

## ***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

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**Name:** Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)

**Type of Organization:**

- Armed insurgent group
- political party
- and popular-mobilization group

**Ideologies and Affiliations:**

- Kurdish Nationalism
- Apoism
- Marxist-Leninism
- Jineology
- Democratic Confederalism

**Place of Origin:**

Southeast Turkey

**Year of Origin:**

1978

**Founder(s):**

Abdullah Öcalan, Cemal Bayik, Murat Karayilan, Kemal Pir, Mahzum Korkmaz, Mazlum Dogan, Riza Altun

**Places of Operation:**

Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Europe

**Overview**

*Also Known As:*

- Freedom and Democracy Congress of Kurdistan<sup>1</sup>
- Hezan Parastina Gel<sup>2</sup>
- Kongra-Gel (KGK)<sup>3</sup>
- Kongra Gele Kurdistan<sup>4</sup>
- Kongreya Azadi u Demokrasya Kurdistan (KADEK)<sup>5</sup>
- Kurdistan Freedom Falcons<sup>6</sup>
- Kurdistan Freedom Brigade<sup>7</sup>
- Kurdistan Freedom Hawks<sup>8</sup>
- Kurdistan Halk Kongresi (Kurdistan People's Congress)<sup>9</sup>
- Kurdish Liberation Hawks<sup>10</sup>
- Kurdistan Labor Party<sup>11</sup>
- Kurdistan Ozgurluk Sahinleri<sup>12</sup>
- Kurdistan People's Congress<sup>13</sup>
- Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan<sup>14</sup>
- People's Defense Force (HPG)<sup>15</sup>
- Teyrbazên Azadiya Kurdistan<sup>16</sup>

*Executive Summary*

Abdullah Öcalan founded the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in [Turkey](#) [1] in 1978.<sup>17</sup> While the PKK's manifesto "...explicitly called for the creation of an independent Kurdish state," the group embraced Marxism to justify its Kurdish-separatist war as part of a global class struggle and revolution.<sup>18</sup> The PKK also utilizes violence to destroy or subsume any other Kurdish nationalist movement that opposes it or deviates from its specific goals.<sup>19</sup> The PKK uses car bombs, suicide bombings, abductions, and assassinations against civilians, foreign tourists, and politicians alongside its small-arms attacks on Turkish security forces.<sup>20</sup>

Öcalan, born a peasant in southeastern Turkey, propagated his ideology in the wake of the 1980 military coup in Turkey.<sup>21</sup>

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Only a year after officially founding his party, he fled to Syria in light of Turkey's increasing military counterinsurgency activity.<sup>22</sup> Between 1979 and 1998, the Syrian government sheltered Öcalan in Damascus or in the Beka'a Valley of Lebanon.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the PKK carried out an armed struggle against the Turkish state and carried out terrorist attacks on Turkish military targets and civilians domestically and abroad.<sup>24</sup> The PKK "is estimated to have been responsible for the deaths of more than 30,000 Turkish security force members and civilians," according to the U.S. State Department.<sup>25</sup>

Despite his capture and incarceration in February of 1999, Abdullah Öcalan continues to significantly influence Kurdish politics.<sup>26</sup> He has since published 10 books, and in 2013, he signed a peace treaty with the Turkish government on behalf of the PKK from inside his jail cell.<sup>27</sup> Öcalan's ideology has evolved during his imprisonment. His trademark brands of feminism ("jineology"), Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and Kurdish revolutionary nationalism have remained the core functions of what his followers have often referenced as "Apoism" ("apo" meaning uncle in Kurdish). Since 2004, inspired by the writings of leftist political philosopher Murray Bookchin, Öcalan has shifted his ideology toward the promotion of democratic confederalism.<sup>28</sup>

The PKK has undergone numerous name changes and mergers in order to subsume all other Kurdish political and militant movements and distance itself from its violent actions. Prior to 2005, the PKK leadership consisted solely of a central committee overseen by Öcalan, with no regional chapters.<sup>29</sup> In 2005, the PKK renamed itself the Kongra-Gel and compartmentalized violent activities under a newly formed military wing, People's Defense Forces (HPG).<sup>30</sup> In 2007, the PKK formed the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) as an umbrella organization including both the PKK and other Kurdish movements in Syria (PYD), Iraq (PÇDK), and Iran (PJAK).<sup>31</sup> The formation of the KCK was an attempt by the PKK to localize Kurdish struggles within each nation while providing a mechanism that unites each movement under the dominant political ideology of the PKK.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Doctrine***

Despite the PKK's consistent adherence to Abdullah Öcalan's ideological leadership and prioritization of Kurdish identity and Marxism-Leninism, the PKK has proven itself to be ideologically flexible.<sup>33</sup>

The 1978 PKK manifesto "...explicitly called for the creation of an independent Kurdish state..." yet the PKK has more recently come to be defined by its transnational and "democratic confederalist" agenda.<sup>34</sup> The PKK, like many other Kurdish organizations, has carried out attacks against the Turkish military and security forces with the long-term objective of the creation of an autonomous region in Turkey similar to the Kurdistan Region in Iraq. The PKK has also asserted additional goals, including the preservation of Kurdish culture and political rights.<sup>35</sup> It pursues these goals in part by pressuring Turkey through violent attacks targeting tourists and by gaining the support of international actors.<sup>36</sup>

In the late 1970s, socialist movements were extremely popular in Turkey.<sup>37</sup> Öcalan saw an opportunity to align his movement with leftists, realizing that he had to disrupt social hierarchies within traditional Kurdish society in order to attract rural members to his new organization.<sup>38</sup> The PKK's founders considered themselves Marxists, but at the fifth PKK congress, members emphasized their opposition to Soviet-era socialism and vowed to modernize their socialist practices.<sup>39</sup>

Öcalan remains a prominent influencer on Kurdish politics within the region even from jail. He has since published ten books, and in 2013, signed a peace treaty with the Turkish government on behalf of the PKK from inside his jail cell.<sup>40</sup> Since his incarceration, his ideology has also evolved. His trademark brands of feminism ("jineology"), Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and Kurdish revolution have remained the core functions of Apoism. Since 2004, his more recent inspiration

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from Murray Bookchin pushed his ideology toward the promotion of democratic confederalism.<sup>41</sup>

Jineology is an ideology created by Öcalan that dictates that women's revolution against the patriarchy is an essential component of creating a free society.<sup>42</sup> ("Jin" means "woman" in Kurdish.) With both jineology and his communist dogma, Öcalan sought to disrupt tribal and traditional feudal practices by breaking down gendered boundaries.<sup>43</sup> The term was first referenced in his work "The Sociology of Freedom" in 2003.<sup>44</sup>

In 2003, Öcalan reformulated the ideological basis of the PKK. Inspired by eco-anarchists Murray Bookchin and Janet Beihl, he advocated for a new anti-nationalist approach he referred to as "democratic confederalism."<sup>45</sup> While the PKK is often still described as a Marxist-Leninist organization, Öcalan's new ideology diverges from traditional Leninist principles, seeking essentially decentralized communalism.<sup>46</sup> Öcalan's new doctrine, democratic confederalism, has inspired the "Rojava Experiment" in Syria, created in the wake of the Syrian revolution.<sup>47</sup>

The PKK's ideological reformation resulted in the foundation of new relationships with regional parties. The PYD, PJAK, and PÇDK share allegiance to Öcalan but vary in ideology.<sup>48</sup> The Syrian Civil War provided an opportunity for Kurds in Syria to attempt to implement Öcalan's "democratic confederalism" through the use of a decentralized canton system, whereas in the PKK, such a system of linked but semi-sovereign regions is infeasible as the organizational structure is still strictly hierarchical and built on the back of a cult of personality.<sup>49</sup> Each regional branch of the KCK stresses different components of Öcalan's doctrine.<sup>50</sup>

### *Organizational Structure*

The PKK has a rigid hierarchical structure, with Abdullah Öcalan at the top. In 2013, the PKK reconfigured its senior management. The KCK adopted a dual-gender leadership (known as *Hevserok*), replacing KCK head Murat Karayilan (a.k.a. Cemal) with co-chairs Cemil Bayik (a.k.a. Cuma) and Hülya Oran (a.k.a. Bese Hozat) as the head of the KCK and reassigning Karayilan to lead the Turkey-based HPG.<sup>51</sup> Bayik allegedly has strong ties to Iran's intelligence agency, VEVAK.<sup>52</sup> Two Syrian Kurds, Fehman Hüseyin (a.k.a. Bahoz Erdal) and Nurettin Halef Al Muhammed (a.k.a. Nurettin Sofi), were also assigned leadership positions within the HPG.<sup>53</sup> The PKK's Executive Council is now run by Cemil Bayik, Hülya Oran, Murat Karayilan, Mustafa Karasu (a.k.a. Hüseyin Ali), Nuriye Kesbir, and Elif Pazarcik. Öcalan directed all of these leadership changes from prison.<sup>54</sup>

According to the Turkish foreign ministry, the PKK largely went through two phases of organizational structure before the formation of the Kongra-Gel in 2005. The first structure was headed by the Central Executive Committee, which oversaw the Central Committee led by the Secretary General (Öcalan). Below the Central Committee, decisions were made by subcommittees and the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan (ERNK) and Kurdistan People's Liberation Army (ARGK). The ERNK was primarily responsible for PKK operations in Europe, while the ARGK organized domestic militant activities.<sup>55</sup>

In 2005, the PKK implemented its second phase of organizational structure, forming the Kongra-Gel.<sup>56</sup> In this structure, the PKK was headed by Öcalan as the honorary president, the Kongra-Gel acted as the legislative body, and the KKK (Kurdish Democratic Foundation) acted as the executive branch.<sup>57</sup>

The People's Defense Forces (HPG) became the military wing of the movement, with at least 2,000 fighters as of 2013.<sup>58</sup> Each HPG regional command is divided into units of eight to 20 militants.<sup>59</sup> In 2013, two Syrian Kurds were assigned as HPG commander positions, representing the possible high-level ties between the YPG and the PKK.<sup>60</sup> Like the YPG, the HPG also has an all-female unit called the Free Women's Units (YJA STAR). Younger women primarily serve as militants, while older women serve in various front organizations.

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In the fifth congress of the Kongra-Gel in 2007, the PKK moved to adopt a new organizational structure, with the KCK as the transnational head and the PKK as Turkey's regional branch.<sup>61</sup> The KCK serves as an umbrella organization including the PKK and other Kurdish movements in Syria (PYD), Iraq (PÇDK), and Iran (PJAK).<sup>62</sup> The KCK has judicial, legislative, and executive bodies, as well as the following societal committees: Social Committee, Public Health Committee, Language and Education Committee, Laborer Committee, Committee for Solidarity with the Relatives of Martyrs and with War Veterans, Youth Committee, Yekiniya Jinen Azad (YJA or Union for Free Women) Committee, and Free Citizenship Coordination Committee.<sup>63</sup> The legislative body, the Kongra-Gel, has 300 representatives elected every two years.<sup>64</sup> However, the KCK's activities are dictated by the PKK's legislative council in Iraq.<sup>65</sup> The U.S. designation of the PKK as a foreign terrorist organization treats the group as synonymous with the Kongra-Gel.<sup>66</sup>

The Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H) is the urban-based youth unit of the PKK.<sup>67</sup> In 2015, the YDG-H was allegedly incorporated into the PKK as part of the Civilian Protection Units (YBS).<sup>68</sup> That same year, the YDG-H attacked Turkish local security forces and effectively initiated an insurgency in Kurdish city centers across the southeast such as Diyarbakir, Nusaybin, and Cizre. The YDG-H has described itself as "semi-independent" and PKK leadership has sometimes denied its direct connection to that unit.

The YBS is a militia group affiliated with the PKK formed in 2015 and active throughout 2016 in the insurgency in the southeast. Members include both rural militants and the more urban YDG-H "youth division."<sup>69</sup>

### *Financing*

In 2015, Osman Öcalan, brother to Abdullah Öcalan, claimed the PKK earns \$50 million in annual income from taxing smugglers—including drug smugglers—and merchants.<sup>70</sup> In its early years, Osman Öcalan stated, the PKK received support from the Syrian regime, Syrian groups in Lebanon, the Lebanon Communist Party, various Palestinian organizations, and the Kurdish diaspora community in Germany.<sup>71</sup> In the 1980s the PKK was able to raise significant funds in Europe.<sup>72</sup> After 1995, the PKK set up several customs border checkpoints between Iraq, Iran, and Turkey that raised \$3 million, according to Osman Öcalan.<sup>73</sup> According to Turkish government-run think tanks and newspapers, the PKK has also been supported by Greece, Russia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.<sup>74</sup>

The PKK also reportedly ran its own drug-trafficking operations and extorted money from illicit drug operations in the area. Before the 1990s the PKK extorted money from heroin traffickers and cannabis cultivators in Turkey and in northern Iran and Iraq.<sup>75</sup> From the 1990s onward, the PKK became more directly involved in illicit drug activity and ingrained itself into the global drug network. The PKK began producing and delivering drugs, conducting money laundering activities, and assassinating rivals.<sup>76</sup> This led to semi-regular clashes in 1992 and 1993 with Hezbollah in southeastern Turkey, where the latter was also involved in the drug market.<sup>77</sup> The PKK has also been known to use illegal taxation and extortion to collect money, under the guise of "donations," from its members and those living under the indirect control of the group.<sup>78</sup>

### *Recruitment*

Members began recruiting aggressively for the "Kurdistan Revolutionaries," as they called themselves, in 1975.<sup>79</sup> The Turkish government's heavy-handed repression of Kurdish culture, arbitrary detention, torture, etc., and extrajudicial killings of Kurds in the southeast, were powerful motivators for PKK recruitment.<sup>80</sup> Prestige, financial compensation, and kinship appear to be less important elements of recruitment. Local Kurds are faced with the option of joining the Turkish government-supported village-guard system or the PKK.<sup>81</sup> Village guards enjoy a steady paycheck, access to weapons, and potentially a share of proceeds from illicit activities, but risk death at the PKK's hands.<sup>82</sup>

### *Transnational Movement:*

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During the PKK insurgency of the 1980s and 1990s, according to analyst Aliza Marcus, the Syrian government “...did not block the flow of illegal refugees from Turkey, did not make trouble for Kurdish militants setting up house in Syria, and did not impede traffic back and forth to Lebanon.”<sup>83</sup> Abdullah Öcalan spent most of the period between 1984 and 1999 in Damascus, and at least 130 Syrian Kurds had joined the PKK at the Helwe camp in Lebanon as early as 1987.<sup>84</sup> Syrian Kurds were often supportive of the PKK.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, in late 1991 an Iraqi Kurdish leader claimed Saddam Hussein was arming the PKK in a deal to prevent Turkish food and supplies from reaching the Kurdish region of northern Iraq through Turkey.<sup>86</sup> The PKK has long maintained headquarters in northern Iraq, particularly the Qandil mountains, from which it trains recruits and conducts military operations against both the Turkish government and the regional Kurdish government led by the KDP.<sup>87</sup>

### *Child Soldiers:*

Human Rights Watch claims the PKK has forcibly recruited children in Iraq for the HPG (People’s Defense Forces) and the PKK-affiliated Yezidi Resistance Units (YBS).<sup>88</sup> In 2010, UNICEF also condemned the PKK’s use of child soldiers.<sup>89</sup> In 1995, 17-year-old PKK recruit Leyla Kaplan carried out a suicide attack against Turkish police in Adana, prior to which another PKK female fighter, Turkan Adiyaman, was shot in front of Kaplan for refusing to “volunteer” for a suicide bombing.<sup>90</sup> Rather than promising a rewarding afterlife, the mostly secular PKK cultivated a cult of personality around Abdullah Öcalan, as well as a refuge from poverty and some restrictive gender norms.<sup>91</sup>

A 2001 Amnesty International report claimed the PKK had “systematically recruited children,” including in Swedish schools, and formed regiments entirely composed of children.<sup>92</sup> In 2013, a PKK commander signed a commitment to take measures to “limit” the use of children in insurgent activities.<sup>93</sup> However, the PKK continues to recruit child soldiers. A 2016 Human Rights Watch report describes PKK recruitment and training in Iraq and notes that even if children aren’t actively engaged in combat, they are endangered by being trained in areas targeted by Turkish airstrikes.<sup>94</sup>

The PKK-affiliated YPG has similarly been accused of using child soldiers in Syria. Human Rights Watch first condemned the YPG’s use of child soldiers in 2014 and later documented the spike of child-soldier recruitment in 2017 and continued use in 2018.<sup>95</sup> In 2018, following the culmination of most of their anti-ISIS campaigns, the YPG released a press statement that declared that the SDF would remove all minors from military positions.<sup>96</sup>

### *Women:*

The PKK has incorporated women into the organization since its founding, with their influence and numbers growing over time. According to Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, in the early 1990s, 30 percent of PKK militants were women.<sup>97</sup> The PKK recruited women living in western Turkish cities and in tribal areas where gender roles restricted their opportunities and freedoms, as well as migrants to European countries after 1960.<sup>98</sup> Initially, many women were forcibly recruited, but in other cases women were convinced by promises of freedom. Some women were indoctrinated at a young age and sent to avenge killed relatives, while others fled unwanted marriages.<sup>99</sup> In 2013, the PKK instituted a system of male and female co-chairs of the KCK and appointed three women to the KCK’s six-person General Council.<sup>100</sup>

### *Training*

The PKK trains militants in both small- and large-scale camps located primarily in the mountains in Iraq and Turkey. The PKK allegedly trains PKK affiliates from across the region who often go on to carry out attacks or other PKK activities in their home countries.<sup>101</sup> The PKK emphasizes ideological training, indoctrinating recruits with Abdullah Öcalan’s ideology and the PKK’s interpretation of Kurdish history and culture.<sup>102</sup> Women comprise their own regiments and are separated from men.<sup>103</sup>

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The latest Turkish operation in Iraq (Operation Claw) has targeted PKK camps and high-ranking commanders, as many PKK militants had previously moved their operations abroad during the previous ceasefire.<sup>104</sup> The PKK has also been accused of having training camps in Turkey, Europe, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian territories.<sup>105</sup> As early as 1979, Öcalan sent recruits to camps in Lebanon for joint training with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).<sup>106</sup> From 1980 to 1982, PKK militants trained 300 fighters in Lebanon who were then mobilized in Turkey.<sup>107</sup>

Many PKK bases and training camps operate out of the Qandil Mountains on the borders with Iran and Iraq.<sup>108</sup> The mountains offer a safe haven for PKK activities, with difficult terrain and relative autonomy from the Iraqi government. As of 2006 these camps were described by a Jamestown Foundation report as low-tech and modest in size, weaponry, and funding.<sup>109</sup> The PKK has often taken direct control over smaller villages in the region and recruits frequently flow to and from Turkey, Iran, and Iraq.<sup>110</sup> Murat Karayilan is the primary commander of this region.<sup>111</sup>

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Abdullah Öcalan set up PKK training camps in Syria with the support and funding of Syrian dictator Hafez al-Assad.<sup>112</sup> The most prominent PKK training camp at that time was located in Lebanon's Beka'a Valley, where militants were trained for about three months, living alongside other recruits in groups of 15 in tents or small buildings.<sup>113</sup> In 1991, Öcalan was pictured visiting the Beka'a camps.<sup>114</sup>

YPG martyrdom reports also acknowledge the deaths of large numbers of Kurdish militants from Turkey, indicating that there is still a considerable flow population flow across the Syria-Turkey border.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Chapter 6—Terrorist Groups," U.S. Department of State, April 27, 2005, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/45394.htm> [2].

<sup>2</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, August 4, 2018, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>3</sup> Kongra-Gel (KGK) "Chapter 6 -- Terrorist Groups," U.S. Department of State, April 27, 2005, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/45394.htm> [2].

<sup>4</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>5</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>6</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

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<sup>9</sup> "Country Reports on Terrorism 2004: Chapter 6—Terrorist Groups," U.S. Department of State, April 27, 2005, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/45394.htm> [2].

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<sup>11</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>12</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>13</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>14</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>15</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>16</sup> "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>17</sup> Michiel Leezenberg, "The Ambiguities of Democratic Autonomy: The Kurdish Movement in Turkey and Rojava," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16, no. 4 (2016), <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14683857.2016.1246529> [4].

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<sup>107</sup> Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya, “The ‘Palestinian Dream’ in the Kurdish Context,” *Kurdish Studies* 3, no. 1 (May 2015), 54, <https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/5948651/file/5948668.pdf> [51].

<sup>108</sup> James Brandon, “Mount Qandil: A Safe Haven for Kurdish Militants—Part 1,” *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 17 (September 21, 2006), <https://jamestown.org/program/mount-qandil-a-safe-haven-for-kurdish-militants-part-1/> [46].

<sup>109</sup> James Brandon, “Mount Qandil: A Safe Haven for Kurdish Militants—Part 1,” *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 17 (September 21, 2006), <https://jamestown.org/program/mount-qandil-a-safe-haven-for-kurdish-militants-part-1/> [46].

<sup>110</sup> James Brandon, “Mount Qandil: A Safe Haven for Kurdish Militants—Part 1,” *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 17 (September 21, 2006), <https://jamestown.org/program/mount-qandil-a-safe-haven-for-kurdish-militants-part-1/> [46].

<sup>111</sup> Michael M. Gunter, “Historical Dictionary of the Kurds” (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 154; Kadr Gursel, “PKK Peace Process on Track,” *al-Monitor*, April 26, 2013, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/fr/originals/2013/04/selahattin-demirtas-peace-process-erdogan.html> [52].

<sup>112</sup> Simon Hooper, “PKK’s Decades of Violent Struggle,” CNN, October 11, 2007, <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:reamGl7dG3cj:www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/europe/10/10/pkk.profile/index.html+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=safari> [8].

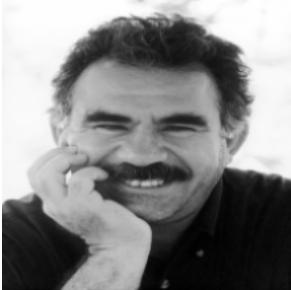
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***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

**Key Leaders**



**Abdullah Öcalan**  
Founder and symbolic leader



**Osman Öcalan**  
Brother of Abdullah Öcalan



**Murat Karayilan**  
Leader of the HPG (People's Defense Forces), member of Executive Council, and co-founder of PKK



**Hulya Oran**  
Co-chair of the KCK, formerly a battalion commander and deputy chief of Qandil training



**Cemil Bayik (Cuma)**  
Co-chair of the KCK



**Mustafa Karasu (a.k.a. Hüseyin Ali)**  
Member of the Executive Council



**Nuriye Kesbir**  
Member of the Executive Council



**Elif Pazarcik**  
Member of the Executive Council



**Zübeyir Aydar**  
Europe Chief



**Duran Kalkan**  
Senior leader and co-founder



**Fehman Hüseyin (a.k.a. Bahoz Erdal)**  
Deputy commander of the HPG



**Nurettin Halef Al-Muhammed (a.k.a. Nurettin Sofi)**  
Commander of the HPG's Amed and Botan Turkish regional commands



**Deyari Qamishlo**  
PKK liaison to PYD, former media supervisor, and head of the Syrian Relations Committee



**Ahmet Deniz**  
PKK liaison to PYD, former head of the External Relations Committee



**Ali Haydar Kaytan (a.k.a. Fuat)**  
Senior leader and co-founder

*Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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**History:**

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### **Violent history:**

The International Crisis Group has reported that from 2011 to 2012, more than 1,000 people died as a result of the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish government.<sup>116</sup> Since the reemergence of the conflict in July 2015, 4,551 people have died in the conflict. That toll includes 1,194 state security force members, 478 civilians, 2,656 PKK members, and the remaining ones of unknown affiliation.<sup>117</sup>

The PKK has implemented suicide attacks, bombings, shootings, targeted assassinations, car bombs, and even drone attacks.<sup>118</sup> The PKK frequently conducts VBIED (vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices) to carry out attacks in urban settings.<sup>119</sup> The PKK used VBIEDs for the first time in the 1990s, while the first VBIED took place in 2011.<sup>120</sup>

PKK attacks in the 1980s and 1990s were primarily small-scale and rural. Militants targeted village guards, policemen, gendarmerie, and soldiers. The PKK has generally carried out attacks in the southeast while many speculate that the Kurdish Freedom Hawks (TAK) are the PKK's special forces urban organization. TAK attacks have sought to dissuade tourists from city centers in Istanbul and grab headlines with more central settings. In 2015, the initial year of the breakdown of the 2013 ceasefire, the conflict was mainly confined to rural villages but in 2016 PKK attacks shifted to urban centers in the southeast. A series of airstrikes pushed the conflict back into rural spaces at the end of 2016.<sup>121</sup>

- **1978:** A member of the Kurdish Revolutionaries kills Mehmet Baysal, a member of the Suleymanlar tribe in retribution for the murder of a Kurdish Revolutionaries member.<sup>122</sup>
- **1979:** Kurdistan Revolutionaries members attempt to assassinate Mehmet Celal Bucak, a member of the Justice Party that was at the time aligned with the MHP (an ultra-nationalist party).<sup>123</sup>
- **1984:** The PKK conducts raids on jandarma and police stations in Siirt and Semdinli. Jandarma commando Süleyman Aydın and Sergeant Memiş Arıbaş were killed in the attacks.<sup>124</sup>
- **June 20, 1987:** After a series of threats against Kurdish residents who joined the ranks of the village guards, PKK militants attack a village guard post in the town of Pınarcık in the Mardin province, killing 30 people, including 16 children. The PKK later claims the attack in its *Serxwebun* magazine.<sup>125</sup>
- **February 1990:** PKK militants and Turkish security forces clash in southeast Turkey, resulting in nine PKK dead and one captured while the PKK captures seven members of the Turkish security forces.<sup>126</sup>
- **March 1990:** Three Turkish security members and 22 PKK militants are killed in fighting in March along with 14 civilians.<sup>127</sup>
- **April 1990:** Two Turkish security members and 48 PKK militants are killed in fighting in April along with 12 civilians. Sixteen Kurds are also arrested or captured while the Turkish government imposes martial law over the southeast.<sup>128</sup>
- **May 1990:** Six Turkish security members and 40 PKK militants are killed in fighting in May along with 12 civilians.<sup>129</sup>
- **June 1990:** Twelve Turkish security members and 20 PKK militants are killed in fighting in June along with 32 civilians.<sup>130</sup>
- **July 1990:** Twelve Turkish security members and 47 PKK militants are killed in fighting in July.<sup>131</sup>
- **August 1990:** Sixteen PKK militants are killed in fighting in August along with five civilians.<sup>132</sup>
- **September 1990:** Three Turkish security members and 29 PKK militants are killed in fighting in September while 26 Kurds are arrested or captured.<sup>133</sup>
- **November 1990:** Seven Turkish security members and two PKK militants are killed in fighting in November while ten Kurds are arrested or captured.<sup>134</sup>
- **December 1990:** Twelve PKK militants and an unknown number of state security forces are killed in fighting in

## ***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

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December. In total, 153 Turkish security forces, 315 PKK militants, and 174 civilians were documented to have died in fighting in 1990 while the Turkish government arrested or captured 181 additional Kurds.<sup>135</sup>

- **February 1991:** Nine PKK militants and one civilian are killed in fighting in February.<sup>136</sup>
- **March 1991:** Three PKK militants and four civilians are killed in fighting in March while PKK militants kidnap two civilians.<sup>137</sup>
- **April 1991:** Nine civilians are killed amid clashes between Turkish forces and PKK militants while the government arrests 35 Kurds.<sup>138</sup>
- **May 1991:** Eight Turkish security members and 17 PKK militants are killed in fighting in June as the Turkish government establishes 53 new military outposts in the southeast.<sup>139</sup>
- **June 1991:** Six Turkish security members and four PKK militants are killed in fighting in June along with dozens of civilians.<sup>140</sup>
- **July 10, 1991:** Turkish police clash with pro-PKK protestors during the funeral for HEP chairman Vahdet Aydin, leaving 12 dead and 122 wounded.<sup>141</sup>
- **July 1991:** Three Turkish security members and 29 PKK militants are killed in fighting in July along with 16 civilians. PKK supporters occupy the Turkish embassy in London and attack the Turkish embassy in Bern, Switzerland, in protest of crackdowns in Diyarbakir, Turkey.<sup>142</sup>
- **August 3, 1991:** Two PKK militants abduct 10 German tourists in eastern Turkey, releasing them one week later.<sup>143</sup>
- **August 8-9, 1991:** Turkish Kurds attack or occupy Turkish businesses in Berlin, Norway, the Hague, and Brussels.<sup>144</sup>
- **August 31, 1991:** PKK militants kidnap five western tourists in eastern Turkey.<sup>145</sup>
- **August 1991:** Three Turkish security members and 22 PKK militants are killed in fighting in August along with 14 civilians.<sup>146</sup>
- **August 1991:** PKK militants abduct four biblical archaeologists—three Americans and one Australian—and a British tourist, and release them three weeks later.<sup>147</sup>
- **September 1991:** Six Turkish security members and 19 PKK militants are killed in fighting in September along with at least 5 civilians.<sup>148</sup>
- **October 1991:** Fifty-one Turkish security members and 10 PKK militants are killed in fighting in October along with 12 civilians. Turkish forces capture 12 Kurds while the PKK releases seven previously captured Turkish security members. The PKK takes responsibility for a series of bombings and small arms attacks across the country in the run up to the parliamentary elections.<sup>149</sup>
- **November 1991:** Six Turkish security members and 15 PKK militants are killed in fighting in November along with 5 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 103 Kurds while PKK militants capture one Turk. On November 8, Kurdish protesters attack the Turkish embassy in Oslo, Norway.<sup>150</sup>
- **December 25, 1991:** PKK militants attack a department store in Istanbul, killing 17 and injuring 23.<sup>151</sup>
- **December 27, 1991:** Kurdish protesters attack the Turkish consulates in Frankfurt, Germany, Stuttgart, Germany, Rotterdam, Netherlands, and Brussels, Belgium.<sup>152</sup>
- **December 1991:** Ten Turkish security members and 15 PKK militants are killed in fighting in December along with 11 civilians.<sup>153</sup>
- **January 1992:** Two Turkish security members and nine PKK militants are killed in fighting in January along with eight civilians. Turkish forces arrest 23 Kurds while the PKK capture 17 Turks.<sup>154</sup>

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- **February 1992:** On February 20, the PKK kills two alleged members of Hezbollah that it claims were collaborating with the Turkish government against them. One Turkish security member and six PKK militants are killed in fighting in February along with 32 civilians.<sup>155</sup>
- **March 1992:** Four Turkish security members and six PKK militants are killed in fighting in March along with 32 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 14 Kurds. Three of the civilians are killed when PKK militants hang them after holding a mock trial. The victims were accused of being informers. Meanwhile, Kurdish protesters attack Kurdish missions in Germany, Copenhagen, London, and Paris.<sup>156</sup>
- **April 1992:** Twenty-nine Turkish security members and 67 PKK militants are killed in fighting in April along with 11 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 172 Kurds while the PKK releases six hostages.<sup>157</sup>
- **May 1992:** Sixty-eight Turkish security members and 133 PKK militants are killed in fighting in May along with 14 civilians. Three of the civilians are killed by PKK militants in Bingol Province when they refuse to cooperate with the PKK. Residents of the village are forced to watch as the PKK executes the men. Turkish forces arrest 28 Kurds.<sup>158</sup>
- **June 1992:** Twelve Turkish security members and 64 PKK militants are killed in fighting in June along with 44 civilians. Two of the killed civilians are executed in the province of Kars after the PKK accused them of being informers. Fourteen other civilians, including nine children, are murdered by the PKK during a June 22 raid on the houses of village guards in Batman Province. On June 26, PKK militants execute 10 local men in a mosque in Diyarbakir. Turkish forces arrest 49 Kurds.<sup>159</sup>
- **July 1992:** Twenty-one Turkish security members and 41 PKK militants are killed in fighting in July along with more than 16 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 46 Kurds.<sup>160</sup>
- **August 1992:** Forty Turkish security members and 85 PKK militants are killed in fighting in August along with 22 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 253 Kurds while the PKK capture 17 Turks.<sup>161</sup>
- **September 1992:** Eighty-six Turkish security members and 197 PKK militants are killed in fighting in September along with 39 civilians. At least 29 of the civilian deaths are caused by the PKK when they raide a village in Bitlis province. The PKK also captures two Turks and briefly abducts six foreign tourists.<sup>162</sup>
- **October 8, 1992:** PKK militants execute two of their own who are accused of “betraying the organization.”<sup>163</sup>
- **October 23, 1992:** Armed Kurds seize the Turkish consulate in Strasburg, France.<sup>164</sup>
- **October 1992:** Fifteen Turkish security members and 263 PKK militants are killed in fighting in October along with 61 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 423 Kurds as well as 19 Turks accused of planning attacks against Kurds in Turkey.<sup>165</sup>
- **November 1992:** Thirteen Turkish security members and 34 PKK militants are killed in fighting in November along with 14 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 10 Kurds.<sup>166</sup>
- **December 1992:** Five Turkish security members and 25 PKK militants are killed in fighting in December along with 22 civilians. Turkish forces arrest three Kurds. The Turkish government claims to have killed 1,000 PKK militants in Turkey in 1992 with 580 deaths among Turkish security forces and 552 killed civilians.<sup>167</sup>
- **January 1993:** Seven Turkish security members and 167 PKK militants are killed in fighting in January along with nine civilians. Turkish forces arrest 60 Kurds.<sup>168</sup>
- **February 27, 1993:** Suspected PKK militants kill a member of Hezbollah during a dispute between the two groups.<sup>169</sup>
- **February 1993:** Seven PKK militants and two civilians are killed in fighting in February. Turkish forces arrest 86 Kurds while the PKK threatens to begin attacking Turkish tourist resorts.<sup>170</sup>
- **March 1, 1993:** According to a Reuters report, PKK militants have carried out regular attacks against oil installations in southeastern Turkey, hampering production in the region.<sup>171</sup>
- **March 5, 1993:** A Reuters report claims that 140 people have died since March 1992 in street battles between the PKK and Hezbollah in southeastern Turkey.<sup>172</sup>

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- **March 24, 1993:** PKK militants launch a coordinated series of attacks across Europe, seizing hostages in the Turkish consulates in Marseille, France, and Munich, Germany, and attack Turkish businesses in Bern, Switzerland, Copenhagen, Lyon, France, and the German cities of Hamburg, Hanover, and Bonn.<sup>173</sup>
- **March 1993:** Seven Turkish security members and 87 PKK militants are killed in fighting in March, along with three civilians. Turkish forces arrest 96 Kurds.<sup>174</sup>
- **April 1993:** Two Turkish security members and 17 PKK militants are killed in fighting in April. Turkish forces arrest 27 Kurds.<sup>175</sup>
- **May 24, 1993:** PKK militants ambush an unarmed military convoy on the Bingol-Elazig highway. PKK members kill 33 Turkish soldiers and two civilians and temporarily capture 22 before a military operation rescues them. Öcalan releases a statement calling this attack a warning and insisting that there remained a ceasefire.<sup>176</sup>
- **May 27, 1993:** PKK militants abduct 16 construction workers in Diyarbakir, Turkey.<sup>177</sup>
- **May 1993:** Thirty-six Turkish security forces members and 107 PKK militants are killed in fighting in May along with seven civilians. Turkish forces arrest 68 Kurds.<sup>178</sup>
- **June 11, 1993:** PKK militants kidnap a Turkish tourism ministry official as they warn tourists to stay away from the country.<sup>179</sup>
- **June 24, 1993:** PKK members attack five Turkish consulates and dozens of Turkish-owned businesses in 29 European cities. The attackers take dozens of hostages and wound at least eight people in shootouts with security forces.<sup>180</sup>
- **June 1993:** Fifty-six Turkish security members and 96 PKK militants are killed in fighting in June along with 22 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 52 Kurds while the PKK kidnaps three civilians.<sup>181</sup>
- **July 1993:** Eighty-six Turkish security members and 145 PKK militants are killed in fighting in July along with 94 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 49 Kurds while the PKK captures and then releases seven local workers. Meanwhile, the PKK bombs a seaside resort amid threats of continued attacks against tourists.<sup>182</sup>
- **July-October 1993:** The PKK kidnaps 19 Western tourists in southeastern Turkey. All of the hostages are released unharmed after being held captives for several weeks.<sup>183</sup>
- **October 15, 1993:** Oil company Mobil suspends operations in southeastern Turkey due to repeated attacks and extortion attempts by the PKK.<sup>184</sup>
- **October 18, 1993:** The PKK threatens to kill all foreign journalists in southeast Turkey due to alleged biased reporting and demands that all foreign and domestic newspaper offices in the region close.<sup>185</sup>
- **October 21, 1993:** The PKK bans all political parties from southeastern Turkey over accusations of collusion and kidnaps the local leader of the Social Democratic Populist Party in Diyarbakir, Turkey.<sup>186</sup>
- **October 1993:** Forty-three Turkish security members and 235 PKK militants are killed in fighting in October along with 266 civilians. Turkish forces arrest 208 Kurds. The PKK claims it killed 1,300 Turkish soldiers and captured 186 others. The PKK also claims only 112 of its own members were killed.<sup>187</sup>
- **November 4, 1993:** PKK supporters attack several Turkish businesses in Germany and the United Kingdom.<sup>188</sup>
- **November 2, 1994:** The PKK threatens to kill any Kurds who run in the upcoming Turkish by-elections on the grounds of being collaborators. HADEP, the pro-Kurdish party, announces it is boycotting the elections the following day.<sup>189</sup>
- **March 1995:** Fifty-one Turkish security members and 394 Kurdish militants are killed in fighting in March. The PKK claims to have killed 261 soldiers.<sup>190</sup>
- **April 8, 1995:** PKK militants kill the Turkish mayor of a Kurdish town whom they accuse of collaboration.<sup>191</sup>
- **August 30, 1995:** The PKK begins a protracted conflict with northern Iraq's ruling Kurdish party, the KDP.<sup>192</sup>



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- **November 1995:** Leyla Kaplan, a 17-year-old PKK recruit, kills three policemen in a suicide attack on a special forces police headquarters in Adana.<sup>193</sup>
- **January 16, 1996:** PKK militants kill 11 village guards and civilians in Tashonek, Turkey, in violation of their ceasefire.<sup>194</sup>
- **March 9, 1996:** Seven Turkish security members and five PKK militants are killed in fighting in eastern Turkey.<sup>195</sup>
- **April 9, 1996:** Twenty-seven Turkish security members and 99 PKK militants are killed during a Turkish army attack on a PKK training base.<sup>196</sup>
- **July 15, 1996:** PKK militants ambush Turkish troops in Tunceli, Turkey, killing three. Clashes in other parts of the country leave 28 militants dead.<sup>197</sup>
- **August 20, 1996:** PKK militants kill three civilians along the Iraq-Turkey border during clashes with Turkish security forces. Sixteen PKK militants are also killed.<sup>198</sup>
- **October 1, 1996:** Kurdish militants kill four elementary school teachers. The PKK claims such attacks are to draw attention to the banning of Kurdish history and culture from the Turkish school curriculum.<sup>199</sup>
- **October 3, 1996:** PKK militants clash with Turkish soldiers throughout southeast Turkey, leaving three soldiers and 32 PKK militants dead.<sup>200</sup>
- **October 29, 1996:** A PKK suicide bomber attacks a Republic Day parade, killing one civilian and three police officers in the third PKK suicide bombing since July.<sup>201</sup>
- **October 1996:** At least 14 Turkish security forces and 150 PKK militants are killed in fighting in October.<sup>202</sup>
- **November 8, 1996:** Seventeen Turkish security forces and 22 PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>203</sup>
- **May 19, 1997:** PKK militants kill 40 members of the Iraqi KDP's security forces in retaliation for what they claim was a KDP massacre of PKK militants in the Iraqi city of Irbil.<sup>204</sup>
- **June 3, 1997:** PKK militants kill five Kurdish civilians in Dikgobaz, Turkey.<sup>205</sup>
- **June 15, 1997:** PKK militants attack a Turkish freight train with rockets, killing two soldiers. Turkey retaliates by killing 52 militants.<sup>206</sup>
- **October 22, 1997:** The PKK is accused of detonating a car bomb near the Iran-Iraq-Turkey border, killing one person and injuring 19. Another PKK member is arrested nearby as he attempts to plant a similar bomb.<sup>207</sup>
- **December 25-27, 1997:** Turkish forces kill 18 PKK militants in a series of clashes along the Iraqi border.<sup>208</sup>
- **June 3, 1998:** PKK militants kill a religious leader and 10 other civilians in Tunceli, Turkey.<sup>209</sup>
- **June 14, 1998:** Seven Turkish security forces members and 18 PKK militants are killed in clashes across the southeast of the country.<sup>210</sup>
- **July 1998:** Human Rights Watch claims PKK militants killed a 4-year-old and a 14-year-old girl after they failed to find their father, the brother of a village leader wanted by the PKK.<sup>211</sup>
- **August 15, 1998:** PKK militants destroy three Turkish oil wells. Turkish forces respond by killing six militants in two separate attacks.<sup>212</sup>
- **October 30, 1998:** A PKK militant hijacks a plane, forcing it to land in Ankara before he is killed by Turkish special forces.<sup>213</sup>
- **November 10, 1998:** PKK militants kill 21 Turkish security forces and wound 18 others.<sup>214</sup>

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- **February 15, 1999:** PKK supporters attack Greek consulates and embassies across Europe and attempt to storm the Israeli consulate in Berlin based on rumors the two countries assisted in capturing Öcalan.<sup>215</sup>
- **March 13, 1999:** Three militants detonate a bomb in the Mavi Carsi department store in Istanbul, killing 13. One places the bomb while the other two corral shoppers in the upper floors where many were trapped and died of smoke inhalation. There are no immediate claims of responsibility but Turkish protesters blame the PKK.<sup>216</sup>
- **May 5, 1999:** PKK militants ambush Turkish forces in eastern Turkey, killing nine and wounding four.<sup>217</sup>
- **May 1999:** The PKK threatens bombings across the country in retaliation for Öcalan's arrest.<sup>218</sup>
- **July 2-6, 1999:** PKK militants carry out a series of attacks in response to Öcalan's death sentence, despite his calls for them to lay down their weapons. In the city of Elazığ, militants kill four civilians in an attack on a coffeehouse. Two days later, they detonate a bomb at a park in Istanbul, killing one civilian and wounding 25. On July 5, a female PKK suicide bomber attacks a police station in Adana, wounding 14 officers and three civilians.<sup>219</sup>
- **July 10, 1999:** PKK militants claim to kill 18 Turkish soldiers in a rocket and mortar attack on a base near Yusekova, Turkey.<sup>220</sup>
- **July 25, 1999:** Suspected PKK militants kill two soldiers and wound two others in clashes in Elazığ Province.<sup>221</sup>
- **November 18, 1999:** One soldier and eight PKK militants die in a clash in the province of Diyarbakir.<sup>222</sup>
- **August 25, 2000:** One member of the Turkish security forces and three PKK militants die in clashes in Sirnak province.<sup>223</sup>
- **August 30, 2000:** Seven people die in clashes between the PKK and Turkish security forces in the Hakkari province.<sup>224</sup>
- **October 12, 2000:** Three members of the Turkish security forces are wounded and seven PKK militants die in clashes in Sirnak province.<sup>225</sup>
- **March 15, 2001:** One soldier and nine PKK militants die in clashes in eastern Anatolia.<sup>226</sup>
- **May 21, 2001:** PKK militants kill a Turkish soldier during clashes in southeast Turkey. Soldiers kill 15 PKK militants.<sup>227</sup>
- **June 7, 2001:** Five PKK militants die in clashes with Turkish security forces in Hakkari province.<sup>228</sup>
- **May 22, 2007:** A bomb goes off in Anafartalar Mall in Ankara, wounding 80 and killing six. Some accuse the PKK of carrying out the attack but the group does not claim responsibility.<sup>229</sup>
- **October 1-12, 2007:** PKK militants kill 13 Turkish soldiers near the Iraqi border on October 7. The following day, militants kill two more and wound three in a series of attacks across the country. Over the next week, PKK attacks leave at least 15 more Turkish soldiers dead.<sup>230</sup>
- **July 9, 2008:** PKK militants kidnap three German tourists on Mount Ararat in what the PKK claims is retribution for German anti-PKK legislation.<sup>231</sup>
- **September 16, 2010:** PKK militants kill 10 people and wound three in a car bomb attack in Hakkari province.<sup>232</sup>
- **July 14, 2011:** PKK militants kill 13 Turkish soldiers.<sup>233</sup>
- **September 2011:** A car bomb explodes in Ankara near government buildings killing 4 and wounding 15. TAK claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>234</sup>
- **October 2011:** PKK militants kill 11 Turkish soldiers in near the border with Iraq. The attack was the deadliest attack since 1993.<sup>235</sup>
- **August 20, 2012:** PKK militants use a car bomb to kill eight Turkish soldiers in Gaziantep.<sup>236</sup>

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- **January 10, 2013:** Three women are shot dead in a Kurdish Activist Center in Paris. One of the women, Sakine Cansiz, was a co-founder of the PKK. Some analysts suspect that the murders were the result of PKK infighting.<sup>237</sup>
- **July 24, 2015:** The PKK kills two Turkish police officers in Sanliurfa whom they claimed were working with ISIS.<sup>238</sup>
- **July 2015:** Sixteen Turkish security members and 15 PKK militants are killed in fighting in July along with one civilian and five people of unknown affiliation.<sup>239</sup>
- **August 2015:** Fifty-five Turkish security members and 51 PKK militants are killed in fighting in August along with 30 civilians and 13 people of unknown affiliation.<sup>240</sup>
- **September 2015:** Sixty-five Turkish security members and 90 PKK militants are killed in fighting in September along with 35 civilians and 12 people of unknown affiliation.<sup>241</sup>
- **October 2015:** Twenty-two Turkish security members and 48 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 10 civilians and 10 people of unknown affiliation.<sup>242</sup>
- **November 2015:** Twenty Turkish security members and 30 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 13 civilians and 23 people of unknown affiliation.<sup>243</sup>
- **December 2015:** TAK militants claim an attack on the Sabiha Gokcen Airport, which results in the death of one and injures another. The PKK does not claim the attack. Twenty-eight Turkish security members and 28 PKK militants are killed in fighting in December along with 37 civilians and 24 people of unknown affiliation.<sup>244</sup>
- **January 2016:** Forty-three Turkish security members and 77 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 45 civilians and 43 people of unknown affiliation.<sup>245</sup>
- **February 16, 2016:** A bombing in Ankara kills 28 people (16 civilians). The Kurdistan Freedom Hawks, which the Turkish government alleges is an arm of the PKK, claims the attack. TAK states that the attack was meant to discourage tourism to Turkey and was in retribution for the ongoing military operations in the southeast. The PKK denies responsibility.<sup>246</sup>
- **February 2016:** Seventy-five Turkish security members and 91 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 34 civilians and 60 people of unknown affiliation.<sup>247</sup>
- **March 2016:** Sixty-five Turkish security members and 125 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 40 civilians and 15 people of unknown affiliation.<sup>248</sup>
- **April 2016:** Fifty-seven Turkish security members and 161 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 17 civilians.<sup>249</sup>
- **May 2016:** Sixty-nine Turkish security members and 110 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 43 civilians and three people of unknown affiliation.<sup>250</sup>
- **June 2016:** Forty-one Turkish security members and 81 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 19 civilians and three people of unknown affiliation.<sup>251</sup>
- **July 8, 2016:** The Turkish government blames the PKK for a carbomb attack that kills 11 in Istanbul.<sup>252</sup>
- **July 2016:** Forty Turkish security members and 59 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with nine civilians and one person of unknown affiliation.<sup>253</sup>
- **August 18, 2016:** PKK militants attack a police station in Elazig province, Turkey, with a VBIED killing three police officers and wounding 217 people, including civilians.<sup>254</sup>
- **August 26, 2016:** PKK militants attack a police station in Cizre, Turkey, with a VBIED, killing 11 police officers and wounding 78 people, including civilians.<sup>255</sup>
- **August 2016:** Sixty-four Turkish security members and 88 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 19

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civilians.<sup>256</sup>

- **September 13, 2016:** PKK militants attack local AKP party offices in Van, Turkey, with a VBIED killing 18 security forces and wounding over 50 people, including civilians.<sup>257</sup>
- **September 2016:** Sixty-five Turkish security members and 129 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with eight civilians.<sup>258</sup>
- **October 2016:** Forty-eight Turkish security members and 103 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 19 civilians.<sup>259</sup>
- **November 2016:** Eighteen Turkish security members and 68 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 16 civilians.<sup>260</sup>
- **December 2016:** Fifty-nine Turkish security members and 68 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with nine civilians and 11 people of unknown affiliation.<sup>261</sup>
- **January 2017:** Eleven Turkish security members and 16 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with three civilians.<sup>262</sup>
- **February 2017:** Twenty-seven PKK militants and four civilians are killed in fighting.<sup>263</sup>
- **March 2017:** Eight Turkish security members and 82 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>264</sup>
- **April 11, 2017:** PKK militants kill three police officers in an IED attack on a police headquarters in Diyarbakir, Turkey.<sup>265</sup>
- **April 2017:** Twenty-three Turkish security members and 84 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>266</sup>
- **May 2017:** Twenty-one Turkish security members and 41 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>267</sup>
- **June 2017:** Twenty-eight Turkish security members and 61 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>268</sup>
- **July 2017:** Twelve Turkish security members and 74 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 10 civilians.<sup>269</sup>
- **August 2017:** Fourteen Turkish security members and 44 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with nine civilians.<sup>270</sup>
- **September 2017:** Twelve Turkish security members and 79 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 11 civilians.<sup>271</sup>
- **October 2017:** Seventeen Turkish security members and 25 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with six civilians.<sup>272</sup>
- **November 2, 2017:** PKK militants clash with Turkish security forces in Hakkari province, Turkey, killing eight members of security forces and wounding two others.<sup>273</sup>
- **November 2017:** Fourteen Turkish security members and 61 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>274</sup>
- **December 2017:** Four Turkish security members and 22 PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>275</sup>
- **January 2018:** Two Turkish security members and two PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>276</sup>
- **February 2018:** Seven Turkish security members and 10 PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>277</sup>

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- **March 29, 2018:** PKK militants kill seven and wound six members of a village guard militia in Siirt province.<sup>278</sup>
- **March 21, 2018:** PKK militants kill two Turkish soldiers in Hakkari province, Turkey.<sup>279</sup>
- **March 2018:** Eighteen Turkish security members and 61 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>280</sup>
- **April 2018:** Sixteen Turkish security members and 46 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>281</sup>
- **May 2018:** Eleven Turkish security members and 27 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>282</sup>
- **June 2018:** Twenty-three Turkish security members and 71 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>283</sup>
- **July 2018:** Seven Turkish security members and 82 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 4 civilians.<sup>284</sup>
- **August 2018:** Twelve Turkish security members and 59 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>285</sup>
- **September 2018:** Four Turkish security members and 50 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>286</sup>
- **October 2018:** Thirteen Turkish security members and 15 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>287</sup>
- **November 2018:** Ten Turkish security members and 33 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>288</sup>
- **December 2018:** One Turkish security member and five PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>289</sup>
- **January 2019:** One Turkish security member and four PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>290</sup>
- **February 2019:** One PKK militant is killed in fighting.<sup>291</sup>
- **March 2019:** Four Turkish security members and 11 PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>292</sup>
- **April 2019:** Five Turkish security members and 29 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>293</sup>
- **May 2019:** Seventeen Turkish security members and 40 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with three civilians.<sup>294</sup>
- **June 2019:** Fifteen Turkish security members and 49 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with six civilians.<sup>295</sup>
- **July 17, 2019:** Two assassins kill a Turkish diplomat and two others in Erbil. The PKK denies responsibility but many suspect the attack was likely carried out by a PKK sympathizer, as one of the assassins, Mazloum Dag, left a detailed video confession claiming top PKK officials ordered the murder. A senior PKK commander later thanks the assassins in an interview with a PKK media outlet. The assassination may have been a response to increasing collaboration between officials in Iraqi Kurdistan and the TSK in Turkey's ongoing anti-PKK operations in northern Iraq.<sup>296</sup>
- **July 2019:** Thirteen Turkish security members and 23 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with four civilians.<sup>297</sup>
- **September 13, 2019:** PKK militants detonate an explosive near a vehicle carrying forest workers in Kulp district, Diyarbakir. The attack kills seven and injures nine.<sup>298</sup>
- **October 13, 2019:** PKK supporters attack a Turkish association and market in Villingen-Schwenningen, Germany, following a march against Turkey's Operation Peace Spring. On the same day, in a separate attack by PKK supporters, a Turkish market was targeted in Nuremberg, Germany. It is unreported if there were any injuries in either attack.<sup>299</sup>
- **October 20, 2019:** PKK militants open fire on Turkish soldiers in Dogubeyazit, Agri province during their patrol along the Iranian border. The attack injures five soldiers.<sup>300</sup>

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- **March 26, 2020:** PKK militants launch a mortar attack on Turkish troops in an undisclosed area in northern Iraq. The attack kills two Turkish soldiers and wounds two others.<sup>301</sup>
- **April 1, 2020:** A PKK suicide bomber detonates an explosive next to a pipeline in Agri province near the Iran-Turkey border. According to a statement released by the PKK, over 30 Turkish soldiers were killed.<sup>302</sup>
- **April 8, 2020:** A car strikes a bomb that is allegedly planted by the PKK in Diyarbakir province, Turkey. The attack kills five.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> “PKK attack in SE Turkey kills 7 civilians,” Hurriyet Daily News, September 13, 2019, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/pkk-attack-in-se-turkey-kills-7-civilians-146532> [96].

<sup>299</sup> Cuneyt Karadag, “PKK supporters attack Turkish group in Germany,” Anadolu Agency, October 13, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/pkk-supporters-attack-turkish-group-in-germany/1611742> [97].

<sup>300</sup> Goksel Cuneyt Igde and Bulent Mavzer, “Terrorists attack military vehicle in eastern Turkey,” Anadolu Agency, October 20, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/terrorists-attack-military-vehicle-in-eastern-turkey/1620232> [98].

<sup>301</sup> “Turkey retaliates after two soldiers killed in northern Iraq,” Al Jazeera, March 26, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/turkey-retaliates-soldiers-killed-northern-iraq-200326070837310.html> [99].

<sup>302</sup> Karwan Faidhi Dri, “PKK claims suicide attack on Turkey-Iran pipeline killing 30 Turkish soldiers,” Rudaw, April 1, 2020, <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/01042020> [100].

<sup>303</sup> “Turkey: Five civilians die in bomb attack in southeast,” Middle East Eye, April 8, 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/five-civilians-die-bomb-attack-turkeys-southeast-governor> [101].

***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

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**Designations:**

**Designations by U.S. Government:**



October 8, 1997: The State Department designates the “Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK, a.k.a. Kongra-Gel)” as a foreign terrorist organization.<sup>304</sup> On March 1, 2019 the U.S. reviewed and maintained their designation.<sup>305</sup>

**Designations by Foreign Governments:**



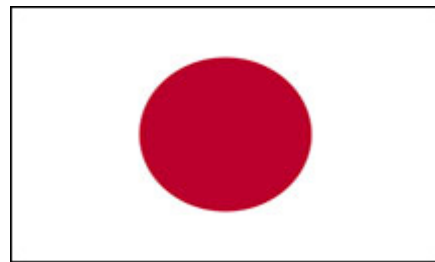
Australia—Designated as a terrorist organization on December 17, 2005, and renewed on August 4, 2018.<sup>306</sup>



Canada—Designated the PKK as a foreign terrorist group on December 10, 2002 and renewed on November 21, 2018.<sup>307</sup>



European Union—Designated the PKK as a terrorist group in 2014 and reaffirmed in 2018.<sup>308</sup>



Japan—Designated the PKK as a terrorist group on July 5, 2002.<sup>309</sup>



Kyrgyzstan—Designated the PKK as a terrorist group on June 12, 2008.<sup>310</sup>



New Zealand—Designated the PKK as a terrorist group on February 10, 2010 and renewed on January 30, 2019.<sup>311</sup>

## ***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

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Turkey—Designated the PKK as a terrorist organization  
in 1984.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” U.S. Department of State, April 15, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/> [24].

<sup>305</sup> “State Department Maintains Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) Designation of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK),” U.S. Department of State, March 1, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/state-department-maintains-foreign-terrorist-organization-fto-designation-of-the-kurdistan-workers-party-pkk/> [102].

<sup>306</sup> “Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK),” Australian National Security, August 4, 2018, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx> [3].

<sup>307</sup> “Currently Listed Entities,” Canadian Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, June 21, 2019, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scr/cntr-trrrsm/lstd-ntts/crrnt-lstd-ntts-en.aspx#43> [103].

<sup>308</sup> “EU Verdict Keeps PKK on Terror List Despite Procedural Mistakes,” Ahval, November 15, 2018, <https://ahvalnews.com/european-union/eu-verdict-keeps-pkk-terror-list-despite-procedural-mistakes> [104]; “Council Decision 2011/70/CFSP of 31 January 2011 Updating the List of Persons, Groups and Entities Subject to Articles 2, 3 and 4 of Common Position 2001/931/CFSP on the Application of Specific Measures to Combat Terrorism,” European Union, February 2, 2002, <https://archive.fo/20120722224908/http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:028:0057:01:EN:HTML#selection-45.0-45.223> [105].

<sup>309</sup> “Implementation of the Measures Including the Freezing of Assets against Terrorists and the Like,” Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 5, 2002, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2002/7/0705.html> [106].

<sup>310</sup> “Le Kirghizistan a connu PKK comme une organisation terroriste,” Azeri-Press Agency, June 12, 2008, <https://archive.fo/20120710175128/http://fr.apa.az/news.php?id=1873> [107].

<sup>311</sup> “Lists Associated with Resolution 1373,” New Zealand Police, February 1, 2019, <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice/personal-community/counterterrorism/designated-entities/lists-associated-with-resolution-1373> [108].

<sup>312</sup> “PKK,” Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 20, 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/pkk.en.mfa> [109].

**Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)**

**Associations:**

**Ties to Extremist Entities:**



TAK (Kurdistan Freedom Hawks)

A Kurdish nationalist group that has claimed several terrorist attacks within Turkey. The group formed after the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan as a breakaway group specializing in urban operations.<sup>313</sup> Many suspect that TAK is actually a front for or directly connected to the PKK. A 2014 report by IHS Jane's claims that HPG deputy commander Mustafa Karasu also commands TAK.<sup>314</sup> Some experts like Aliza Marcus has expressed doubt that the PKK would allow TAK to work independently given the PKK's history of suppressing competing insurgent groups in Turkey.<sup>315</sup>



Wrath of Olive Operations Room (Ghadab al-Zaytoun (GaZ))

Wrath of Olives (GaZ) is an insurgent group allegedly made up of YPG members operating in Afrin, Syria, since the region was captured by the Turkish military and its Syrian allies in early 2018.<sup>316</sup> GaZ carries out assassinations and car bombings against Turkish soldiers and Turkish-backed Syrian militants as well as civilians and local political leaders it accuses of being "occupiers" and "collaborators."<sup>317</sup>



Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA)

ASALA is an Armenian insurgent group that cooperated with the PKK during the 1980s as they plotted attacks against the Turkish state. ASALA used targeted assassinations of Turkish officials in Turkey to demand recognition by the Turkish state of the Armenian Genocide.<sup>318</sup>

**Ties to Other Regional Entities:**



KCK

(Kongra-Gel, Union of Communities in Kurdistan)

The KCK is the umbrella organization of the PKK and acts as a Kurdish congress. The KCK elects some 300 representatives from across the region.<sup>319</sup>



PJAK (The Free Life Party of Kurdistan)  
The less prevalent Iranian Kurdish political party.<sup>320</sup>



## ***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***



PCDK (Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party) Iraqi Kurdish branch of the PKK. The party is banned from formal political activity in Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>321</sup>



PYD (Democratic Union Party)

The PYD is the political party of the Syrian Kurdish branch of the KCK. The PYD (Hezib al-Ittihad al-Dimocrati or Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat or Democratic Union Party) was founded in 2003 as the Syrian branch of the Kurdish political movement headed by the KCK (Koma Civakên Kurdistan or Kurdistan Communities Union). The PYD was one of four parties operating in Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria. Abdullah Öcalan founded the KCK from prison with the hope of someday establishing democratic confederacies in each region. Since the Adana Agreement, the Syrian government had become increasingly oppressive of Kurdish resistance groups in order to appease its Turkish neighbors.<sup>322</sup> Human Rights Watch notes “since 2004 the Syrian government has quashed public gatherings to express solidarity with fellow Kurds across international borders with harsh measures, including firing live ammunition at demonstrators, arrests, detention, and prison terms.” The PYD, amongst other Kurdish movements, continued its political activism despite the repression of the Syrian regime up until the Syrian civil war.<sup>323</sup>

At the brink of the Syrian Civil War the PYD faced new ideological dilemmas and opportunities for their movement. Despite the fact that PYD party leadership “...such as party chairman Salih Muslim, Hadiya Yusuf, and Anwar Muslim have all spent time in prison...” the YPG has both clashed and cooperated with the Assad regime during the Syrian Civil War. The PYD has since developed a unique ideology and distanced itself from its origins as a political party and a PKK affiliate. Their charter no longer declares Öcalan as the leader of the PYD movement.<sup>324</sup> PYD leader Saleh Muslim Mohammed further distances himself from the origins on the party with claims that “the decision making [in the self-ruling areas] is no longer the PYD’s—now the people rule themselves. The councils have been established, and the people decide.”<sup>325</sup>

The PYD has evolved significantly since its inception. Its hazy and flexible status as a political party and then political establishment has rendered it capable of practical ideological mobility. As a result, what began as a weak political party transformed into an armed struggle and arguably the only Kurdish enclave to successful attempt Öcalan’s democratic confederacy experiment. However, the reality of the PYD’s distance from the PKK is still unknown. In August 2019, the Iraqi Kurdistan-based new outlet “Kurdistan 24” was banned from reporting in northeast Syria by the PYD.<sup>326</sup>

This decision was made after Kurdistan 24 aired an interview with Öcalan’s brother, Osman Öcalan, in which he criticized a senior PKK leader’s recent comments about whether or not Sinjar, Iraq belonged to Iraq or to a greater “Kurdistan.”<sup>327</sup>

***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***



YPG (Peoples' Protection Units)  
The YPG is the military arm of the PYD.<sup>328</sup>



YPJ (Women's Protection Units)  
Women's branch of the YPG.<sup>329</sup>



YBS  
The Yezidi Protection Units were created with the help of the PKK after the ISIS massacres of Kurdish-speaking Yezidis on Mt. Sinjar.<sup>330</sup>

- <sup>313</sup> Frederike Geerdink, "Ankara Bombing: PKK, TAK Ties Come under Scrutiny Again," Middle East Eye, March 4, 2016, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/ankara-bombing-pkk-tak-ties-come-under-scrutiny-again> [89].
- <sup>314</sup> Soner Cagaptay and Coskun Unal, "Leadership Reshuffle—PKK Makes Changes in Its Ranks," IHS Janes, February 26, 2014, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/Cagaptay20140226-Janes.pdf> [14].
- <sup>315</sup> Frederike Geerdink, "Ankara Bombing: PKK, TAK Ties Come under Scrutiny Again," Middle East Eye, March 4, 2016, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/ankara-bombing-pkk-tak-ties-come-under-scrutiny-again> [89].
- <sup>316</sup> Alexander McKeever, "Wrath of the Olives: Tracking the Afrin Insurgency through Social Media," Bellingcat, March 1, 2018, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2019/03/01/wrath-of-the-olives-tracking-the-afrin-insurgency-through-social-media/> [110].
- <sup>317</sup> Alexander McKeever "Wrath of the Olives: Tracking the Afrin Insurgency through Social Media," Bellingcat, March 1, 2018, <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/mena/2019/03/01/wrath-of-the-olives-tracking-the-afrin-insurgency-through-social-media/> [110].
- <sup>318</sup> Thomas Schmidinger, *The Battle for the Mountain of the Kurds: Self Determination and Ethnic Cleansing in the Afrin Region of Rojava* (Oakland: PM Press, 2019), 39.
- <sup>319</sup> Soner Cagaptay and Coskun Unal, "Leadership Reshuffle—PKK Makes Changes in Its Ranks," IHS Jane's, February 26, 2014, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/Cagaptay20140226-Janes.pdf> [14].
- <sup>320</sup> Soner Cagaptay and Coskun Unal, "Leadership Reshuffle—PKK Makes Changes in Its Ranks," IHS Jane's, February 26, 2014, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/Cagaptay20140226-Janes.pdf> [14].
- <sup>321</sup> Soner Cagaptay and Coskun Unal, "Leadership Reshuffle—PKK Makes Changes in Its Ranks," IHS Jane's, February 26, 2014, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/Cagaptay20140226-Janes.pdf> [14].
- <sup>322</sup> *Group Denial: Repression of Kurdish Political and Cultural Rights in Syria*, Human Rights Watch (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 2009), [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syria1109webwcover\\_0.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syria1109webwcover_0.pdf) [111].
- <sup>323</sup> Group Denial Repression of Kurdish Political and Cultural Rights in Syria, Human Rights Watch, (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 2009), [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syria1109webwcover\\_0.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syria1109webwcover_0.pdf) [111].
- <sup>324</sup> Barak Barfi, "Ascent of the PYD and the SDF," Washington Institute for Near East Policy Research Notes, no. 32 (April 2016), 8, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/ResearchNote32-Barfi.pdf> [112].
- <sup>325</sup> Aron Lund, "The People's Rule: An Interview With Saleh Muslim, Part I," Carnegie Middle East Center, February 27, 2014, <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/54675> [113].
- <sup>326</sup> "Statement from Kurdistan 24 Company for Media and Research Ltd.," Kurdistan 24, September 2, 2019, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/e9639851-d3aa-42c4-962b-7a04e733e3bf> [114].
- <sup>327</sup> Baxtiyar Goran, Twitter post, August 27, 2019, 5:29 a.m., <https://twitter.com/BaxtiyarGoran/status/1166281515472445440> [115].
- <sup>328</sup> Alev Erhan And Aaron Stein, "Mapping 'The Kurds': An Interactive Chart," Atlantic Council, March 15, 2016, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/mapping-the-kurds-an-interactive-chart> [116].
- <sup>329</sup> Karzan Sulaivany, "New Training Academies Will Include Arab Women: YPJ," Kurdistan 24, January 4, 2017, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/deb089d9-81cf-4f28-8466-9d9a872434eb/New-training-academies-will-include-Arab-women-YPJ> [117].
- <sup>330</sup> Wladimir van Wilgenburg, "Why Did the PKK Withdraw from Sinjar?," Ahval, March 28, 2018, <https://ahvalnews.com/sinjar/why-did-pkk-withdraw-sinjar> [118].

*Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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**Media Coverage:**

## ***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

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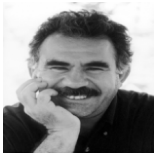
### **Rhetoric:**



[119]

[Kurdish fighter Zind Ruken, 2016](#) [119]

“Sometimes I’m a PKK, sometimes I’m a PJAK [the PKK-allied affiliate, active in Iran], sometimes I’m a YPG. It doesn’t really matter. They are all members of the PKK.”<sup>331</sup>



[120]

[Abdullah Öcalan, 1977](#) [120]

“If a people embraces its own tradition, uses its own religion, makes its culture come alive, this too is a rebellion.”<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Aaron Stein and Michelle Foley, “The YPG-PKK Connection,” Atlantic Council, January 26, 2016, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/the-ypg-pkk-connection> [56].

<sup>332</sup> Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*, (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 39, <https://books.google.com/books?id=6rcUCgAAQBAJ&pg=PA115&lpg=PA115&dq=Pinarçik+massacre+pkk+claims&source=bl&ots=JaZ9Kg160t&sig=ACfU3U1bsjVs8x7ufCH5zblsbOjVM4nolQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjsh9yy1YPkAhWUup4KHeRFDZUO6AEwBnoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=Pinarçik%20massacre%20pkk%20claims&f=false> [16].