

Women's Revolution

Monthly Newsletter on the development and agenda of the women's revolution in North and East Syria



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KONGRA STAR
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The women's revolution and the women's movements and organizations in North and East Syria are progressing step by step towards a free society. In this issue of the newsletter we will give a short review and evaluation of our work as a women's movement in the past year. In addition, we will discuss important steps taken in North and East Syria in the past month, including the new social contract of the North and East Syria region, actions of the Women's Ecology Platform for the Freedom of Abdullah Öcalan, and last month's attacks on North and East Syria by fascist Turkey and the resistance of the people in the region.



A short review of Kongra Star's struggles and activities in 2023

The year 2023 began with Kongra Star holding its 9th Congress on the 15th of January, the anniversary of the founding of Kongra Star. Under the slogan „In the spirit of the women's revolution, we will lead the Jin Jiyan Azadî rebellion to success!“, thousands of women from all organizational structures in North and East Syria discussed the struggles of women in all areas of society, politics, diplomacy, culture, ecology and economy together and made important decisions for the next two years. This included, for example, planning campaigns against all forms of violence, war and occupation in order to protect the land and the identity of women. Many of the decisions made at the congress were then reflected in the actions and activities of the women's movement throughout the year.

Fighting for our freedom also means fighting for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan

One of the main goals was and is to fight for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan. His vision of a democratic, ecological society based on women's freedom created the theoretical basis on which a new social model is being developed today in North and East Syria. Through his perspectives on women's liberation, he inspired the women's movement in Kurdistan and women's struggles worldwide. As the women's revolution in Rojava draws its strength and determination from his perspectives, one of its most important tasks is to stand up for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan. In order to develop this work, in 2023 Kongra Star formed a committee specifically for this purpose, which has carried out numerous activities. A conference was held about the Democratic Nation and the leadership role of women, as well as the continuing isolation of Abdullah Öcalan. More than 12,000 letters were written to Abdullah Öcalan communicating the spirit and feelings of children. Together with the Committee for Children, Kongra Star collected a selection of these letters and published them as a book. Seminars and meetings on the ideas and perspectives of Abdullah Öcalan have been held in many cities, districts and villages, and various actions have been organized against his isolation and for his freedom.

Continuing the women's revolution also means expanding its achievements

Another important step was to hold the „Mala Jin“ conference in 2023. The Mala Jin are one of the most visible achievements of the women's revolution. Mala Jin means „house of women“ and is a contact point for women who have problems or whose rights have been violated. In 2023, more than 60 Mala Jin were organized throughout the region of North and East Syria. In the Mala Jin, the problems of society, family, men and women are solved and they take responsibility for the development of a democratic family model. After all the important work and activities of Mala Jin, it was time to hold a joint conference to make decisions and take new steps. Discussions included the importance of the new family law for the work of Mala Jin, and how to inform and sensitize society about family law and women's principles.¹

The co-chair system was also an important topic. Meetings were held with hundreds of co-chairwomen and discussions were held on how women can organize themselves in this system and take an important role and mission in all institutions and areas.

Being a voice for all women through campaigns and actions

With the aim of creating links between women fighting for their freedom in the Middle East, a campaign of solidarity with the women of Shengal and Afghanistan was launched in August, the anniversary of the attacks on Shengal and the Taliban invasion of Afghanistan. A number of activities were carried out as part of this campaign. These included a women's forum in the city of Raqqa.

On the 8th of March, a campaign was launched under the slogan „With Jin Jiyan Azadî to the Women's Revolution“ and thousands of seminars, demonstrations and forums were organized and training courses for men were opened. Many civil society organizations participated in the campaign with their own activities.

This year, the Ecology Committee launched a campaign to encourage women to build an ecological society and opened women's gardens in Dirbesiyê and Amûdê. A campaign entitled „Against All Forms of Violence and Occupation - Jin Jiyan Azadî!“ was also launched in November with the aim of taking a stand in the struggle for women's freedom and homeland.

1 <https://kongra-star.org/eng/2022/02/03/mala-jin-empowering-women-and-strengthening-society/>

Attacks, martyrs and the will to defend our achievements

With heart and strength, we women have continued to fight against patriarchal mentalities and structures every single day this year, working to build a system based on women's freedom. In 2023, this system and all the achievements of the women's revolution were repeatedly the target of attacks. These came from remnants of the Islamic State, gangs supported by the Syrian regime and Iran, but above all from the Turkish state. With more than 800 targets, Turkey has attacked the population in North and East Syria with warplanes, drones and artillery shells, repeatedly targeting women in political and social leadership. In particular, we would like to remember the two women Yusra Derwêş - co-chair of the self-administration in Qamişlo canton and Lîman Şiwêş, her deputy. They were pioneers of the women's revolution and were deliberately executed by Turkish state drones on the 27th of June.

In early October and most recently over Christmas 2023, the Turkish state launched large-scale attacks on the region's infrastructure. Water, electricity, fuel, food and health services have been destroyed in many regions. This puts a particular burden on women, society and children. We say again: these attacks do not frighten us. They will not be able to destroy our courage, our will and our strength. As women, we stand together and we will defend our achievements together. We will continue our struggle against war, occupation and patriarchy in the coming year and expand our work and activities with great enthusiasm, love and organization.





New social contract in North and East Syria

After a long democratic process, a new social contract came into force on the 12th of December in the region of North and East Syria, which regulates the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people and the various population groups, the organization of democracy, self-defence and justice, and includes the establishment of women's councils. This new version of the social contract has been under discussion in society since 2018 and it is intended to reflect the developments of the last eleven years, as the previously adopted laws were passed without the Arab-dominated regions of Raqqa, Tabqa, Minbic and Deir ez-Zor.

All ethnic identities, religions, denominations, languages, cultures and world views are taken into account in the new social contract, and bringing it into practice is an important development in building the system on this basis. This social contract represents a historic step, because for the first time the peoples of the Middle East have agreed to live together. For the first time, Kurds, Arabs, Suryoye, Turkmen, Armenians, Circassians, Chechens, Muslims, Christians and Yezidis are named in a social contract and their rights are guaranteed.

In addition to the renaming of the Autonomous Administration to „Democratic Self-Government in the Region of North and East Syria“, the new social contract regulates in 134 paragraphs a concrete form of social democracy adapted to current needs, starting with the neighborhoods, cities, cantons and the Democratic Council of Peoples. The councils are a mixture of representative elections and representatives of organized social groups, such as ethnic groups, religious communities, women and youth. The system has been further adapted to the needs of the region and society, from the basic commune to the council, from the basic economy to the national economy, from health to education. The new social contract adheres to the radical democratic principles of democratic autonomy. At the same time, the creation of an independent institution for financial supervision is planned. A court is to be established to protect the social contract. The regional structure was also changed and is now to consist of seven cantons: Cizîrê, Firat, Raqqa, Tabqa, Deir ez-Zor, Minbic and Efrîn-Şehba.

The Women's Council was explicitly included as a body in the most important articles of the social contract and thus legally secured. It comprises the principles that guarantee the construction of an ecological and democratic society based on the liberation of women and the foundation of social confederalism. One of the cornerstones of the new social contract is the principle of gender equality. The commission that drafted the new social contract consisted of fifty percent women. Accordingly, the guarantee of women's rights was not only mentioned in the general principles, but also in specific articles.

One of the most important steps was that the Women's Council of North and East Syria was legally recognized as a special section of the agreement. Within the legal system, women organize themselves in specific ways. The representation of women and their rights are specifically defined in all articles of the agreement and guaranteed in special articles. New articles have also been included in order to create a social contract for women in the future.

To learn more about the social contract you can read the following interviews:



[Foza Yusif: The Social Contract is a new milestone](#)



Hessaf: The Social Contract will help us building an ecological and democratic society
[Part one](#) [Part two](#)



Resistance to Turkish attacks on North and East Syria

Since the 23rd of December, in the shadow of the Christmas holidays, fascist Turkey has once again intensified its attacks on North and East Syria in violation of international law. Turkey is using the public distraction of Christmas to bombard the region of northern Syria from the air and with artillery.

The entire border region was attacked by drones, warplanes and artillery. Turkey's intensified attacks constitute war crimes as they target civilian infrastructure, civilian facilities and production sites in populated areas. At least nine civilians were killed and dozens injured in the intensified and ongoing attacks during the Christmas period. Health facilities such as the hospital in Kobanê, the dialysis center and an oxygen production plant for hospitals in Qamishlo were bombed. Several power generation facilities were bombed, with the result that around 2,600 villages and nine towns are currently cut off from electricity. Grain silos, olive oil production facilities, wedding halls, a printing press, food production facilities, internal security checkpoints, civilians' homes and other locations have also been bombed.

The aim of the attacks is to make daily life impossible, create instability in the region, revive ISIS, intimidate people in the region and force them to flee. But in all parts of northern and eastern Syria, people have taken a defiant stance and clearly signaled that they will not be intimidated and will defend the hard-won democratic social system. From Sheba to Derik, there were dozens of demonstrations by the population against the attacks on them. On the 26th of December, in the city of Qamishlo, six of the nine fallen civilians were buried by thousands of people in a ceremony at the Cemetery of Martyrs.

Read our statement on the attacks:

[Stop the Turkish state terror and defend the women's revolution.](#)

Resistance to Turkish attacks on North and East Syria

One of the many demonstrations in North and East Syria against the Turkish attacks.

(The poster in the picture calls for a no-fly zone)



A picture of the funeral ceremony of the martyrs in the city of Qamishlo on December 26 with the participation of thousands of people.



Rojava Women's Ecology Platform campaigns for the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan

The Rojava Women's Ecology Platform, which was founded a year ago and consists of various organizations and institutions working on ecology, held a series of actions on the 6th of December for the release of Abdullah Öcalan, who has been held in strict isolation for years in the Turkish prison island of Imrali. Especially after the earthquake in Turkey, which also hit the prison island of Imrali, the platform announced that it would carry out various activities every Wednesday for a month.

The struggle for freedom, democracy, an ecologically just society and the liberation of women must go hand in hand and cannot be considered separately. This is why the Ecology Women's Platform, as women who are primarily committed to ecology, has launched weekly actions for the end of solitary confinement and the freedom of Abdullah Öcalan. Abdullah Öcalan is committed to a democratic, gender liberated and ecologically just society, as demonstrated by his paradigm, and encouraged the people of Rojava and North and East Syria to start a revolution with his ideas eleven years ago. Abdullah Öcalan is a key figure in solving not only the Kurdish problem, but also the conflicts in the Middle East, which also lead to environmental disasters.

That is why every Wednesday – chosen because Abdullah Öcalan's lawyers met with him every Wednesday before the conditions of isolation were reinforced – the Women's Ecology Platform meets and reads from the previous transcripts of the meetings with Öcalan and his lawyers.



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