



Marxist Leninist Communist Party / Turkey & Kurdistan

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

July 2026 #275

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No to NATO! Protests Against the War Summit in Ankara

The last time an annual NATO summit was held in Turkey was in 2004. Even then, both the Turkish colonial state and the imperialist war alliance NATO were confronted with a strong revolutionary and anti-imperialist movement.

The spectrum of resistance ranged from mass protests and demonstrations in the streets to targeted, practical-political and politico-military actions. Neither the Turkish state nor its imperialist allies were given a respite.

The determined mobilization made clear that the NATO summit would not be accepted without resistance and sent a clear signal. The state, too, draws its lessons from past experiences and had been preparing for months to host this year's summit. Every spark of resistance and rebellion was to be extinguished in its infancy. To this end, hundreds of people were arrested in advance, large-scale raids were carried out, cities were sealed off, and political actions were banned. Thousands of people were taken into custody. Despite all this, the revolutionary, democratic, and anti-imperialist forces refused to be intimidated. The NATO summit did not remain free of protests. Resistance to the meeting of the war alliance also took shape internationally. Despite the well-known repression, internationalists made their way to Ankara to join in the protests. NATO, as an instrument of imperialist war and power politics, is a common opponent of the oppressed worldwide. In addition, demonstrations and rallies were held across Europe against NATO's war policy and the war summit. The NATO summit is nothing other than a meeting to prepare and coordinate imperialist war

policy. Demonstrations were held in several major European cities, calling for withdrawal from NATO, an end to global militarization, and the release of all political prisoners. In Turkey itself, the anti-imperialist movement mobilized under extremely difficult conditions. In numerous cities, conditions were effectively those of a state of emergency; assemblies were banned, Ankara was largely sealed off during the summit and placed under the control of a massive deployment of police and intelligence services. Added to this were mass preventive arrests, with which the state sought to prevent protests before they could even take place. Nevertheless, the revolutionary and democratic forces succeeded in holding actions and rallies in many cities. Initiatives against NATO had called for nationwide protests. Even before the summit, people gathered in various cities to denounce not only militarization but also the repression of the Turkish state. In view of the massive repression and state mobilization, the diverse mobilization of resistance against NATO can be regarded as a significant sign of protest.



11 Years After Suruç The Struggle for Justice Continues

11 years after the Suruç massacre, commemorative events for the 33 people who were killed were held in numerous countries. In July 2015, hundreds of young people set out for Kobanê, the city in Rojava that had been devastated by ISIS. Their promise was: "Together we defended it, together we will rebuild it!" Under this slogan, socialist youth across Turkey and Northern Kurdistan launched a campaign aimed at building a bridge between Turkey's revolutionary movement and the Rojava Revolution. Following the heroic defense of Kobanê and

the victory of the revolutionary Kurdish forces, defending the Rojava Revolution as a whole and rebuilding the war-ravaged areas became a matter of revolutionary importance.

A countrywide solidarity campaign mobilized to organize solidarity and build a bridge. On July 20, 2015, a final press conference was due to be held in the city of Suruç, shortly before the border with Kobanê. However, during the statement, an ISIS attack took place, killing 33 people. This massacre was not an acci-

dent, but the result of deliberate cooperation between the Turkish fascist regime and ISIS. To this day, comrades and the relatives of those killed, organized in the “Suruç Families Initiative,” continue to fight for clarification of the circumstances and for justice. In the 11th year, the voices demanding accountability have not been silenced. On the contrary, this year saw numerous actions in Turkey and Kurdistan as well as across Europe. The bereaved families, together with revolutionary, democratic, and progressive forces, will not abandon the struggle until justice prevails.

To date, none of those responsible has been held accountable. Instead, numerous survivors of the massacre have been arrested. Those demanding justice have likewise been intimidated or threatened. Remembering those who were killed in Suruç therefore remains an urgent anti-fascist task. As every year, in Turkey and Northern Kurdistan, the graves of those killed were visited at 11:50 a.m., the time of the attack in 2015. In Istanbul, Bursa, Samsun, Amed, Muş, Elazığ, Urfa, Mardin, Şırnak, Hakkari, Ağrı, Dersim, Wan, and Hatay, relatives, comrades, representatives

of democratic and revolutionary organizations, trade unions, and members of parliament from the DEM Party gathered. Numerous demonstrations, rallies, and press statements were also held that day in many other cities across Turkey and Northern Kurdistan. A commemoration was also held at 11:50 a.m. in front of the Amara Cultural Center, the site of the massacre. Speakers emphasized that Turkey’s revolutionary movement had not been defeated despite this devastating attack and the many other massacres and assaults carried out by the state.

The dream of building a bridge between the revolution in Turkey and the revolution in Kurdistan continues to live on through ongoing struggles. The speeches at the commemoration made clear that, despite all its attempts at intimidation, the fascist regime had failed to destroy this bridge between the peoples. The liberation of the peoples of Turkey goes hand in hand with the liberation of Kurdistan. The dreams of the 33 continue to live on. The event concluded with the slogan: “Long live the fraternity of the peoples!” Commemorative events were also held in Rojava, including in

Kobanê, Qamişlo, and Hesekê. For the people of Rojava, commemorating the Suruç massacre has a very particular significance.

Numerous massacres have shaped the history of the Kurdish people's resistance and are commemorated every year. Yet the Suruç massacre represents a decisive turning point, as it was effectively a declaration of war by the fascist regime against the revolutionary Kurdish movement, the Rojava Revolution, and all those who supported it. Moreover, the practical act of solidarity expressed by the revolutionary youth at the time holds profound significance for the peoples of Rojava, who continue to defend their revolution to this day.

Especially now, at a time when the revolution is under greater threat than ever, commemorating Suruç is also a practical call for international solidarity. At one commemoration, a young communist woman from Rojava said: "In these times, it is of great importance to stand up for Kurdistan. We are currently going through a decisive phase. The jihadist gangs of al-Golani are imposing capitulation and annihilation on our people under the gu-

ise of 'integration.' The people of Rojava must rise up and put everything else aside. Individual resentments, silence, all of this must be set aside; this is not the time for that. Now is the time to organize. Now is the time to stand up for the revolution in Rojava. That is why we say: The call of Pirsûs [the Kurdish name for the city of Suruç] is a call to stand up for the revolution." Various revolutionary youth organizations from Europe took the initiative this year to spread the stories of the 33 "dream travelers." Their commemoration is at the same time a promise to continue the internationalist struggle. In Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Austria, and Switzerland, demonstrations, rallies, and cultural events were held. At the demonstration in Berlin, representatives of the People's Caravan addressed the crowd. This year, the internationalist People's Caravan set out for Kobanê to defend the Rojava Revolution in the face of a large-scale campaign by HTS aimed at its liquidation. They emphasized that those who fell in Suruç remain role models for all internationalists and that solidarity must find practical forms of expression.



The Crisis of the Bourgeois Opposition in Turkey: On the Split within the CHP

With the so-called annulment ruling, which annulled the CHP's last regular party congress and removed the party leadership elected at that time, the fascist judiciary set in motion a process that has led to a deep split within the party. On one side stands the camp around former chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu; on the other stands the camp around the ousted chairman Özgür Özel and Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, who was replaced by a state-appointed trustee. Behind this judicial decision lies a political objective of the regime: to weaken the CHP as the central bourgeois opposition force and the AKP's main electoral

competitor. Previously, the removal and imprisonment of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu triggered a mass uprising whose mobilization potential continues to exist. Political-science and historical experience show that the emergence of two competing centers within a party can effectively amount to a split. Since the legal center around Kılıçdaroğlu has so far failed to establish sufficient dominance within the CHP, it had not yet dared to bring the cadres of the Özel camp before disciplinary committees and carry out a comprehensive purge. Conversely, the Özel camp had also been unable to immedia-

tely announce the formation of a new party. First, this step had to be politically legitimized vis-à-vis the traditional CHP electorate and the public by creating the impression that no other option remained. At this point, the split already existed in practice; it has now also become officially visible. It should be emphasized that this development cannot be attributed solely to internal conflicts within the CHP, but must be understood in the context of fascist state intervention and political pressure on the party. At the same time, the regime is attempting to create the impression that existing internal party disputes are the actual cause of the split. A discourse has also become widespread within the working-class and left-wing movement that views the split within the CHP primarily as an internal party problem. This portrayal must be challenged. Concealing the political causes of the split contributes to losing sight of the state interventions and political machinations of those in power. After Istanbul's municipal administration was brought under state control, several CHP mayors were replaced by state-appointed trustees, and dozens of CHP politicians were imprisoned, a new

phase of the regime's attacks on the bourgeois opposition began. To believe that these attacks will end here would be politically short-sighted. Rather, it is to be expected that political pressure on the circles around Özel and İmamoğlu will continue to increase. The course of the process demonstrates above all the far-reaching concentration of political power in the hands of the regime and the effectiveness of the instruments it employs to secure its power. Despite the developments of recent years that have led to the establishment and consolidation of the current model of rule, the regime continues to consider elections necessary to secure its political legitimacy. It assumes that without corresponding electoral legitimacy it cannot permanently stabilize its rule. Against this backdrop, weakening the CHP as the central opposition electoral force is of particular political significance for the AKP.

The Construction of a Centralized Presidential System

The system of government introduced in Turkey as the "presidential system" was established by restricting Parliament's powers of oversight over the executive as well as substantially cur-

tailing its legislative powers. The president was granted extensive powers to issue presidential decrees. The constitutional referendum provided this system with its constitutional foundation. In this way, political power, which is based in particular on the alliance between the AKP and MHP, was largely centralized. In Nazi Germany, the political monopoly was established by eliminating all parties outside the NSDAP, particularly the communist and social democratic party. Political pluralism, and consequently free elections, were abolished. Trade unions, cultural and political organizations, professional associations, clubs, and freedom of the press were likewise systematically destroyed. Today, however, fascist regimes can also maintain a concentration of political power without completely abolishing these institutions. They formally continue to exist, but their powers are restricted, their substance hollowed out, and they are increasingly rendered dysfunctional. In Turkey, the path toward establishing the present system of government under Erdoğan's political-Islamist dictatorship was paved, among other things, by the fact that the

political will expressed in the June 7, 2015 elections could not lead to the formation of a government. Erdoğan declared the Dolmabahçe Agreement and thus the peace process with the PKK between 2013 and 2015 to be over, broke off the negotiations, and declared the elections invalid. The subsequent Suruç massacre, the attacks on the Medya Defense Zones, the brutal attacks on the self-government resistance in Northern Kurdistan, the lifting of the immunity of HDP deputies, and the arrest of the HDP co-chairs marked further decisive turning points.

During this period, today's political alliance between the AKP and MHP emerged. In the years that followed, this alliance expanded its influence over the bureaucracy and judiciary and increasingly brought key state institutions under its control. This played an especially important role in the subsequent attacks on the CHP. The judicial bureaucracy has moved far away from criteria such as legality, conformity with the law, independence, and impartiality. It does not orient itself toward the constitution, laws, universal law, international law, or the primacy of agreements and treaties, but rather toward the

decrees of the fascist chief Erdogan, whose primary objective is to maintain the political monopoly. The CHP under Kılıçdaroğlu's leadership also contributed to this process. In 2015, it avoided attempting to form a government with the HDP and contributed to the political situation developing in favor of the later AKP-MHP alliance. It voted in favor of authorizations for military action, supported the attacks on the self-government resistance, and voted for the lifting of the immunity of HDP deputies. In doing so, it assumed a political role within the process through which the present chief regime was established. After the CHP had fulfilled a certain function in this process and increasingly became a political obstacle itself, it ultimately found itself at the center of state attacks. Weakening the concentration of political power around the CHP thus became a strategically important objective of the regime.

The "New Party"

The center around Özel, which distinguishes itself from the previous party leadership and is connected to İmamoğlu's circle, controls a substantial part of the CHP's existing organizational structures and support base. Its support

among the electorate is also politically significant. This has made this center an important point of reference in the confrontation between the fascist government and the bourgeois opposition. Through the mass rallies that have continued since March 19, 2025, the Özel-İmamoğlu camp has expanded its political mobilization and managed to keep large sections of the population in the streets. The regime could also take further legal steps against Özgür Özel and, if necessary, restrict his ability to act politically. At present, it is not yet possible to determine whether the Özel-İmamoğlu camp will develop a consistent political resistance against the regime.

It should nevertheless also be noted that the continued failure to create a united revolutionary alternative, despite the existence of objective conditions for such a development, remains a decisive factor. The mobilization of the working class and the oppressed on the basis of an independent and consistent political line of struggle, led by a united revolutionary center, will be crucial in determining the direction in which the new opposition formation develops.