İdris Baluken, in a speech at the TBMM General Assembly, commented on the Paris massacre on its 2nd anniversary. Baluken drew attention to the fact that the government had taken no steps to shed light on the Paris massacre in the two years that have passed, saying, "If the AKP government were sincere regarding the solution process, then it should have unearthed all details of such a bloody plan aimed at terminating the solution process and revealed all the necessary information to the people of Turkey".

9 January 2015

DTK Co-Chairperson Hatip Dicle, HDP Group Deputy Chairpersons Pervin Buldan and İdris Baluken and HDP Istanbul MP Sırrı Süreyya Önder held a meeting with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan at İmralı Island.

11 January 2015

DBP Co-Chairperson Emine Ayna, from the Freedom for Öcalan for Peace Platform, demanded an end to repression targeting activists carrying out the signature campaign, saying, "The number of signatures we have collected now stands at over 5 million. This figure displays the will for a solution. Any attack targeting this campaign targets the solution process".

14 January 2015

HDP Deputy Group Chairpersons Pervin Buldan ve İdris Baluken presented a Legislative Proposal for the establishment of a "Historical Truths and Reconciliation Commission".

12-year-old Nihat Kazanhan died after receiving injuries to his head when police opened fire in Cizre.

15 January 2015

HDK Co-Spokespersons Sebahat Tuncel and Ertuğrul Kürkçü made a written statement on State terror carried out in Cizre. The statement drew attention to the fact that an attack had been carried out to coincide with the visit of DTK Co-Chairpersons and HDP members of parliament, saying, “The State seems to be exerting an extraordinary effort to trigger new incidents”. It was underlined that the number of deaths in Cizre since December 27 had reached 6, and that the perpetrators of the murders were yet to be determined.

A HDP Delegation held a 1,5 hour meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan at the Prime Minister’s Central Office.

16 January 2015

The HDP Delegation made a written statement regarding the meetings it held with AKP Government ministers on the solution process. The delegation stated that they had met with Yalçın Akdoğan yesterday, and Interior Minister Ekan Ala today, and that topics of the meetings included the stage arrived at in the solution process and what needed to be done, developments in the Kurdish region with Cizre of prior concern that put a strain on the process, seriously-ill prisoners, democratization steps that needed to be taken and Turkey’s Kobani policy.

Unidentified persons opened fire on the DBP Bingöl Provincial Headquarters. Eye witnesses reported that the attack had been carried out from within a vehicle.

A rocket launcher attack was carried out on a police station within the grounds of the district governor’s office in Cizre.

17 January 2015

In Cizre, in the Yafes Neighbourhood, where Nihat Kazanhan was massacred on January 14, this time 43-year-old Nazım Ölmez was massacred in an armed attack.

19 January 2015

Cizre Police Chief Ercan Demir was arrested within the scope of the investigation of public officials in the Hrant Dink murder case on charges of “voluntary manslaughter due to neglect of duty”. Demir was Trabzon Police Directorate Intelligence Branch Chief at the time of Hrant Dink’s murder.

26 January 2015

Under ISIS attacks since 15 September 2014, the town of Kobani was liberated after 134 days.

28 January 2015

In the investigation of Nihat Kazanhan’s murder in Cizre, Special Forces police officer H.V., who was revealed to be part of the team [squad] that came to Cizre on temporary duty, and who served at the Mardin Police Directorate Special Forces Bureau Directorate, was arrested by the court on duty.

15 January 2015

YDG-H and YDGK announced that, in contrast to media reports, they had no connection to handmade explosives left in many public areas in Istanbul on January 18.

HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş met with ambassadorial representatives of 27 EU member countries. At an official lunch, issues such as Turkey's EU membership process, democratization, elections, the solution process, and regional developments with a focus on Syria and Kobani were discussed.

30 January 2015

30 year old Nezahat Celal, trying to pass into Turkey from the Derik district of Rojava, lost her life as a result of shots fired by Turkish Army soldiers.

4 February 2015

The İmralı Delegation, formed of HDP Deputy Group Chairpersons Pervin Buldan and İdris Baluken, Istanbul Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Democratic Society Congress (DTK) Co-Chairperson Hatip Dicle and Democratic Free Women's Movement (DÖKH) member Ceylan Bağrıyanık, held a meeting with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.

HDP Deputy Co-Chairperson Meral Daniş Beştaş, drawing attention to detention operations that have continued at full speed since 6 October, stated that the primary target was the signature campaign carried out for Abdullah Öcalan's freedom.

6 February 2015

MİT Undersecretary Hakan Fidan resigned from his position in order to become a candidate for nomination in the parliamentary elections to be held on June 7. His resignation letter was accepted by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu.

President Erdoğan said, "If we want a solution process, then we must deliver 400 members of parliament so that a party in power with all its might can realize this".

8 February 2015

President Erdoğan stated that he did not approve of Hakan Fidan's candidacy in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

9 February 2015

Yalçın Akdoğan stated that “a favorable point had been reached” in the Solution Process, saying, “Previous processes were disrupted because of very serious acts of sabotage. The Solution Process suffered serious turbulence in the Kobani incidents as well”. Akdoğan added that despite serious difficulties, a tradition and dialogue had emerged in the problem solving method, and that the system had developed immunity. Regarding Öcalan’s draft, Akdoğan said, “The HDP has its own view. We, of course, have our own view and approach. In other words, the draft alone has no significance. It is a view, it is an issue that is being debated. My impression is that we are close to an outcome. It needs to be supported with good will”. When asked about his view regarding Ahmet Türk’s statement, “If we do not pass the election threshold, then the State is liable”, Akdoğan responded, “Is it the State’s responsibility to secure that a political party passes the election threshold? That is a very reckless statement,” adding that the main axis of the Solution Process was important.

11 February 2015

HDP İmralı Delegation members Group Deputy Chairperson Pervin Buldan and Istanbul Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder held a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan. The meeting that was closed to the press was held at the Prime Minister’s Central Office.

Meeting with the press on the same day in Parliament, HDP Co-Chairperson Figen Yüksekdağ stated that the internal security package disrupted the solution process, adding that Hakan Fidan’s resignation would not have a decisive impact on the implementation and organization of the process. Yüksekdağ said, “The process is now at the stage where it passes onto negotiations. If negotiations do not commence, there can be no joint statement. We are ready. The government has failed to complete its preparation for negotiations. We expect the government to take this decision in 2 weeks so negotiations can commence. Certain legal steps must be taken in addition to the framework law”.

12 February 2015

DTK Co-Chairperson Hatip Dicle stated that there were continuing efforts to enable the announcement of an important message regarding the solution process at Newroz, adding that a democratic Constitution was necessary for the solution of the Kurdish Question.

13 February 2015

An explosion took place in a waste container at the police checkpoint 50 metres away from the Arin Mirxan Tent City on the road out of Suruç, 3 people, one of them a police officer, were injured. The People’s Defence Central Headquarters Command announced that they had no connection to the explosion in Suruç. The statement specifically drew attention to provocative efforts targeting the solution process in Suruç District.

A total of 10 million 328 thousand 623 signatures collected within the scope of the Freedom for Öcalan Campaign was announced to the public at a press conference held in front of the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg.

13 February 2015

A HDP Delegation travelled to Qandil.

15 February 2015

The İmralı Delegation made a statement, saying, “In the meeting held with the KCK, the main agenda featured steps that need to be taken within the scope of the solution process, the ‘Internal Security Package’ that has been sent to Parliament, and the recent developments in the Middle East with a focus on Kobani and Shingal”. It was also claimed in the statement that the KCK found it unacceptable that the negotiations process had still not begun, and that the AKP government, instead of taking steps that would lead to permanent peace in concrete negotiation headings, spent time focusing on public perception management via expectations that did not correspond to reality.

18 February 2015

HDP Group Deputy Chairperson Pervin Buldan and Mersin Member of Parliament Ertuğrul Kürkçü made a statement on the attack AKP members of parliament carried out in the General Assembly on opposition members of parliament before the session on the “Internal Security Package” commenced. Buldan said, “History will record the silence of the female Parliament Deputy Chairperson in the face of the violence carried out against us, female members of parliament. This law is now stained in blood. The AKP is casting the solution and peace process into a very dangerous course”.

20 February 2015

HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş made a statement on the internal security package, also commenting on the solution process: “Following the most recent meeting held at İmralı Island, both sides declared to the press that a joint statement could be made. This joint statement would have been a consensus on which articles needed to be sensitively debated so that negotiations can begin in the coming period. The manipulative approach of the government and its supporters is the reason this call has failed to materialize.”

22 February 2015

The Turkish Armed Forces carried out the Shah Euphrates Operation, reaching via Kobani the Suleyman Shah Mausoleum under ISIS siege to move the remains and evacuate the 38 maroon berets protecting the mausoleum. The remains were transferred to a new mausoleum formed in the Eshme village of Syria.

YPG made a press statement announcing that they had provided support to Turkish forces entering Kobani, and that they had formed a 5 kilometre security corridor. A Turkish security official speaking to Reuters stated that the operation had been carried out “via Kobani with the support of local Kurdish officials”.

25 February 2015

HDP Group Deputy Chairperson İdris Baluken demanded the immediate retraction of the AKP government's 'Internal Security Package'. Baluken also drew attention to racist attacks targeting the HDP in various provinces.

26 February 2015

Deputy Prime Minister and Government Spokesperson Bülent Arınç made a statement regarding the expected joint statement by the İmralı Delegation and the government, saying, "A joint statement is not on the agenda". Arınç also commented on the HDP, saying, "A fight is taking place. This fight is about Qandil constantly using its right of veto regarding Öcalan's demands and requests. And politicians here, Demirtaş foremost among them, are speaking in Qandil's tone. I wonder if this is a sham fight between İmralı and Qandil. It is the HDP's task to eliminate such discrepancies".

28 February 2015

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan and Interior Minister Efkan Ala met with HDP Group Deputy Chairpersons Pervin Buldan, İdris Baluken and HDP Istanbul Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder at the Prime Minister's Office in Dolmabahçe.

Önder, in a statement made following the meeting, conveyed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's main assessment regarding the stage the process has arrived at: "In taking this 30-year process of clashes to permanent peace, our main target is reaching a democratic solution. On principles that form the least common denominator, I invite the PKK to summon an extraordinary congress in Spring in order to make the strategic and historical decision on the basis of ending the armed struggle. This invitation is a historical declaration of intent aimed at replacing armed struggle with democratic politics."

Önder then went on to list the headings forming the spine of peace in 10 clauses:

- Democratic politics, its definition and content
- Recognition of the national and local dimensions of the democratic solution
- Legal and democratic reassurances for free citizenship
- The relationship between the State and society and democratic politics and headings aimed towards its institutionalization
- Socioeconomic dimensions of the solution process
- Treatment of the democracy-security relationship in a manner that protects public order and freedoms throughout the process
- Legal solutions and reassurances for women's, cultural, and ecological problems
- Development of a pluralist democratic approach regarding the recognition of the concept, definition and recognition of identity
- Definition of the democratic republic, common homeland and nation on the basis of democratic criteria, and the introduction of legal and constitutional reassurances within the pluralist democratic system
- A new constitution with a vision to internalize all these democratic moves and transformations.

28 February 2015

Yalçın Akdoğan then said that they recognized the significance of the statement, saying, “We find important this statement on the acceleration of work towards disarmament, realization of a complete state of non-action and prioritization of democratic politics as a method”. These statements on the process would from this point on be referred to as the Dolmabahçe Consensus.

3 March 2015

Democratic Society Congress (DTK) Co-Chairpersons Selma Irmak and Hatip Dicle issued a written statement. Declaring that the solution process had evolved into a highly critical and important phase with the Dolmabahçe meeting and the 10-article draft text Öcalan presented, the statement issued a call to the State and government to fulfill the requirements of the draft text. As a first step, the retraction from Parliament of the Internal Security draft law was demanded.

Making a statement following a Cabinet meeting, Government Spokesperson Bülent Arınç strongly criticized Selahattin Demirtaş, claiming he was creating obstacles for the progress of the solution process, saying, “Demirtaş is not a person who shows well-intentioned efforts regarding the solution process, or desires this process to succeed. I hope from now on he won’t become involved in a movement that will sabotage this process”. Claiming that the text made public on 28 February had been changed, Arınç said, “The text that was read out was not the text presented to us, and that was to be accepted. 60% of the text was changed”.

4 March 2015

President Tayyip Erdoğan, in response to a question, declared that he was still resentful regarding disappointed with Hakan Fidan, saying: “If the National Intelligence Organization of the State is weak, then that State cannot survive. Now, we had appointed him to that position. It was me who appointed him. Since that is the case, when leaving, if he was not given permission to do so, he should have remained in duty, and not left. Therefore, I am still resentful”.

HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş responded to Arınç’s claims that the 10-article text had been changed, stating that the 10 articles that had been announced overlapped 99,9% with Öcalan’s call, and that they had not touched the text. Demirtaş explained the changes made to the text as follows: “In the first text, Öcalan’s expression was, ‘I will issue a call for the PKK to summon a congress’. The government asked for that to be changed. We said that a change could not be made without asking Öcalan. Then a consensus was reached, and in the second text the expression was changed as ‘I am now making a call’”.

5 March 2015

A delegation formed of HDP Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder and Diyarbakır/Amed Member of Parliament Leyla Zana travelled to İmralı Island to hold a meeting with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.

9 March 2015

Hakan Fidan, who had resigned to become a candidate for nomination at the June 7 elections, issued a written statement declaring the retraction of his nomination. Bülent Arınç announced that Fidan had been reappointed to his former position at MİT.

12 March 2015

A HDP Delegation formed of Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder held a meeting at TBMM with Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan. The first statement after the meeting was made by the HDP. Pervin Buldan announced that a 16-person Observation Committee had been formed and that HDP members would travel to İmralı Island with this committee, and that the committee would include wise persons, regional chairpersons, and a further 9 people yet to be determined.

13 March 2015

A delegation formed of HDP Group Deputy Chairperson İdris Baluken and Ceylan Bağrıyanık travelled to Qandil to hold meetings within the scope of initiatives carried out in relation to the solution process.

Pervin Buldan's statements regarding the Observation Committee were refuted by Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan. Akdoğan took to Twitter to write, "Some press outlets are announcing that a 16-person Observation Committee has been formed, and they are publishing lists of names. These are complete lies and fabrications. Making statements on the basis of a regular meeting held in Parliament that then leads to speculation does not match the serious nature of the process".

The HDP Delegation also made a written statement, announcing that the necessity of forming an Observation Committee had been conveyed to Yalçın Akdoğan at the meeting held on 12 March, but the names to be included in the committee had not been discussed.

15 March 2015

Prisoners Mehmet Sait Yıldırım, Ömer Hayri Konar, Çetin Arkaş, Nasrullah Kuran and Veysi Aktaş were transferred to İmralı Island.

President Erdoğan, speaking at a ceremony he attended, said, "Turkey has no Kurdish question. In Turkey, our Kurdish brothers have problems, like people from all sections of society. They have the problem that their identity is not recognized. They have the problem that their beliefs are not respected. They have problems such as underdevelopment, neglect and discrimination".

18 March 2015

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan stated that the Observation Committee would consist of 5-6 people, that some of the names had been determined, and that the final decision would be made by Prime Minister Davutoğlu in the coming week.

In the same statement Akdoğan emphasized the importance of Newroz in the solution process, saying, “As I have said before, if this process is to arrive at a certain point before the election, then every month ahead of us is important and critical. In my opinion, Newroz is an opportunity that can accelerate this. After all, the realization without delay of Öcalan’s call for a congress would mean a concrete development will take place in the coming one or two months”.

19 March 2015

A delegation formed of HDP Group Deputy Chairpersons İdris Baluken and Pervin Buldan, Istanbul Member of Parliament Sırrı Süreyya Önder, DTK Co-Chairperson Hatip Dicle and Ceylan Bağrıyanık travelled to İmralı Island. The delegation then made a written statement, declaring that Öcalan’s Newroz message had been conveyed to the delegation following the 4-hour meeting held today. It was added that work towards the establishment of an Observation Committee and the situation of Kurdish politicians in exile had been discussed at the meeting.

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık commented on President Erdoğan’s words, “Turkey has no Kurdish question” in a published article. Bayık stated that no politician that prioritizes the solution of the Kurdish question can have a future, adding, “At the point we are at, the policy of creating expectation and then implementing diversion strategies has been exposed. This policy has washed up on the shore. He either takes a step in the Kurdish question, or he goes”.

20 March 2015

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in reference to Deputy Prime Minister Akdoğan’s statement regarding the Observation Committee, said, “I’m reading this in the newspapers. To be frank, I don’t know anything about it. And I’ll put this very clearly, I do not have a positive view of it. I had also said that we did not find it right when I was asked during my term as Prime Minister, “How would you view a group from within the Wise Persons Committee going there [to İmralı]?” I repeat my view now. As in every other country, from the beginning of the process, it is intelligence organizations that primarily conduct the process. During that period, we sent 3 members from the political party who have the representatives known to all. It was us who did that, too. What would it change if the number of members in that group were to be increased from 3 to 5, or 7”.

21 March 2015

PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, in a letter he sent to the Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır/Amed, saluted the Kobani victory and resistance, saying, “I salute the ‘Spirit of Eshme’ that has developed on this basis as a symbol of a new history between our peoples. All the points I have tried to set out above, in a single sentence, constitute a valuable call for the revision, restoration and reconstruction of our history and present contemporaneity as a society”.

Deputy Prime Minister and Government Spokesperson Bülent Arınç commented on President Erdoğan’s statements regarding the Observation Committee, saying, “Statements such as ‘I’m not happy with it, I don’t like it, I treat it coldly, or I treat it warmly’ are his own views. The responsibility of the process carried out by our government belongs to our government. It is not possible for him to be considered unaware of developments, our President knows everything very well”. Arınç stated that as the government, they were determined about the establishment of an Observation Committee.

22 March 2015

After stating that he did not approve of an Observation Committee, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that he was also against the Dolmabahçe meeting consensus, and the 10-article-declaration.

Speakin at the Newroz celebration in Istanbul, HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş criticized President Erdoğan’s words, saying, “This Newroz has proved who wants democracy, and who embraces dictatorship”.

23 March 2015

The Turkish Armed Forces made a statement via its web site on PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan’s expression “Spirit of Eshme” included in his Newroz letter: “Broadcasts and news reports that have been published in certain press and broadcast outlets regarding the changing of place within the territory of SYRIA of the Süleyman Shah Post of Reverence in reference to an expression by the head terrorist - a person that we never have addressed and never will address - about the “SPIRIT OF ESHME” claiming that “the Turkish Armed Forces and the PYD/PKK collaborated” are entirely unsubstantiated; and in the presence of the Great Turkish Nation we strongly condemn these people and media organs who made such an imputation about the honourable, dignified and noble National Army, the Turkish Armed Forces, that has seen thousands of martyrs fall, and thousands of soldiers injured in carrying out an armed struggle against a terrorist organization that for 31 years has aimed to change the Constitutional order of the State of the Republic of Turkey.”

Responding to criticism of his statement ‘There is no Kurdish Question’, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said, “Numerous coup attempts, numerous attacks, the Gezi events, the 17-25 December coup attempt, they were all staged to prevent the solution of my Kurdish brothers’ problems. But we did not bow down to any of them. Terror cannot determine our policies... You can make no contribution whatsoever if you do not put aside those weapons. In an environment where promises made were broken time and time again, we cannot progress any further without seeing concrete steps”.

24 March 2015

The Turkish Armed Forces announced that a military operation had been initiated in the Mazıdağı rural area of Mardin. A statement said, “Upon the approval of the Governorate, 5 teams squads are performing an operation. The operation continues as of now”.

25 March 2015

A statement made by the Turkish Armed Forces announced that PKK forces were carrying out mortar shelling in Dağlıca, and that the army had responded.

HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş stated that an Observation Committee was, rather than an indispensable exclusive demand of the HDP, a requirement in peace processes implemented across the world.

26 March 2015

The People’s Defense Center made a statement regarding the Dağlıca clash, underlining the fact that the HPG was acting in accordance of the “democratic solution strategy” to implement the requirements of ceasefire regulations. The statement pointed out that the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) was intentionally and deliberately increasing military mobility, and that fire had been opened from certain military bases and stations along the border line in violation of ceasefire regulations, claiming that the TSK and AKP were implementing an election policy with the purpose of receiving votes from nationalist circles.

Parliamentary Speaker Cemil Çiçek stated during his Washington visit that there was “uncertainty, incoherence and indecision” in the struggle against ISIS. He added that “There are efforts to legitimize and portray in a sympathetic light certain terror organizations because they are fighting against DAESH. Our region is experiencing this mistake. This will cause further problems”.

HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş stated that following the President’s statement, the issues of “observation committee, commencement of negotiations, and congress” had been rendered unclear despite a previously-achieved full consensus. Demirtaş claimed that there was a crisis within the AKP, and that this crisis would harm the process if the Observation Committee was not formed, and visits to İmralı Island ceased. Demirtaş added that 15 April had not been set as a date for the PKK Congress, and that consensus had been reached between the State-HDP-İmralı-Qandil for “the assembly of a congress during the Spring months”.

27 March 2015

The Internal Security Package was accepted in Parliament.

Deputy Prime Minister responsible of the solution process Yalçın Akdoğan said, “The Solution Process is not a process that can be sacrificed for the sake of an election. It is a strategic issue. We will never take a step back from the Solution Process”.

28 March 2015

Selahattin Demirtaş stated that the government had, since the beginning of the process, not taken steps that would meet expectations. Demirtaş underlined that all manners of provocative acts could take place during their election campaign, saying, “Look, if anything happens to us during the election campaign period, which is a possibility, it is my special request from all our friends; this ship must be sailed to the harbour”.

29 March 2015

HDP Istanbul Member of Parliament and Negotiations Delegation Spokesperson Sırrı Süreyya Önder, HDP Amed Member of Parliament Leyla Zana, and KNK Co-Chairperson Nilüfer Koç travelled to Hewler/Erbil in South Kurdistan in order to convey the letters and messages Abdullah Öcalan sent to Kurdish political parties, with Iraqi Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani and YNK Leader Jelal Talabani foremost among them.

31 March 2015

A hostage crisis took place at Çağlayan Court House in Istanbul, resulting in the deaths of Public Prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz, who was in charge of the Berkin Elvan - The 15-year old boy who died on 11 March 2014 following a 269-day coma after being hit on the head by a tear-gas canister fired by a police officer in Istanbul during the Gezi Resistance - investigation, and Bahtiyar Doğruyol and Şafak Yayla, the two militants that carried out the action.

PKK Executive Council Member Duran Kalkan said, “If there has been a poisoning, it was Tayyip Erdoğan’s words that poisoned the process, in fact, it has been worse than a poisoning, his words have frozen the process”.

1 April 2015

Following an armed attack carried out by 2 persons on the Istanbul Police Headquarters, one of the attackers, Elif Sultan Kalşen, died, and one police officer was injured.

The HPG Press Liaison Center announced its 3-monthly statement on the war. According to the statement, the Turkish Armed Forces carried out 197 reconnaissance flights, 2 Kobra attacks, 134 tank and artillery attacks; 14 enforced clashes took place during the operations, 2 soldier fatalities were confirmed; 2 soldier injuries were confirmed and 5 military vehicles were damaged in clashes.

HDP Group Deputy Chairperson and Bingöl Member of Parliament İdris Baluken commented on new village guard recruitments in Bingöl, saying, “new village guard recruitments are perceived as practices evoking war rather than peace”.

2 April 2015

In Bursa, 9 Kurdish students were physically attacked by a racist group referring to themselves as “Genç Atsızlar” [The Young Disciples of Atsız: Nihal Atsız was a racist, pan-Turkist ideologue of the early years of the Republic].

In Ağrı, 6 DBP members were arrested following morning raids on their homes on the grounds that they were “KCK Justice Commission” members.

3 April 2015

The 69-article “Internal Security Package” debated in the General Assembly of Parliament since February 17, and was accepted, was ratified by President Erdoğan.

In a written statement issued on the occasion of Abdullah Öcalan’s birthday, the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Headquarters pointed at Öcalan’s freedom as a “precondition of peace”.

5 April 2015

The HPG announced that the ‘Turkish army increasingly continued to carry out ambushes’, and that there was ‘an attempt to draw guerrillas into clashes’.

The HDP Delegation travelled to İmralı Island where it held a meeting with Abdullah Öcalan.

7 April 2015

The objection filed by Kazanhan’s lawyer Filiz Ölmez to the verdict of lack of grounds for legal action regarding H.V., who was initially arrested in relation to Nihat Kazanhan’s murder in Cizre on January 24, but was later released after providing testimony, was accepted. The Cizre Heavy Penal Court ruled for police officer H.V. to be tried on charges of “voluntary manslaughter”.

The Peace Assembly of Turkey announced its report titled “Towards a Solution: Evaluation on Probabilities, Opportunities and Problems” in which it evaluated the past two years of the solution process and presented its proposals for the future.

9 April 2015

The HPG Press Liaison Center announced that ‘In Diyarbakır/Amed’s Silvan district, the Turkish army has continued its dam construction despite all warnings, and upon the observation of increased military activity in this region, guerrilla forces fired warning shots on 2 armoured vehicles, 1 trailer truck and 1 minibus belonging to the Turkish army at 5 am on April 8’.

10 April 2015

Savaş Koçyiğit, twice detained previously in connection to the attack on Bingöl Police Chief Atalay Ürker that took place on 9 October 2014, was arrested. Deputy Police Chief Atif Şahin and police superintendent Hüseyin Hatipoğlu had died in the attack.

Serhat Savaş (17), seriously injured when a CS gas cannister fired by police struck his head during the Kobani protests in Gaziosmanpaşa, passed away.

11 April 2015

A clash took place between the PKK and military units in an area close to the Yukarıtüttek village of Ağrı where a tree planting event was to be held by the HDP and DBP. In the clash, HDP Diyadin former District Co-Chairperson Cezmi Budak, and a guerrilla named Ferhat Kızılay (Canfeda Serhat) died, while 4 soldiers and MEYA-DER representative Cenap İlboğa were injured.

In its first statement regarding the incident, the Ağrı Governorate announced that the clashes had begun when soldiers came under fire. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan also made a statement saying that the PKK aimed to “dynamite the peace environment and sabotage the solution process”. The HPG (People’s Defence Forces) also made a statement, declaring that the clashes began when “Turkish forces opened fire on PKK forces in the area”.

12 April 2015

The Presidency of General Staff stated that clashes took place between army units and HPG guerrillas following the operation launched in the rural area of Yeşilova village in Şemdinli. The Presidency alleged on its website that army units were in the region to carry out an intervention against smugglers, and they were exposed to harassment fire from HPG forces.

The HPG Press Liaison Center made a written statement saying that claims regarding the Turkish army’s operation in Tendürek Mountain that “guerrillas took part in Spring celebrations and pressurized the public” were complete fabrications aimed at disinformation, and that they had not participated in any celebration. The statement added that there were fatalities as a result of fire opened by the Turkish Armed Forces on the public that came to the area to prevent the clashes that had ensued.

İKSV (Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts) stated that the documentary titled “North (Bakur)” directed by Çayan Demirel and Ertuğrul Mavioğlu about the PKK would not be screened due to its lack of a registration document from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Witnesses of the incident in Ağrı and HDP administrators claimed that injured soldiers had been left to die, and that the soldiers had been rescued by civilians. Video footage broadcast by the Dicle News Agency also showed civilians helping injured soldiers. The footage also featured a civilian telling soldiers, “We will teach you about humanity”. Ağrı Governor Musa Işın denied these claims. Turkish Armed Forces also made a statement, saying, “The help of our citizens who came to the area to our injured personnel was deemed praiseworthy, and represented a good example of the unity and togetherness of our nation”.

13 April 2015

İmralı Delegation Spokesperson Sırrı Süreyya Önder said, “The act of provocation carried out in Diyadin has revealed why the President does not want an Observation Committee, and why the government has done a U-turn on the existing consensus,” adding that the government will resort to many methods including a cancellation of the election in order to curb its loss of votes. The İmralı Delegation formed of HDP Group Deputy Spokesperson Pervin Buldan, Ceylan Bağrıyanık, Hatip Dicle and Leyla Zana announced that they would carry out inspections in Ağrı.

The General Staff Press and Public Relations Department Head Brigadier General Ertuğrulgazi Özkürkçü made a statement to the Anadolu Agency about the Ağrı incident, stating that gendarmerie units, which are public security forces, had been assigned by the Governor, saying, “This preemptive measure taken for security grounds has no connection with the Turkish Armed Forces”.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu refuted claims made by HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş, saying, “I will put this very clearly, Mr. Demirtaş is lying, and distorting the facts”. Davutoğlu added, “Is he the chairperson of a legitimate political party, or a defender of terror who defends and seeks to legitimize this type of terrorist activity carried out by armed elements of separatist terror organizations through pressure and in order to manipulate the people? Today is the day for everyone to clearly declare their positions”.

14 April 2015

HDP Group Deputy Chairperson İdris Baluken said, “The solution process is progressing thanks to the efforts of Mr. Abdullah Öcalan. Despite the continuing solution process and our efforts, the AKP government has taken a decision to go to war in the most recent 13-hour National Security Council meeting. This is clear to us, and we can confirm that we have received this information,” adding that the incidents that took place in Ağrı were part of this decision.

15 April 2015

It was revealed that there was only one reference to the “solution process” in the AKP Election Declaration announced by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. The reference is made in the “What We Have Achieved” section of the declaration, and the solution is not mentioned in the section detailing the party’s plans for the future.

18 April 2015

An armed attack by unidentified individuals was carried out on the HDP Headquarters. Of the two persons detained in relation to the attack, one was released, while the other was arrested.

Former Interior Minister Efkan Ala, responding to claims that he had planned the incidents that took place in Ağrı, and that he had made a phone call to the Ağrı Governor for this end, described the claims as “immoral fabrications”. Ala also said, “We wish that the people do not let the HDP pass the election threshold”.

19 April 2015

AKP Yozgat parliamentary candidate and former Minister of Justice Bekir Bozdağ claimed that the HDP's decision to enter the election as a political party was part of an international project aiming to block the AKP's path.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu responded to criticism regarding the absence of the solution process in their election declaration, saying: "This was due to some digital mishaps that took place when the text was sent off to the printer's, and one or two pages went missing".

20 April 2015

Soldiers opened fire on people who went to the exit of the village to prevent military operations targeting citizens engaged in border trade in the Yemişli Village, on the border line of Şırnak's Uludere district, injuring 3 persons. According to the report of the İHD's Şırnak Branch that carried out an investigation regarding the attack, a village guard injured in the attack stated that fire was opened without reason, and without any warning.

The KCK Executive Council Co-Directorate made a statement, saying, "This policy, which the government has built on conflict and tension, has resulted in a situation that considerably endangers both the solution and election processes. The HDP delegation's İmralı visit has objectively been suspended. An observation committee has not been formed, and negotiations have not begun. The solution process, which is far too important to be sacrificed for the benefit of any political party or the election, has been frozen. At a point when the observation committee had to be formed and negotiations had to begin immediately, the AKP government took no steps in this process. It is Erdoğan's directives that orient the process. Following Erdoğan's statements, the AKP has presented a new concept and new policy regarding both the solution and election process. This policy is a policy of provocation and of the development of operations via tension and conflict".

21 April 2015

The HPG Press Contact Center made a statement saying, "The intensifying increase in the military mobility of the Turkish army and its activities fuelling a platform for clashes continue. Such mobility, which has increased along the Şırnak border line and around the Haftanin region Medya Defense Zone, have reached a level that could trigger clashes at any moment".

The "Solution Process" was added to the AKP Election Declaration as an appendix.

22 April 2015

The HDP Election Declaration stated that "the 10 articles announced in the Dolmabahçe Consensus are accepted as the principal framework of the solution" under the heading "Kurdish Question and Solution Process"

28 April 2015

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said, “Saying ‘There is a Kurdish question’ constitutes, from this point on, separatism. The Kurdish question is caused precisely by those who say that there is a Kurdish question. There is no longer a Kurdish question in our country. There is the State in this country. The existence of a table at which we sit facing each other means that the State has collapsed. The State does not lay down its arms, and if a terrorist bears arms, the State does what is necessary. This is why the issue of internal security is sensitive. The HDP resorted to illegal methods to make our work difficult”.

29 April 2015

Sırrı Süreyya Önder made a statement, saying, “I say this as the İmralı Negotiations Delegation Spokesperson, there is a table set up between the two parties. And that table was set up three months ago. There are people who sit at either side, and parties held several meetings at that table. The historical Dolmabahçe Consensus was secured at that table. That table is called the ‘Table of Peace and Democratic Solution’. That table was one of the most important democratic moves aimed at securing the unity, democracy and future of our country as systems in the Middle East collapse one after the other”.

30 April 2015

The İmralı Delegation made a statement on the phase the “solution process” had reached and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s statements against the solution, saying, “The table has become obsolete at present because of the campaign of defamation carried out by the President. We will not allow ourselves or the public to be used in business that cannot be carried out with the seriousness required by official negotiations”. The Delegation added, “Mr. Öcalan’s status must be determined and declared to the public. Otherwise, we will not allow you to vulgarly and recklessly play around with the future of this people”.

1 May 2015

It was announced that DBP Co-Mayors would not take part in official programs during President Tayyip Erdoğan’s visits to Batman, Diyarbakır/Amed and Siirt on 2 May.

2 May 2015

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in a speech he made in Batman where he came to take part in opening ceremonies, said, “Saying that there is a Kurdish question is discrimination. It would mean we separate the solution of the problem of my Kurdish brothers from others. Those who isolate the solution process in the bracket of the Kurdish question are creating a zone of exploitation. In the past, it was those who did not allow our Kurdish brother to say ‘I am a Kurd’ who were carrying out separatism, now a separatism is being practiced from the opposite direction”.

The two-day Reconstruction of Kobani Conference held with the slogan, “Reconstructing Kobani is protecting the values of humanity” began.

5 May 2015

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Bese Hozat stated that the process had been ended by the AKP, saying, “Holding our congress is not on our agenda at the moment, because the process did not work, and no steps were taken. The PKK would have held its congress in response to steps taken by the State. We have removed the congress from our agenda.”

Police attacked a group reacting to AKP parliamentary candidates taking part in the opening ceremony of an electoral bureau in Van’s Erciş district, injuring 1 person.

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan said, “Now some say, this or that will happen if we do not pass the electoral threshold. Yet I say, nothing will happen. It would be superb, it would be fine. Because when AK Party initiated this process in 2005, they did not have a single member of parliament... Tayyip Erdoğan initiated this process, AK Party initiated this process. The owner of this process is the AK Party government”.

HDP filed an application with the Supreme Electoral Council on grounds that President Erdoğan was turning the HDP into a target, and that he was exploiting religion. The application underlined that Erdoğan was violating electoral prohibitions, stating, “We express our hope that the necessary precautions, including a warning to the Office of Presidency, and compliance with broadcast principles, are taken, and that our party is informed about the outcome”.

6 May 2015

A woman who entered the AKP’s rally area in Ağrı was battered and detained by police when she made the victory sign associated with the Kurdish movement.

Pervin Buldan, commenting on Yalçın Akdoğan’s words, “It would be superb if the HDP were not to pass the election threshold,” said that Akdoğan should stop worrying about the HDP and focus on filling the other side of the table at İmralı and form the observation committee. Buldan drew attention to the fact that President Erdoğan, Prime Minister Davutoğlu and Akdoğan were all trying to block the process, emphasizing that this process was too valuable to be sacrificed for the sake of an election, and that it would continue whether the AKP was involved or not.

7 May 2015

The Bursa 3rd Heavy Penal Court, in a lawsuit filed on charges against PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan’s lawyers İbrahim Bilmez and Muhdi Öztüzün for “conveying information regarding the organization and receiving information on actions to be taken” in the meeting they held with Öcalan, ruled that the audio recording made with authorization from the Execution Magistracy constituted “illegal evidence” and acquitted the two lawyers.

9 May 2015

Diyarbakır/Amed Police Directorate units went to HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş's home in Kayapınar, demanding to carry out a search stating that a person sought in connection with various crimes resided at the address. Demirtaş's family stated that the person in question did not live at the address and reminded officers that the residence belonged to Demirtaş. Diyarbakır/Amed Police Directorate Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime units then stated that they had been sent to Demirtaş's residence following a tip-off to 155, the crime report line. In the investigation that followed, it was claimed that a police officer at the communications center had made a mistake in the registration of a report regarding sought criminals. Police Commissioner Halis Bögürcü announced that the operator who spoke to the person providing the report had been dismissed on orders from the Governor. At a television program he attended, Demirtaş said, "It is not normal for police to come knocking at my door at a time so close to the election and in the middle of such a critical process".

10 May 2015

Women from women's organizations, political parties and unions came together on 9-10 May at the "Workshop for Women's Liberation in the Democratic Solution and Negotiations Process". The final declaration of the workshop announced that participants had decided to continue work as the "Women's Liberation Assembly".

The "Democratic Islam Congress", proposed by PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and for which preparations had been continuing for months, gathered in Diyarbakır/Amed. The final declaration of the Congress stated, "For peace to become permanent, legal regulations must urgently come into force, by also taking into consideration the negotiation methods of the Charter of Medina", calling on Islamic circles to recognize their responsibilities and actively participate in the peace process.

12 May 2015

Police, having formed a barricade between the HDP and MHP stands opened in front of the entrance gate of Gaziantep University Campus, then attacked students that had opened the HDP stand with CS-gas bombs and water cannons, and detained a large number of students.

11 of the 12 persons detained in the investigation launched in Diyarbakır/Amed on 8 May against YDG-H members were arrested.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said, "Who is in Kobani at the moment? Around 60 thousand people. And they are people who have returned from Turkey. Now they are exploiting this situation. There are almost no Arabs left in Kobani. In other words, a very different method is being implemented in the region. This begins in Afrin, and extends towards Kobani and Qamışlı. Their target now is to connect these points. Their efforts aim to form a certain ethnicity there. USA has only now begun to realize this. So we said, you have to discuss what is to be done here with us. Our teams are carrying out work for this purpose at the moment. The train-and-equip program has begun".

12 May 2015

PKK Executive Council member Duran Kalkan said, “We are under attack as a movement and as a people following President Tayyip Erdoğan’s anti-solution stance, especially since Newroz. We declare that this is the beginning of a new process”. Kalkan added that because of Erdoğan and the AKP’s stance against democratization and the solution process which hindered the negotiations process they had frozen the congress preparations that had progressed significantly.

13 May 2015

Around 2 years after the murder of Medeni Yıldırım during the protest held in Lice against a kalekol construction, a crime scene investigation was carried out.

14 May 2015

A large number of armoured vehicles and soldiers that exited the District Gendarmerie Comande in the Varto district of Muş in the early hours of the morning sealed entrances to and exits from the district. As police forces also took up position along the main streets in the district centre with water cannons, the reason for the mobility remained unclear.

15 May 2015

KCK Executive Council member and People’s Defence Center Commander Murat Karayılan made critical assessments regarding the solution process, saying, “We are carefully observing the process, and are trying to prevent provocations. Our actions are based on unilateral ceasefire. The isolation in İmralı constitutes for us a cause for war. We, as the HPG, are waiting for Leader Apo’s orders, and are continuing to observe the unilateral ceasefire within this framework. However, everyone should know that there is a limit to everything”.

16 May 2015

HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş stated that the process was now frozen, that the party delegation had not been able to visit İmralı Island for more than two months, and that at the moment isolation was imposed on Öcalan.

17 May 2015

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan stated that the HDP was creating every obstacle imaginable in the solution process, and that it would mean nothing even if the HDP did pass the election threshold.

18 May 2015

The İmralı Delegation, having received no response to its request for a meeting with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, with whom they held the last meeting on April 5, travelled to Qandil to assess the most recent point the process was at with KCK executives.

HDP Ankara Parliamentary Candidate and İmralı Delegation Spokesperson Sırrı Süreyya Önder drew attention to the statements regarding the attacks carried out against their party made by government officials and Erdoğan that presented them as a target. Önder also commented on the ‘solution process’, saying, “According to the consensus we reached with the government, we should have carried out a routine visit to the island in 15-20 days at most”.

Bomb attacks were carried out on the Adana and Mersin headquarters of the HDP.

The “Diyarbakır/Amed Prison Coordination Center”, the first concrete step towards Diyarbakır/Amed Prison’s transformation into a museum, was opened by witnesses of that period of atrocities, and relatives of those who lost their lives in resistances against the atrocities.

19 May 2015

The İmralı Delegation that met with KCK executives in Qandil, held a press conference in Diyarbakır/Amed on its return. The delegation said in a statement, “KCK executives declared that they had frozen preparations for a Congress that would have focused on the solution process because of the conduct displayed by President Erdoğan and the AKP government; and especially stated that the KCK was ready to summon Congress within a single day if necessary if the AKP government were to take steps in related matters regarding the process”.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu stated that PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was not under isolation, that the solution process would not progress if no steps were taken regarding disarmament, and that the continuation of visits to İmralı was not meaningful as long as the step of disarmament was not taken.

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Bese Hozat said, “Erdoğan has reverted to a discourse of denial and destruction. In this sense, there is no process in progress. There is no dialogue process either. The dialogue process has been stopped at this stage. And in its current state, it has been abolished”. Cemil Bayık also made a statement saying that they were aiming to call a PKK Congress on the basis of the Dolmabahçe consensus, and were carrying out preparations for it, adding, “But Erdoğan’s intervention in the process, his rejection of negotiations, his rejection of coming to the table, his rejection of one of the parties, and his statement, ‘There is no Kurdish question, it is separatism, whoever speaks of negotiations and parties, this means bringing down the State of Turkey,’ abolished in essence the conditions to realize the Congress”.

In Hakkari’s Yüksekova district, in incidents that began following the funeral ceremony of YPG fighter Mazlum Altekin (Botan Geve), F.Ö. (14) was injured when he was hit by a CS gas cannister fired by police.

20 May 2015

İmralı Delegation Member İdris Baluken stated that Prime Minister Davutoğlu had confessed with his statements that Öcalan was being kept in isolation, adding that only the KCK and Öcalan could take the decision regarding “disarmament”. Baluken stated that it was an immediate necessity for them to meet with Öcalan, warning that the AKP would initiate a comprehensive war if it succeeded at the election.

In a report, the Human Rights Association assessed violations against political parties during parliamentary election campaigns that took place from 23 March to 19 May 2015. According to the report, 126 attacks took place, of which 114 were against the HDP; 49 people, 47 of them HDP members, were injured in these attacks. 125 HDP members were detained by security forces during election campaigning, 8 were arrested, while 32 of them reported being subjected to torture and maltreatment.

In the İspiriz Mountains of Hakkari’s Yüksekova District, special operation units launched an operation supported by helicopters and drones unmanned aerial vehicles [UAVs]. The units attacked civilians that went to the operation area to prevent clashes with CS-gas bombs. Levent Dere received a head injury after being hit by a CS-gas cannister.

It was reported that a specialist corporal and a satellite personnel who disappeared in the Varto District of Muş could have been abducted by the PKK.

21 May 2015

The Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) and the Mesopotamia Lawyers Association (MHD) stated that the prohibition imposed on PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan since 27 July 2011 that prevented him from meeting with his lawyers was a violation of law, the constitution, ECHR and legal precedents.

22 May 2015

Making a statement on the bomb attacks carried out on the HDP Adana and Mersin provincial headquarters, HDP Adana parliamentary candidate Meral Daniş Beştaş stated that they did not believe statements made regarding the identity of the attacker, and that the Prime Minister and the Interior Minister had made “false statements”. Beştaş underlined the fact that they did not think that Savaş Yıldız, the person named as the perpetrator, was a DHKP-C member, adding, “In Turkey, people perceived as perpetrators are either Kurds or leftists. We condemn this stance displayed by the government. They are almost saying that we bombed ourselves”.

Muş Governor Vedat Büyükersoy stated that the gendarmerie specialist corporal and satellite control personnel on field work duty allegedly detained by the PKK had been released during the previous night. It was stated that the 2 persons were at the Varto District Police Directorate and that the investigation continued.

23 May 2015

KCK Executive Council member Murat Karayılan said, “The Turkish Army is displaying a certain mobility aimed at breaching the rules of ceasefire. If it were not for the outstanding care and sensitivity of our forces, clashes could have taken place in many areas by now”. Karayılan added, “I clearly state that we will not opt for violence in any manner, especially until the election is concluded. If any violent incident does occur, it should be known now that it will be caused by State forces. This is clear from our viewpoint”.

İmralı Delegation Spokesperson Sırrı Süreyya Önder stated that the AKP cowered in the face of the interest shown to the HDP, and isolated Öcalan in order to legitimize war.

25 May 2015

4 persons including President of the Turanist Movement Platform Hasan Karabey, who forced two Kurdish students into the basement of the Atsız Culture House Association in Kadıköy, tied their hands and mouths and tortured them, were taken to Kartal Court after being held at the Kadıköy District Police Directorate for four days. The suspects were released by the Duty Prosecutor despite evidence from CCTV camera footage of a store showing them forcing the two students into the association building.

26 May 2015

Shopkeepers in Yüksekova carried out a collective closing-up-shop action before the arrival of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu for the opening ceremony of the newly completed airport. HDP and BDP executives announced that they would not attend the opening ceremony of the airport for which construction had begun in 2010. State officials arriving in the town for the opening were met with protests from the public. The police attacked citizens gathering to protest Erdoğan and Davutoğlu. A child named Duran İşleyen (10) was injured in one eye by a plastic bullet in the police attack.

27 May 2015

A checkpoint was formed at Muş’s Varto District by the armed forces, vehicles and citizens were subjected to identity checks and searches.

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan tweeted, “No one should be surprised if Demirtaş, who allows himself to be used by the lobby trying to end the solution process, turns into Brutus in the eyes of İmralı Island after the election”.

29 May 2015

AKP Chairperson Ahmet Davutoğlu faced intense protests at an election rally he held in Van. Hundreds of people gathered in the square booed AKP Erzurum parliamentary candidate Efkân Ala when he was invited to the stage. The police carried out a violent intervention on the protesting group, detaining tens of people.

29 May 2015

The daily Cumhuriyet newspaper published footage of ammunition including mortars, artillery and rifle ammunition transported to Syria in trailer trucks belonging to MİT, which were stopped on 19 January 2014 following a tip-off. An investigation on “terror” charges was launched against the newspaper. Former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and government officials had claimed at the time that the trailer trucks were not carrying weapons but foodstuff for Turkmens. Prime Minister Davutoğlu stated that the aid was sent to Bayırbucak Turkmens.

31 May 2015

HDP Hizan District Co-Chairperson Abdulkerim Gültekin suffered a brain haemorrhage after he was heavily injured following a blow to his head when village guards attacked HDP members carrying out election campaign work in Siirt.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu announced that they had determined 10 articles comprising structural issues they would prioritize on June 8, stating that the first three were the new Constitution, the solution process, and social consensus. Davutoğlu added that the solution process had reached deadlock on the issue of “disarmament”.

3 June 2015

Hamdullah Öge, driver of an HDP election vehicle that came under fire from long-barreled firearms as it approached the Serpmekaya village of Karlıova for election campaigning, passed away. Details of the attack later emerged, revealing that Öge had been forced to leave the vehicle, was tortured, and then executed by shooting squad.

5 June 2015

A bomb attack was carried out on an HDP rally organized at Diyarbakır/Amed İstasyon Square. Following two consecutive explosions, 5 people lost their lives, and more than 400 people were injured. The alleged igniter of the bombs, Orhan Gönder, was claimed to have been captured in Antep, that he had pleaded guilty, and that he was a member of ISIS. Gönder was arrested on charges of “premeditated murder and membership of an illegal organization. It was also claimed that Gönder had entered Turkey a few days before the rally, and that he had been struck off the Police surveillance list on the day of the attack.

In a press statement, the Human Rights Association drew attention to the fact that the attacks targeting the HDP during the election period were carried out by a special gang structure tolerated by the State. The statement summarized developments from 23 March to 5 June 2015 as follows: “The number of ambushes, attacks, threats and police raids carried out on HDP election bureaus/vehicles, candidates, rallies and workers has reached 176. 7 of these attacks were armed attacks, 5 of them were bomb-attacks, while 4 of them were arson-attacks. 5 people lost their lives in these attacks, while 522 people were injured. Instead of preventing these attacks, the exact opposite course of action was adopted, and 185 HDP members were detained -33 of which who declared they were tortured in detention.”

8 June 2015

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan commented on the election results, saying, “In my opinion, the events that took place during this process will show everyone in a better way, and enable it to be better understood that the AK Party is in fact the only guarantee of security and stability, the only guarantee of the Solution Process, and the only guarantee of the new constitution. Now that the HDP has received 13% of the vote, they should call on Qandil for the PKK to disarm”.

Maksut Doğançioğlu, who was claimed to work in border trade along the Rojava border of the Akçakale District of Urfa, was murdered by a Turkish Army soldier.

9 June 2015

In Diyarbakır/Amed, Yeni İhya Der (The New Rejuvenation Cooperation and Solidarity Association) Chairperson and HÜDA PAR (The Free Cause Party) member Aytaç Baran lost his life in an armed attack. 3 more people lost their lives following an attack carried out with long barrelled weapons in the Şehitlik neighbourhood. HDP and DTK executives issued a public call for calm and common sense.

The verdict was declared in the KCK Trial in Van involving 16 Kurdish politicians. A total of 149 years imprisonment on charges of “membership of an illegal organization” was imposed in the summary judgment hearing of the trial that had continued since 2012.

HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş made a statement on the attacks in Diyarbakır/Amed, saying, “The President and Prime Minister of the country remain silent. Certain groups have taken action to trigger civil war in the country, and the Prime Minister is nowhere to be seen. The President is nowhere to be seen, the ministers have gone missing. The Interior Minister and the Minister of Justice have said nothing. They are probably waiting for turmoil to flare up, for civil war to begin in the country so that they can say, ‘See, and understand the value of the AKP. Once the AKP has lost power, the country has drifted into chaos and disorder’. We will not allow that to happen”.

11 June 2015

The HDP announced a 15-article final declaration following the Party Caucus it held today. The declaration stated, “As the HDP Caucus, we call upon the new government, whichever parties it may include, to continue the ‘Solution Process’ from where it left off. We also demand an immediate end to the isolation imposed on Mr. Öcalan, who is the architect of the ‘Solution Process’, who insisted on peace through all critical periods, and who led the way in the ‘Solution Process’”.

12 June 2015

İmralı Delegation Spokesperson Sırrı Süreyya Önder made a statement to the press following the application they made to the Ministry of Justice to hold a meeting with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. Önder demanded the establishment of a “national coalition”, the involvement in the solution process of an observation committee and an end to the isolation imposed on Öcalan, condemning the AKP and Erdoğan’s anti-solution policies.

12 June 2015

The KCK Executive Council Co-Directorate stated that the AKP Government, which in its 10 years in power had not taken steps for democratization and the solution of the Kurdish question and aggravated problems by making no headway, had come to an end with the June 7 election, adding that new policies had to be introduced. The KCK statement declared, “These new policies are consolidated ceasefire, the freedom of chief negotiator Leader Apo and legal and constitutional reassurances for the agreed upon solution steps via the involvement of Parliament,” adding that a pluralist democratic constitution was necessary for the solution of all problems.

14 June 2015

Deputy Prime Minister and AKP Spokesperson Beşir Atalay said that it had been wrong to halt the solution process before the elections, and that this decision had led to the AKP losing votes in the region. Responding to a question on the issue, Atalay said, “Just when everything was planned and progressing, and when we were almost taking the final steps for disarmament, the creation before the election of an atmosphere as if the process was, in a sense, being postponed until after the election, or its suspension, has been a contributing cause”.

İmralı Delegation Member and Diyarbakır/Amed Member of Parliament İdris Baluken drew attention to the fact that the process had been cut short “on the imminent eve of permanent peace,” adding, “The process must continue from this point”. Baluken also reminded that they had not been able to meet with Öcalan for two and a half months.

15 June 2015

YPG forces seized Tel Abyad (Girê Spî from ISIS. Described as an important base for ISIS after Raqqa, Tel Abyad is of strategic importance also for the Kurds because of its location between the Jazira and Kobani Cantons.

16 June 2015

The application by Abdullah Öcalan’s lawyers to meet with their client was rejected on the grounds that the ferry to İmralı was “in maintenance”.

17 June 2015

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Bese Hozat stated that Turkey had entered a new period with the June 7 general election, saying, “AKP has wasted all the chances it was given,” adding that an arbitrary peace could be possible if equal negotiation conditions were prepared and Parliament became part of the process. Hozat emphasized that for the continuation of the process, official negotiations had to begin, and that such negotiations had to be carried out in a transparent manner, saying, “In this sense, the place where the Kurdish question can be solved is Parliament. Such a process would create its own solution”. Hozat drew attention to the fact that it was an absolute necessity to have a third eye observer in such a process, adding that from now on, both written and visual records of every meeting held at İmralı Island had to be kept, and that documents had to be signed.

18 June 2015

HDP Co-Chairperson Selahattin Demirtaş stated that each statement made by KCK executives was valuable, saying, “We perceive them as statements made in order to contribute to searches for a solution, democracy and peace. They should not be perceived as directives issued to the HDP”.

19 June 2015

HDP Co-Chairperson Figen Yüksekdağ stated that a possible AKP-CHP coalition would have to make progress in the solution process in order to succeed.

22 June 2015

HDK announced the final declaration of its General Assembly Meeting held on 21 June. The declaration saluted the expelling of ISIS from Tell Abyad (Girê Spî), and demanded an end to the isolation imposed on PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.

The meeting application of Öcalan’s family with Abdullah Öcalan, who has been prevented from meeting with the İmralı Delegation since April 5, was also rejected.

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık said, “It is absolutely impossible for us to accept as a solution process a meeting where Leader Apo cannot hold negotiations under free conditions... It is impossible to achieve any result under circumstances where Leader Apo, the chief negotiator, cannot hold negotiations under free conditions. Or rather, a political mindset that does not hold dialogue and negotiations with Leader Apo under free conditions is in any case not sincere regarding the solution”.

23 June 2015

KCK Executive Council Co-Chairperson Cemil Bayık stated that isolation was imposed on Abdullah Öcalan, and that the reason for this was Öcalan’s persistence regarding the declaration announced on February 28, and his demand for negotiations to begin. Bayık said, “The continuation of isolation means war. We have always stated this clearly, the way our Leader is treated is reason for war or peace”.

25 June 2015

Following an ISIS attack on Kobani, 206 people, a majority of them children and women, lost their lives, and more than 300 people were injured. At a time when YPG had captured Tell Abyad, and advanced towards Raqqa, how ISIS had infiltrated controlled areas was widely debated. The possibility of ISIS entering the area through Turkey, and claims that ISIS members fleeing the clash that ensued following the attack had taken shelter in Turkey were mentioned.

26 June 2015

Selahattin Demirtaş said, “There is a solution process that has been left half-finished. Let us begin anew, not from where we left, but let us now make it a transparent process, and involve Parliament, too. Let us have negotiations under equal conditions. Let us carry out a process with the involvement of an observation committee, with decisions taken brought to Parliament and made law. This should then be followed by disarmament, so that internal peace can be secured”.

27 June 2015

Democratic Society Congress (DTK) Co-Chairperson Selma Irmak said, “Mr. Öcalan must be free to secure permanent peace. Without Mandela, no one could have secured peace in South Africa between peoples. In the same manner, without Abdullah Öcalan, no one can secure a lasting peace in Turkey”.

3 July 2015

The İmralı Delegation stated that making the ending of the solution process a matter of negotiation in coalition talks led to “alarm bells” ringing for peace. The delegation stated that obstacles preventing the delegation holding meetings with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan had to be removed, and that the solution process had to become State policy for the new government that was to be formed.

11 July 2015

The KCK Executive Council Co-Directorate made a statement on the ceasefire that has continued for 2,5 years, declaring, “Our Freedom Movement will no longer accept the exploitation of our ceasefire position, and will take a stance against policies that have left the Kurdish question unsettled. We will no longer tolerate those who exploit our patient and reasonable position, and implement a policy of delay diversion”. The statement also voiced the claim that the State was “seeking to depopulate Kurdistan” with dam and kalekol constructions, also referring to arrests targeting the Kurdish political movement.

12 July 2015

An attack took place on a municipal vehicle in the Göle district of Ardahan. All claimed to be HDP members, 65 year old Kanber Morkoç, father of a guerrilla, lost his life in the attack, while Sabri Morkoç and Altan Akın were injured. A first statement made by the Ardahan Governorate declared that the attack had been carried out by the PKK, and mainstream media published reports that supported this statement.

14 July 2015

The HDP Central Executive Committee (MYK) made a written statement condemning the isolation implemented on PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.

The İHD (Human Rights’ Association) Diyarbakır/Amed Bureau announced its report on rights’ violations in the region that took place in the first 6 months of 2015. The report stated that a total of 6 thousand 912 rights’ violations had taken place.

İmralı Delegation member Pervin Buldan commented on the İmralı ban imposed on the delegation, saying, “It is probable that the State is considering a new format regarding the process. However, we have no information regarding this format. They are probably communicating this format to Mr. Öcalan, but Mr. Öcalan may be opposing it”.

15 July 2015

In the third round of coalition talks, the AKP visited the HDP. It was reported that the solution process rather than coalition talks had been the focus of the meeting. The HDP presented the AKP Delegation with a document containing the headings, Democracy, Justice and Peace. İmralı Delegation Spokesperson Sırrı Süreyya Önder said that no search to form a government could be carried out independently of the peace and solution process.

The forest fire that started in forested land on Cudi Mountain, which caused the destruction of more than 5 thousand fruit trees and many animals to perish could only be put out after three days. Allegedly caused by mortars fired from the Çalışkan Border Military Battalion, the inadequacy of attempts to fight the fire was criticized.

17 July 2015

The HPG stated that the increase observed in the mobility [activity] of the Turkish army continued, and that the Turkish Army continued its massacres targeting the natural heritage of Kurdistan in many areas and especially in Botan by starting forest fires.

Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan said that the solution process had not ended, adding, “A coalition government will be formed, and the process will function within the framework agreed upon with the other party. It may be referred to differently, but we remain loyal to the content and spirit of the process”.

19 July 2015

PYD Co-Chairperson Salih Muslim said, “The June 25 Kobani attack was the outcome of a major plan, and Turkey was definitely involved in this plan at a political level, or a different level. The attacks were carried out via Turkey, the ammunition was brought through Turkey”.

AKP Spokesperson Beşir Atalay argued that the solution process would again gather speed once the new government is formed.

* Based on [the reports of] İMC TV, Al Jazeera Türk, Wikipedia, bianet, Kurdistan Center for Strategic Studies, the chronology prepared by İrfan Aktan and various other sources.

