

KURDISH WOMEN'S MOUVEMENT IN EUROPE (TJK-E)



DOSSIER ON ASSASSINATION OF KURDISH ACTIVISTS IN PARIS

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1. Introduction

On December 23, 2022, three Kurdish activists, Emine Kara (also known as Evîn Goyi), Abdurrahman Kızıl and Mehmet Şîrîn Aydın (known by his artist's name: Mîr Perwer) were brutally murdered in Paris. This targeted massacre of the Kurdish community in Paris caused a deep wound in the hearts of the Kurdish people and their friends. It was immediately associated with another massacre of Kurds in Paris: the triple femicide of Sakine Cansız, Fidan Doğan, and Leyla Şaylemez on January 9, 2013. These two cases, almost exactly 10 years apart, are expressions of a wide-ranging warfare that aims to annihilate the Kurdish people's quest for liberation and democracy. The fact that leading revolutionary women were assassinated in both cases is an indicator of both the women's liberationist character of our movement and fascism's contempt for struggling women. In both cases, although the circumstances differ in some ways, the Kurdish community has been pointing to the Turkish state intelligence as the organizer and executor of these crimes. The 2013 massacre had been classified as a state secret by the French authorities, leading to credible allegations that the French state is covering up for the Turkish state. This time too the many open questions have moved the Kurdish community to demand a clear stance and answers from the French state.

Patriarchal violence is one of the main tools used by violent actors to suffocate and attack society and its many freedom quests. The Kurdish women's liberation movement is a key dynamic in Kurdistan's freedom struggle and the wider global movement for democracy and peace. Over a period of more than four decades, it has built up a large, international movement of freedom-loving women beyond borders. The movement is struggling towards the horizon of World Democratic Women's Confederation as an antidote to the violence of the patriarchal and capitalist nation-state system. This struggle has been implemented in different parts of the Middle East and in the diaspora. It became most visible during the fight against the so-called Islamic State.

At the same time, the targeting of Kurdish women has long been a major component of the Turkish state's special warfare. Over the past years, a large number of leading Kurdish women have been murdered in targeted assassinations, including drone strikes, by the Turkish army and intelligence. This has led the Kurdish women's movement to speak about 'political femicide' as a weapon used systematically by the second largest NATO army. These attacks are not possible without the support and assistance by Turkey's allies, including France.

The following dossier aims to provide an overview of the events in Paris. It includes our reading of such assassinations through the lens of 'political femicide'. We refuse to see politically-motivated massacres as isolated events perpetrated by individuals. Instead, we urge the public to understand the political background that allows such crimes to be committed in the heart of Paris. We believe that this quest for truth and justice is not in the interest of the Kurdish people only, who face daily harassment, violence, and criminalization in France. Rather, a full investigation is a matter relating to the values that the French state has historically embellished itself with. In the absence of justice and truth for the massacres in Paris, the public should be concerned about the meaning of democracy, freedom, equality and justice in France.

The city of love has become a city of death for Kurdish people. We will do everything in our hands to turn Paris into the city of truth and justice. We invite all defenders of democracy, freedom, and women's rights to join our honorable and just cause.



2. Background: A trail of blood in Paris - from 2013 to 2022

On January 9, 2013, three Kurdish women, Sakine Cansız, Fidan Doğan and Leyla Şaylemez, were murdered in the Kurdistan Information Office in Rue Lafayette in Paris by an agent of the Turkish state. For almost 10 years, Kurdish society has sought justice through a full investigation of this triple political feminicide. Sakine Cansız was a co-founder of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), and a legendary revolutionary of the Kurdistan women's movement. Fidan Doğan was a leading figure in the Kurdish movement's diplomacy in Europe. Leyla Şaylemez was a young and vibrant organizer of the Kurdish youth movement. Although the connection with the Turkish state was evident from the beginning, the French authorities refused to solve this murder in a transparent way. The case was classified as a state secret and the details were thus covered up. The murderer, Ömer Güney, an agent of the Turkish secret service, mysteriously died in his prison cell a few weeks before the trial. It was clear to the Kurdish society that without a full explanation and consequences from the French state, this murder would soon be followed by others. By the Kurdish women's movement, this massacre of leading figures of their struggle was seen as an attack on their organizing against all forms of power and violence.

On December 23, 2022, the same movement was again the target of a terrorist attack in Paris, this time in Rue d'Enghien. This time, too, three Kurdish political activists were brutally murdered: Emine Kara (also known as Evîn Goyi), Abdurrahman Kızıl and Mîr Perwer (Mehmet Şîrîn Aydın). Three other people were seriously injured in the attack. Emine Kara was a well-known activist who played an important role in the Kurdish women's movement. She fought against the so-called Islamic State in Syria and went to Europe for medical reasons. The attack took place shortly before the 10th anniversary of the first massacre in Paris. It was committed by a heavily armed 69-year-old man named William M., who shot at the Ahmet Kaya Kurdish Cultural Center and then at a restaurant run by Kurds and at a barbershop also run by Kurds. It was the Kurds who were present at the hair salon that arrested the killer and called the

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police. At the time of the crime, a meeting of representatives of the Kurdish women's movement in Europe was scheduled to take place in order to plan the 10th anniversary of the first massacre. If the meeting had not been postponed, there would have been many more victims.

Quickly, the authorities and the media started to portray the case as a "racially-motivated act". However, it is clear to us as the Kurdish women's movement and to all Kurdish organizations that this was a political terrorist attack, a crime that seems to have been planned in advance. The perpetrator had been released from prison only a few days earlier after committing other violent attacks. Based on our experience with the French authorities, and given the many threats and attacks by the Turkish state against Kurdish activists in Kurdistan and in Europe, we do not view this targeted act as a single racist act. Shortly before, representatives of the Turkish state had threatened to take the fight against Kurdish "terrorists" in France into their own hands. Such expressions are directed against the democratic Kurdish movement, which is committed to peace, democracy, freedom, and justice.

By now, it has been revealed that the order for the first massacre came from Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the chief of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT), Hakan Fidan. Although this information had been confirmed by Turkish sources, the French administration of the time treated these as 'state secrets'. This politically-motivated behavior was a major blow to any quest for truth and justice. It grossly undermined the credibility of the French authorities. In this sense, the second Paris massacre (2022) represents a continuation of the first Paris massacre (2013).

In both cases, the killers were pathologized. In the case of Ömer Güney, issues around his health condition served as a convenient explanation for his sudden death. Before any proper assessment or investigation, William M., the French murderer in the second massacre, was quickly labelled as 'mentally ill'. While actual health conditions should be taken into consideration, the framing and handling of such information have often been taken as an occasion to further blur the process of justice-seeking. Alternative explanations for murderous behavior or excuses for delays in the investigations help to cover up any potential political implications.

Even 10 years after the murder of the three women in Paris, we see that there will be no justice without the commitment of the Kurdish community and circles of solidarity. Why are the French authorities behaving politically? What does this mean for values like freedom, democracy and women's struggle in France? It is not enough to bring to justice only the person who used the murder weapon. The French authorities must do everything possible to bring to justice those who planned and organized these assassinations. If all the clues point to a political background, then no stone must be left unturned. The lack of truth, justice, and accountability opens the door to more violence.

Even if this year's murder was not committed by a Turkish citizen, many questions remain unanswered. The timing of events is enough to raise an entire set of questions about the motivation behind the crime. It is important to ask: Who benefits from the latest assassination? Who drove the perpetrator to the crime scene? How could someone recently released from detention plan and commit such a massacre? How can it be that a community subject to constant surveillance by France's criminalization policies can fall victim to such an act, despite months of warnings to the French authorities about threats from fascist Turkish groups? As long as these questions remain unanswered, the responsibility lies with the French state. If this time too the

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French authorities cover up the crime instead of investigating it, we will consider them a party in the massacre.

To the Kurdish community, it does not matter who exactly pulled the trigger. What matters more is who ordered the attack and who recruited the killer. The fact is that the political atmosphere conditions the possibility for such massacres. It is highly likely that the latest massacre was politically motivated. The world must not allow the Turkish state to carry its war against the Kurds to Europe.



3. The Turkish State's War on the Kurdish People

For years now, the Erdoğan regime has openly signalled that it will be bringing its war against the Kurds to Europe. This background is crucial to understanding our reading of events. The latest massacre in Paris cannot be seen as isolated from these threats and previous assassinations.

Under the Erdoğan regime, which has created crisis after crisis over two decades, the Turkish state has become a destabilizing, aggressive, and militaristic actor in the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to its systematic violence against Kurds and opposition within its borders (including civilian massacres, mass imprisonment, large-scale attacks on democracy, etc.), the Erdoğan regime has extended its war against the Kurds in Turkey to Iraq and Syria. Although these cross-border military operations systematically violate the sovereignty of states, the international community has so far remained silent. It has routinely used jihadists like al Qaeda and ISIS as auxiliaries in its many wars in the region. Turkey has armed, funded, and trained entire Islamist battalions to be used as militia in Syria, Libya, and Armenia. These have become infamous for their war crimes, including the abduction, torture and execution of

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civilians, sexualized violence against women and children, the destruction and looting of nature and historical sites, among many other acts of violence. By occupying Kurdish areas in northern Iraq (Başur) and northern Syria (Rojava), Erdoğan is advancing his neo-Ottoman plans. The Kurdish people's resistance has prevented these expansionist plans, not least in the battle against the so-called Islamic State. While countries like the US and France have supported the Kurdish people's fight against ISIS, they have also actively sponsored the Turkish state's crimes against the Kurds, thus indirectly aiding both Turkey and ISIS and sacrificing the Kurdish people and the possibility of peace and democracy in the region for their own profit-driven interests. The French people have had their own tragic encounters with the merciless violence of ISIS. In this sense, preventing the empowerment of this terrorist mentality and structure, enabled by Turkey, a NATO member and ally of France, is in the public interest of everyone.



4. Femicide as a Weapon of Warfare

Today, the Kurdish resistance enjoys worldwide sympathy and solidarity, especially through the struggle of Kurdish women. Evîn Goyi was one of the women leading the fight against ISIS in northern and eastern Syria. Like her, many other leading Kurdish women who fought against ISIS subsequently became the target of Erdoğan's death squads. Targeted assassinations of Kurdish women has become Turkish state policy. In October 2022, our comrade Nagihan Akarsel, a leading figure of the Kurdistan women's liberation movement was assassinated by the Turkish Intelligence in front of her house in the Southern/Iraqi Kurdish town of Sulaimaniyah.

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As the Kurdish women's liberation movement, we do not entrust states or patriarchal institutions with justice for the crimes committed against us. We are convinced that the mechanisms and laws of the dominant system are by design unable to prevent and abolish patriarchal violence. Our perspective is a long-term struggle to dismantle all of the sexist mentalities and cultures that enable the violence experienced by women as individuals and in collectives on a daily basis. Patriarchal violence tears the fabric of society and creates a world of ugliness, hierarchy, domination, and injustice.

We do not treat feminicides of any kind - whether so-called 'intimate' crimes or political assassinations - as isolated events. Without the prior existence of climates of violence and impunity that normalize patriarchal terror against women, femicide would not fulfil its function as a weapon of war and intimidation. Similar to our sisters in Latin America, in our analysis of femicide, we center the role of the state. Without the complicity of authorities in charge of security and justice, the environment of impunity would be impossible.

In recent months, women all over the world have taken to the streets with the slogan of the Kurdish women's movement - Jin - Jiyan - Azadî! (Woman, Life, Freedom). In the Kurdish struggle for freedom, this slogan has become a rooted social legacy and philosophy. It underpins the path for liberation and democracy by emphasizing that these values and aims are only achievable through the freedom of women. This philosophy of life is the opposite of Erdoğan's misogynistic, authoritarian, and violent ideology. In our eyes, Erdoğan is taking revenge on behalf of all patriarchal mindsets and groups that try to prevent the liberation of women, including ISIS.

Our notion of 'women's revolution' is a radical quest to struggle against this system on a global scale, starting with our autonomous forms of organization, education, and self-defence. Our efforts are not limited to Kurdistan but join the many resistance and organization efforts of millions of women and numerous social movements around the world.

Despite these attacks, we will not give up our struggle. We owe it to our women friends to continue their struggle for freedom, justice and democracy. Just as our friends Sakine, Fidan, Leyla and Evîn fought for the liberation of women and peoples in their lifetime, from the torturous prisons of Turkey to the streets of Syria invaded by ISIS, we will use all means available to us to strengthen our resistance and continue the path of women's freedom.

We are aware that these attacks are an attempt to break our will for freedom. These attacks do not only target us as the Kurdish women's movement but also all those who struggle and fight for the liberation of women and society. But we are becoming more and more. Our answer is: "Our revenge will be the women's revolution!"



5. The Importance of Solidarity and Common Struggle

For many years, we have said: The Kurdish people living in Europe demand democracy, equality, and fair treatment in law. They expect European states to implement their own laws when it comes to the Kurds and the Kurdish question, without approaching them through the lens of their political interests.

We demand a political solution in Kurdistan and a profound change in policy in France and Europe regarding the situation. European countries must be pressured to stop supporting and covering the Turkish state, a NATO member, with diplomatic and military means. Instead of working for a peaceful, political solution, European states today are complicit in war crimes. Through the cooperation between European states and Turkey, many Kurdish individuals, such as Emine Kara, are denied asylum. Turkey's war crimes within Turkish borders, as well as in Syria and Iraq, including allegations that the army is using chemical weapons against Kurdish guerrillas, remain unaddressed. In this respect, Europe's policy contributes to this war, and is far from supporting peace and democracy. We demand from France and the European Union to urgently bring the Turkish president Erdogan before an international court. As we see that governments are hesitant to take action, we call on the public to join our efforts to put pressure on the relevant institutions of national governments and of the international system.

From women and women's movements, we expect a commitment to solidarity, a common struggle against all forms of patriarchal violence. Women must not allow their cities to become gravesites of resisting women. We will surrender neither to Turkish state terrorism nor to the French state's political deceptions and complicity.

Jin - Jiyan - Azadî!

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