

## *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**

*Executive Summary*

Abdullah Öcalan founded the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in [Turkey](#) in 1978.<sup>1</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>2</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>3</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>4</sup>

Öcalan, born a peasant in southeastern Turkey, propagated his ideology in the wake of the 1980 military coup in Turkey.<sup>5</sup> Only a year after officially founding his party, he fled to Syria in light of Turkey's increasing military counterinsurgency activity.<sup>6</sup> Between 1979 and 1998, the Syrian government sheltered Öcalan in Damascus or in the Beka'a Valley of Lebanon.<sup>7</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>8</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>9</sup>

Despite his capture and incarceration in February of 1999, Abdullah Öcalan continues to significantly influence Kurdish politics.<sup>10</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>11</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

## *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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promotion of democratic confederalism.<sup>12</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>13</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>14</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>15</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>16</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>17</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>18</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>19</sup> It pursues these goals in part by pressuring Turkey through violent attacks targeting tourists and by gaining the support of international actors.<sup>20</sup>

In the late 1970s, socialist movements were extremely popular in Turkey.<sup>21</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>22</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>23</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>24</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 from Murray Bookchin pushed his ideology toward the promotion of democratic confederalism.<sup>25</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>26</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>27</sup> The term was first referenced in his work "The Sociology of Freedom" in 2003.<sup>28</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>29</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>30</sup> Öcalan's new doctrine, democratic confederalism, has inspired the "Rojava Experiment" in Syria, created in the wake of the Syrian revolution.<sup>31</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>32</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>33</sup> Each regional branch of the KCK stresses different components of Öcalan's doctrine.<sup>34</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 *Hevserek*), replacing KCK head Murat Karayilan (a.k.a. Cemal) with co-chairs Cemil Bayik (a.k.a.

## *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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>35</sup> Bayik allegedly has strong ties to Iran's intelligence agency, VEVAK.<sup>36</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>37</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 Pazarçik. Öcalan directed all of these leadership changes from prison.<sup>38</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>39</sup>

In 2005, the PKK implemented its second phase of organizational structure, forming the Kongra-Gel.<sup>40</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>41</sup>

The People's Defense Forces (HPG) became the military wing of the movement, with at least 2,000 fighters as of 2013.<sup>42</sup> Each HPG regional command is divided into units of eight to 20 militants.<sup>43</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>44</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.

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>45</sup> The KCK serves as an umbrella organization including the PKK and other Kurdish movements in Syria (PYD), Iraq (PÇDK), and Iran (PJAK).<sup>46</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>47</sup> The legislative body, the Kongra-Gel, has 300 representatives elected every two years.<sup>48</sup> However, the KCK's activities are dictated by the PKK's legislative council in Iraq.<sup>49</sup> The U.S. designation of the PKK as a foreign terrorist organization treats the group as synonymous with the Kongra-Gel.<sup>50</sup>

The Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H) is the urban-based youth unit of the PKK.<sup>51</sup> In 2015, the YDG-H was allegedly incorporated into the PKK as part of the Civilian Protection Units (YBS).<sup>52</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>53</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>54</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>55</sup> In the 1980s the PKK was able to raise significant funds in Europe.<sup>56</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>57</sup> According to Turkish government-run think tanks and newspapers, the PKK has also been supported by Greece, Russia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.<sup>58</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>59</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>60</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>61</sup> The PKK has also been known to use illegal

## *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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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>62</sup>

### *Recruitment*

Members began recruiting aggressively for the “Kurdistan Revolutionaries,” as they called themselves, in 1975.<sup>63</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>64</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>65</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>66</sup>

### *Transnational Movement:*

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>67</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>68</sup> Syrian Kurds were often supportive of the PKK.<sup>69</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>70</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>71</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>72</sup> In 2010, UNICEF also condemned the PKK’s use of child soldiers.<sup>73</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>74</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>75</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>76</sup> In 2013, a PKK commander signed a commitment to take measures to “limit” the use of children in insurgent activities.<sup>77</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>78</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>79</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>80</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>81</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>82</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>83</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>84</sup>

### *Training*

## *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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>85</sup> The PKK emphasizes ideological training, indoctrinating recruits with Abdullah Öcalan's ideology and the PKK's interpretation of Kurdish history and culture.<sup>86</sup> Women comprise their own regiments and are separated from men.<sup>87</sup>

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>88</sup> The PKK has also been accused of having training camps in Turkey, Europe, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian territories.<sup>89</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>90</sup> From 1980 to 1982, PKK militants trained 300 fighters in Lebanon who were then mobilized in Turkey.<sup>91</sup>

Many PKK bases and training camps operate out of the Qandil Mountains on the borders with Iran and Iraq.<sup>92</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>93</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>94</sup> Murat Karayilan is the primary commander of this region.<sup>95</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>96</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>97</sup> In 1991, Öcalan was pictured visiting the Beka'a camps.<sup>98</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>99</sup>

### *Also Known As:*

- Freedom and Democracy Congress of Kurdistan<sup>100</sup>
- Hezan Parastina Gel<sup>101</sup>
- Kongra-Gel (KGK)<sup>102</sup>
- Kongra Gele Kurdistan<sup>103</sup>
- Kongreya Azadi u Demokrasya Kurdistan (KADEK)<sup>104</sup>
- Kurdistan Freedom Falcons<sup>105</sup>
- Kurdistan Freedom Brigade<sup>106</sup>
- Kurdistan Freedom Hawks<sup>107</sup>
- Kurdistan Halk Kongresi (Kurdistan People's Congress)<sup>108</sup>
- Kurdish Liberation Hawks<sup>109</sup>
- Kurdistan Labor Party<sup>110</sup>
- Kurdistan Ozgurluk Sahinleri<sup>111</sup>
- Kurdistan People's Congress<sup>112</sup>
- Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan<sup>113</sup>
- People's Defense Force (HPG)<sup>114</sup>
- Teyrbazên Azadiya Kurdistan<sup>115</sup>

<sup>1</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>.

<sup>2</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>.

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<sup>4</sup> "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.

<sup>5</sup> Amberin Zaman, "Turkey Celebrates Capture of Öcalan," *Washington Post*, February 18, 1999, [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/feb99/Öcalanturkey18.htm](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/feb99/Öcalanturkey18.htm)

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

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*Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

**Key Leaders**



**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

*Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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**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:

- **October 4, 2023:** Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan announces that all facilities and infrastructure belonging to the PKK and its Syrian offshoot the People's Protection Units (YPG) are now "legitimate targets" of Turkey's security forces and intelligence units. The announcement follows an October 1 PKK suicide bombing outside of Turkey's Interior Ministry building in Ankara that killed one and injured two others. Source: "Turkey says bombers came from Syria, eyes cross-border targets," Reuters, October 4, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-says-ankara-bomb-attackers-came-syria-2023-10-04/>.
- **September 11, 2023:** A court in Diyarbakir sentences Narin Gezgör, a founding member of a Kurdish women's rights group to seven years and six months in prison on charges of membership in a terrorist organization. Critics have claimed that politically active Kurds are accused of membership in a terrorist group although engaging in non-violent civil society engagement and political commentary. Source: "Turkey sentences founding member of Kurdish women's association to more than 7 years in prison," Stockholm Center for Freedom, September 11, 2023, <https://stockholmcf.org/turkey-sentences-founding-member-of-kurdish-womens-association-to-more-than-7-years-in-prison/>.
- **July 6, 2023:** A Stockholm district court finds a Kurdish man guilty of attempted aggravated extortion and a firearms offense. The man, who was originally arrested in January for threatening and firing a gun outside a Stockholm restaurant to extort a businessman to pay more money to the PKK, is sentenced to four and a half years imprisonment. The action was reportedly part of an extensive fundraising program conducted by the PKK in Europe. Source: "NATO applicant Sweden jails Kurdish man for attempting to finance PKK militants," France 24, July 6, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20230706-nato-applicant-sweden-jails-kurdish-man-for-attempting-to-finance-pkk-militants>.
- **June 28, 2023:** According to a U.N. report, a PKK-affiliated group in Syria, the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement, reportedly recruited around 10 children to fight alongside the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in 2022. Four of the children were abducted for recruitment purposes. According to officials with Revolutionary Youth, minors are reportedly not sent to armed service, but reportedly take educational training courses and "are sent to the mountains if they want" as the PKK has a headquarters in the Qandil mountains in northern Iraq. Sources: "Children and armed conflict," United Nations General Assembly Security Council, June 5, 2023, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N23/144/96/PDF/N2314496.pdf?OpenElement>; Hogir Abdo, "Recruitment of children by armed groups in Syria is on the rise, even as fighting subsides," ABC News, June 28, 2023, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/recruitment-children-armed-groups-syria-rise-fighting-subsides-100433251>.
- **May 22, 2023:** Istanbul police launch operations targeting the PKK in the southern provinces of Mersin and Antalya. The raids are carried out after a group called "children of fire" posts across social media that they would "create chaos and fear." The group members were allegedly responsible for arson related attacks and illegal demonstrations across the country. At least 23 people are detained during the operations. Source: "Police detain 23 PKK, 12 ISIL suspects," Hurriyet Daily News, May 24, 2023, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/police-detain-23-pkk-12-isil-suspects-183393>.
- **May 18, 2023:** Turkey's MIT launches an operation in Ayn al-Arab, northern Syria. The operation leads to the death of Tuba Karakoç, a PKK/YPG finance leader. Karakoç reportedly joined the PKK in 2013, and her violent and financial activities with the group extended across Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. Prior to her death, she was suspected of preparing another attack in Turkey. Source: "M?T 'neutralizes' senior PKK member in Syria," Hurriyet Daily News, May 18, 2023, <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/mit-neutralizes-senior-pkk-member-in-syria-183237>.
- **May 13, 2023:** Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) carries out an operation in northern Syria, resulting in the death of senior PKK officer Haydar Demirel, also known as Bager Türk. Demirel, who was trained under PKK founder Abdullah Öcalan beginning in 1993, served as the PKK's general manager of the Hol province in northern Syria. Where he also trained PKK/YPG members. Source: "Turkish intelligence operation eliminates senior PKK/YPG terrorist," Anadolu Agency, May 13, 2023, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/turkish-intelligence-operation-eliminates-senior-pkkygp-terrorist>.
- **May 7, 2023:** Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) carries out a cross-border intelligence operation, targeting and killing Eyvaz Beyaz, a senior PKK official, in Duhok-Gara, Iraq. Beyaz—who was wanted by Interpol with a red notice is also designated by the Turkish government—carried out multiple attacks against gendarmeries over the years, including a bomb attack in the Black Sea province in 2012. Source: "Turkish intelligence eliminates senior PKK terrorist in N.Iraq," Daily Sabah, May 7, 2023, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/turkish-intelligence-eliminates-senior-pkk-terrorist-in-niraq>.
- **May 5, 2023:** Amidst Sweden's bid to join NATO, Stockholm begins proceedings to try a YPG/PKK linked suspect who is accused of extorting money to fund the terror group's activities across Sweden and other countries. The suspect, who was reportedly apprehended in February 2023, is charged with attempted aggravated extortion, weapons offenses, and attempted terrorist financing. Source: "Swedish court to try PKK/YPG-linked extortion suspect for 1st time," Anadolu Agency, May 5, 2023, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/swedish-court-to-try-pkkygp-linked-extortion-suspect-for-1st-time>.
- **April 25, 2023:** Turkish authorities detain at least 110 individuals with reported ties to the PKK. The counterterror operation was carried out across 21 provinces, with police arresting journalists, pro-Kurdish activists, and lawyers. Police charged the suspects with financing the PKK or recruiting for the designated group. Reportedly, some of the suspects transferred money to the PKK from municipalities held by the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), a pro-Kurdish political party. HDP is embroiled in legal woes as the Turkish supreme court is deliberating whether to ban the pro-Kurdish, and alleged PKK affiliated, party or impose a five year political ban on 550 of the group's members. Source: "Turkey arrests 110 people over alleged PKK links ahead of crunch elections," France 24, April 25, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20230425-turkey-arrests-110-people-over-alleged-pkk-links-ahead-of-crunch-elections>.
- **April 14, 2023:** A Paris court convicts 11 members of the PKK on charges of terror financing. The Turkish born defendants are accused of being part of a network that seeks a "revolutionary tax" from the Kurdish diaspora. In southeastern France alone, investigators believe the suspects collected around two million euros every year. The men receive sentences ranging from three to five years. Source: "French Court Convicts 11 Turkish Kurds of PKK Terror Financing," Agence France Presse, April 14, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/french-court-convicts-11-turkish-kurds-of-pkk-terror-financing/7051348.html>.
- **March 29, 2023:** The PKK announces that it will extend its unilateral ceasefire with the Turkish state until after Turkey's May 14 presidential and parliamentary elections.

## *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

The election is critical as Erdoğan faces a close race, which threatens to end his multidecade control over Turkey. However, Hülya Oran, co-chair of the PKK's executive council, states that if Turkish forces continue to attack the PKK, the terror group will retaliate. Source: Ragip Soylu, "Turkey elections: PKK extends ceasefire until polls close," Middle East Eye, March 29, 2023, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-elections-pkk-extends-ceasefire-until-after-polls>.

- **February 10, 2023:** Following two catastrophic earthquakes in Turkey and Syria that killed more than 340,000 on February 6, the PKK announces a temporary pause in their insurgency against the Turkish government. The decision is made to facilitate rescue work. However, the PKK also states it will retaliate if provoked by the Turkish state. Source: "Kurdish militants suspend operations after Turkey quake," France 24, February 10, 2023, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230210-kurdish-militants-suspend-operations-after-turkey-quake>.
- **November 20, 2022:** Turkey launches airstrikes over northern regions of Syria and Iraq targeting the bases of the the PKK and YPG. According to the Defense Ministry, the strikes—which ranged from Tall Rifat, northwest Syria to the Qandil mountains, northeast Iraq—destroyed 89 targets and killed a "large number" of "terrorists." Ankara has stated the airstrikes are in retaliation for a November 13 bombing in Istanbul that killed six and injured 81. Source: Andrew Wilks, "Turkey strikes in Syria, Iraq a week after Istanbul bombing," Associated Press, November 20, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-europe-middle-east-syria-turkey-245f0caaf344698227cbcc0bcf5cf2>.
- **Finland and Sweden submit applications to join NATO.**  
However, Turkey vetos their membership as Erdoğan has accused the countries of harboring individuals linked to the PKK. Turkey later lifts its veto in July in exchange for pledges from the two countries to consider extraditing Kurdish terror suspects to Turkey. As of November 2022, Turkey claims that the two countries have not yet fulfilled their pledge in combatting terrorists targeting Turkey, leading Ankara to stall on formally approving their membership to NATO. Sources: Anna Kaplan, "Turkey Expects 'Serious Steps' From Sweden On Terrorism Concerns, Erdogan Says," Forbes, May 21, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/annakaplan/2022/05/21/turkey-expects-serious-steps-from-sweden-on-terrorism-concerns-erdogan-says/?sh=116fe7d56713>; "Turkey warns Finland, Sweden must 'take steps' before joining NATO," France 24, November 4, 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20221104-turkey-warns-finland-sweden-must-take-steps-before-joining-nato>; Bernd Riegert, "NATO: Sweden, Finland boost unity against Putin," Deutsche Welle, July 29, 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/opinion-nato-summit-sweden-finland-boost-unity-against-putin/a-62305686>.
- **April 18, 2022:** The Turkish military launches Operation Claw-Lock, which targets PKK members in the Metina, Zap, and Ayashin-Basyan regions in northern Iraq. According to the Turkish military, the PKK has reportedly been preparing to carry out large-scale attacks against the military. Source: "Turkey deals heavy blow to PKK terrorists in new op in N. Iraq," Daily Sabah, April 18, 2022, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/turkey-deals-heavy-blow-to-pkk-terrorists-in-new-op-in-iraq>.
- **June 6, 2021:** Turkey launches an airstrike on a refugee camp in northern Iraq. The strike kills Selman Bozkir, a senior PKK official and manager of the Makhmour camp. U.N. officials denounced the strike, claiming "any attack targeting civilians at Makhmour refugee camp would be a violation of international and humanitarian law." Source: "Erdogan says Turkey 'neutralised' PKK official in Iraq camp strike," Reuters, June 6, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/erdogan-says-turkey-neutralised-pkk-official-iraq-camp-strike-2021-06-06/>.
- **May 1, 2021:** The Higher Regional Court in Stuttgart Germany sentences five men for their membership in PKK, an outlawed group in Turkey. The defendants, whose sentences range from one year to five years, reportedly were involved in kidnappings and abductions. Source: "Germany sentences 5 to jail over PKK terrorist membership," Anadolu Agency with Daily Sabah, May 1, 2021, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/germany-sentences-5-to-jail-over-pkk-terrorist-membership>.
- **March 11, 2020:** Turkish security forces launch the "Kapan-7 Garisa" counterterrorism operation in the country's eastern Siirt province. The operation, which deployed almost 500 personnel, specifically targets undermining the threat of the PKK. Source: "New counterterrorism operation launched against PKK in southeast Turkey," Daily Sabah, March 11, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/new-counterterrorism-operation-launched-against-pkk-in-southeast-turkey>.
- **March 5, 2020:** The Turkish interior ministry announces the commencement of Operation Kapan-3 against the PKK terrorist group in Kazan Valley—a territorial addition to the Operation's original focus in Hakkari province which was initiated on January 13, 2020. The operation aims to identify areas used as shelters by the PKK and by rendering those shelters and warehouses unusable. Sources: "Turkey launches Operation Kapan-3 against PKK terrorists," Daily Sabah, March 5, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/turkey-launches-operation-kapan-3-against-pkk-terrorists>; "Police foil terrorist attack on Turkish troops in Syria," Daily Sabah, March 5, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/war-on-terror/police-foil-terrorist-attack-on-turkish-troops-in-syria>.
- **February 26, 2020:** Turkish security forces arrest 10 PKK members in Istanbul under the suspicion that the group sought to carry out terrorist attacks in Istanbul. Two of the suspects were the masterminds who allegedly plotted to target statesmen, government buildings, and other locations of economic and strategic importance. Source: Seda Sevencan, "10 YPG/PKK terror suspects arrested in Istanbul," Anadolu Agency, February 26, 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/10-ypg-pkk-terror-suspects-arrested-in-istanbul/1745846>.
- **February 18, 2020:** Hakkari local police arrest 23 suspects with alleged ties to the PKK. The suspects allegedly either campaigned for PKK on social media, were members of the group, or tried to aid the terrorists in some capacity. Source: Sayim Harmanci, "Over 20 PKK terror suspects arrested in SE Turkey," Anadolu Agency, February 18, 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/over-20-pkk-terror-suspects-arrested-in-se-turkey/1737186>.
- **January 13, 2020:** Turkey launches Operation Kapan in an effort to eliminate the PKK from the country's south. A total of 825 security personnel, including gendarmerie and police forces, are deployed in the operation. Source: "Turkey launches new operation against PKK," Middle East Monitor, January 13, 2020, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200113-turkey-launches-new-operation-against-pkk/>.
- **January 3, 2020:** Turkish forces either kill or capture Metin Arslan, the PKK's intelligence head, in northern Iraq. Arslan is suspected of masterminding multiple attacks against Turkey. Source: Zafer Fatih Beyaz, "Turkey neutralizes YPG/PKK's senior figure in N Iraq," Anadolu Agency, January 3, 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-neutralizes-ypg-pkk-s-senior-figure-in-n-iraq/1691147>.
- **December 23, 2019 - December 25, 2019:** On December 23, Gendarmerie forces launch a narco-terror operation in conjunction with Operation Kiran-11 Narco-Terror to neutralize the PKK's presence in the region as well as eliminate the terror group's financial resources.

## *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

On December 25, Turkish forces destroy 19 caves used by the PKK to store bomb-making materials in Diyarbakir province, southeast Turkey. Source: Mehmet Siddik Kaya, "SE Turkey: Forces seize PKK bomb-making materials," Anadolu Agency, December 25, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/se-turkey-forces-seize-pkk-bomb-making-materials/1683552>.

- **September 13, 2019:** In a joint "pinpoint operation" by Turkish jets and the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), Turkish security forces target and kill Ayfer Kordu in northern Iraq.  
Kordu, a top decision-maker in the KJK, the PKK's female branch. Kordu was reportedly trained by PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan. Kordu was reportedly responsible for managing, training, and assigning female terrorists. Source: A. Eda Unlu Ozen, "Turkey neutralizes most-wanted PKK terrorist in N.Iraq," Anadolu Agency, October 7, 2019, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-neutralizes-most-wanted-pkk-terrorist-in-niraq/1604516>.
- **September 12, 2019:** Security forces in Mardin province arrest two PKK members allegedly sent to Turkey to carry out bomb attacks in cities and start forest fires across the country.  
A Turkish court remanded the suspects, who were said to have been trained in Syria by the Civil Protection Units (YPS), an affiliate of the PKK. In a written statement on a pro-PKK website, YPS, calling itself "the Children of the Fire Initiative," took responsibility for starting 27 separate forest fires in western Turkish cities, between July 11 and August 24, including the one in western Izmir province, which affected more than 500 hectares of forest in the Karabağlar, Menderes, and Seferihisar districts. Source: "PKK terrorists sent to carry out bomb attacks, forest fires in Turkey arrested," Daily Sabah, September 12, 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2019/09/12/pkk-terrorists-sent-to-carry-out-bomb-attacks-forest-fires-in-turkey-arrested>.
- **August 19, 2019:** Turkey's government indicts three mayors with suspected ties to the PKK on terrorism charges—five months after the mayors won landslide victories in local polls.  
The mayors were from Kurdish-majority provinces—Diyarbakir, Mardin, and Van, and are members of the pro-Kurdish, opposition People's Democratic Party. The three mayors are accused of forming an armed terrorist organization and spreading propaganda for a terrorist group. Source: Kareem Fahim, "Turkey suspends three mayors, alleging links to Kurdish militants," *Washington Post*, August 19, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkey-suspends-three-mayors-alleging-links-to-kurdish-militants/2019/08/19/d9c2db0a-c266-11e9-850e-c0eef81a5224\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkey-suspends-three-mayors-alleging-links-to-kurdish-militants/2019/08/19/d9c2db0a-c266-11e9-850e-c0eef81a5224_story.html).
- **June 13, 2019:** The Turkish government launches Operation Claw in northern Iraq in an attempt to target PKK strongholds across the border.  
Source: Eralp Yazar, "Operation Claw Aims to Eradicate PKK Dominance in Northern Iraq," *Daily Sabah* (Istanbul), June 13, 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2019/06/13/operation-claw-aims-to-eradicate-pkk-dominance-in-northern-iraq>.
- **March 23, 2019:** The PKK announces their withdrawal from Mt. Sinjar after the Turkish government threatens to attack.  
Source: "KCK: Security Maintained in Shengal. We Withdraw the Guerrillas," Firat News Agency, March 23, 2018, <https://anfenglishmobile.com/kurdistan/kck-security-maintained-in-shengal-we-withdraw-the-guerrillas-25684>.
- **March 11, 2018:** Ankara summons the Belgian ambassador over Belgium's ruling that the PKK is not a terrorist group.  
Source: "Turkey Protests Belgian Court Ruling Decision on PKK," Associated Press, March 11, 2019, <https://www.apnews.com/f0ffda80c1ca442c82343c67c55e7ed9>.
- **- :** Three-thousand Kurdish inmates at Kurdish prisons go on a hunger strike to protest the poor jail conditions of Öcalan.  
The prisoners end the strike at Öcalan's request after he is allowed to see legal counsel for the first time in eight years. Source: Agence France-Presse, "Kurdish Prisoners End Hunger Strike in Turkey after Öcalan Call," Yahoo News, May 25, 2019, <https://sg.news.yahoo.com/kurdish-rebel-leader-calls-end-jail-hunger-strikes-095723198.html>.
- **April 21, 2018:** The PKK holds an Executive Committee meeting in the "mountains of Kurdistan."  
Source: "PKK Executive Committee Meeting Completed," Firat News Agency, May 2, 2018, <https://anfenglish.com/kurdistan/pkk-executive-committee-meeting-completed-26428>.
- **December 13, 2017:** Turkish police seize 60 kilograms of explosives and arrest 11 suspected PKK militants suspected of planning an attack against the Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit in Istanbul.  
Source: "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, August 4, 2018, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx>.
- **August 11, 2017:** Turkish police raid a PKK cell in Adana that was planning to conduct an attack in Ankara four days later.  
Police seize 1.5 tons of ammonium nitrate, 300 kilograms of nails, 25 gas masks, more than 200 liters of gasoline, other bomb-making materials, 12 Kalashnikov rifles, 24 hand grenades, ammunition, and 12 assault vests and 12 police uniforms with 'Ankara' written on them." Source: "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Australian National Security, August 4, 2018, <https://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/Listedterroristorganisations/Pages/KurdistanWorkersPartyPKK.aspx>.
- **August 8, 2015:** The Turkish military launches a new operation to clear PKK militants out of the provinces of Cizre, Diyarbakir, and Nusaybin.  
Areas of operation are sometimes declared military security zones and temporary curfews are carried out. Source: "Muhalefet, 'çukur ve barikat operasyonlar'nda 'ehit olan 793 asker ve polisi unuttu,'" *Aksam* (Istanbul), June 6, 2018, <https://www.aksam.com.tr/siyaset/muhalefet-cukur-ve-barikat-operasyonlarinda-sehit-olan-793-asker-ve-polisi-unuttu/haber-742595>.
- **July 24, 2015:** Turkey launches Operation Yalcin Nane against the PKK in Iraq and Syria with a series of airstrikes that the PKK views a breach of the ceasefire.  
Source: "Turkish Airstrikes Target ISIL in Syria," *Hurriyet Daily News* (Istanbul), July 24, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-airstrikes-target-isil-in-syria-85853>.
- The PKK opens a corridor for the Kurdish-speaking Yezidis trapped on Mt. Sinjar in Iraq to escape from ISIS.  
Source: Wladimir van Wilgenburg, "Why Did the PKK Withdraw from Sinjar?," *Ahval*, March 28, 2018, <https://ahvalnews.com/sinjar/why-did-pkk-withdraw-sinjar>.
- **March 21, 2013:** The PKK announces another ceasefire with the Turkish government after Öcalan conducts a series of secret talks from jail.  
Source: Constanze Letsch, "Kurds Dare to Hope as PKK Fighters' Ceasefire with Turkey Takes Hold," *Guardian* (London), May 7, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/07/kurds-pkk-turkey-peace-talks>.
- Turkish authorities vow to decrease military presence in the southeast and increase Kurdish language rights.

## *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul publicly endorse a new attempt to ease tensions in the southeast with the so-called "Kurdish initiative."  
Source: Akin Unver, "Turkey's 'Kurdish Initiative': What Went Wrong? (Or Did It?)," Foreign Policy Association, October 22, 2011, <https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2011/10/22/turkey-s-kurdish-initiative-what-went-wrong-or-did-it/>.

- **August 20, 2008:** The PKK convenes in Iraq for its tenth congress.  
Source: "PKK Party Congress Sets Long-Term Strategy Based on Threat Perceptions," *Jamestown Foundation Terrorism Monitor* 6, no. 20 (October 24, 2008), <https://jamestown.org/program/pkk-party-congress-sets-long-term-strategy-based-on-threat-perceptions/>.
- The Turkish military conducts series of airstrikes in Iraq against PKK.  
Source: "Turkey Profile—Timeline," BBC News, June 24, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17994865>.
- **September 30, 2006:** The PKK agrees to a ceasefire with the Turkish military.  
Source: "Turkey Profile—Timeline," BBC News, June 24, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17994865>.
- The PKK declares the ceasefire has been broken by new Turkish operations in Iraq.  
Source: "Turkey Profile—Timeline," BBC News, June 24, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17994865>.
- Turkish parliament authorizes the deployment of Turkish troops into Iraq for new anti-PKK operations.  
Source: "Turkey Profile—Timeline," BBC News, June 24, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17994865>.
- The PKK (KADEK) renames itself as the Kongra-Gel (KGK) with the new goal of creating a nation within existing state borders.  
Source: Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya and Joost Jongerden, "The PKK in the 2000s: Continuity through Breaks?" in *Nationalisms and Politics in Turkey: Political Islam, Kemalism and the Kurdish Issue* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 149.
- **May 2, 2002:** The European Union adds the PKK to its list of terrorist organizations.  
Source: "EU Adds People and Groups to Terrorist List," Voice of America, May 3, 2002, <https://www.voanews.com/archive/eu-adds-people-and-groups-terrorist-list-2002-05-03>.
- **January 26, 2002:** Turkey's prime minister dismisses the possibility of offering classes taught in Kurdish at schools across Turkey.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- **September 27, 2001:** Turkey repeals its ban on broadcasting and teaching in the Kurdish language.  
Sources: "Turkey Allows Broadcasting Of Kurdish-Language Shows," *New York Times*, November 21, 2002, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/21/world/turkey-allows-broadcasting-of-kurdish-language-shows.html>; "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- **August 1, 2001:** Turkish soldiers expel the inhabitants of two Kurdish villages in southeast Turkey while laying siege to three others after a soldier is killed by a landmine.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- - : Turkish security forces violently suppress and arrest hundreds of Kurdish protesters throughout this period while also continuing their suppression and arrest of politicians from the pro-Kurdish HADEP party.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- **April 1, 2000:** As many as 4,000 Turkish soldiers enter northern Iraq in anti-PKK operations.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- Turkey postpones Öcalan's execution as it tries to join the European Union.  
Meanwhile, police arrest the three Kurdish mayors of Diyarbakir, Siirt, and Bingol leading to widespread protests in the region. Sources: "Turkey Postpones Execution of Abdullah Öcalan," *Raidió Teilifís Éireann*, January 12, 2000, <https://www.rte.ie/news/2000/0112/5097-ocalan/>; "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- The PKK rebrands itself as KADEK (Freedom and Democracy Congress) and vows to switch to nonviolent activities as Öcalan calls for the organization to lay down its arms following his capture.  
Sources: "Final Resolution on the 8th Congress of the PKK," PKK Management Committee, April 17, 2002, <http://www.freeÖcalan.org/news/english/final-resolution-on-the-8th-congress-of-the-pkk>; "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- Several groups of PKK militants surrender themselves to Turkish security forces throughout the month, heeding Öcalan's call for them to lay down arms.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- **August 26, 1999:** PKK militants begin withdrawing from Turkey.  
Two days later, the Turkish government passes a law providing widespread pardons for PKK members. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- **August 5, 1999:** The PKK states that it will commit to a unilateral ceasefire beginning September 1 and withdraw its forces to bases outside of Turkey.  
Source: Soner Cagaptay and Emrullah Uslu, "Is the PKK Still a Threat to the United States and Turkey?," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 10, 2005, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/is-the-pkk-still-a-threat-to-the-united-states-and-turkey>.

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

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- **August 3, 1999:** Öcalan again calls for the PKK to end attacks against Turkey.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **July 12, 1999:** The PKK states that it will end its suicide bombings initially launched to avenge the capture of Öcalan.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **May 29, 1999:** A PKK spokesman warns of further violence should Öcalan be sentenced to death.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **May 20, 1999:** The Turkish Interior Ministry bans the use of the word "Kurd" in public government statements. Separately, imprisoned PKK commander Semdin Sakik is sentenced to death. Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; "Kurd Rebel Figure Sentenced to Death," *Chicago Tribune*, May 21, 1999, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1999-05-21-9905210035-story.html>.
  - **February 15, 1999:** Abdullah Öcalan is captured by Turkish soldiers in Kenya. The PKK agrees to implement the first ceasefire.  
Sources: "Turkey Profile—Timeline," BBC News, June 24, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17994865>; Tim Weiner, "U.S. Helped Turkey Find and Capture Kurd Rebel," *New York Times*, February 20, 1999, <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/02/20/world/us-helped-turkey-find-and-capture-kurd-rebel.html>.
  - **October 22, 1998:** The Syrian government agrees to end all support for the PKK, whom they had been harboring and aiding in both Syria and Lebanon.  
Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; Alan Makovsky, "Defusing the Turkish-Syrian Crisis: Whose Triumph?" *Middle East Insight*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January/February 1999, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/defusing-the-turkish-syrian-crisis-whose-triumph>; Mahmut Bali Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998: A Turkish View," *Middle East Policy* 6, no. 4 (1999), <https://mepc.org/journal/turkish-syrian-crisis-october-1998-turkish-view>.
  - **April 17, 1998:** Öcalan again calls for a political solution to the conflict, stating that an independent Kurdish state was never a goal of the PKK.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **March 27, 1998:** Cemil Bayik, one of the PKK's co-founders and top military leaders, surrenders to the KDP in Iraq.  
Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; "Something is Stirring In," *Stratfor*, March 31, 1998, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/something-stirring>.
  - **March 16, 1998:** The PKK's military commander, Semdin Sakik, and six of his personal guards surrender to the KDP in Iraq. Sakik would later claim that it was the PKK that assassinated Swedish Prime Minister Olaf Palme on February 28, 1986, after Palme banned the PKK from Sweden. Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; "Kurdish Rebel Gives Up," *Washington Post*, March 22, 1998, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1998/03/22/kurdish-rebel-gives-up/c03ce0c0-5a45-4dc5-adc8-8f4dba3f6bae/>.
  - On January 11, the European Union requests that Turkey prevent Kurdish refugees from entering Europe, leading to the detention of over 1,300 people across the country.  
On January 30, the U.S. State Department officially criticizes Turkey for its human rights abuses against its Kurdish population. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **October 13, 1997:** Öcalan is tried in absentia in Ankara, Turkey, on charges of treason.  
Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; "PKK Leader's Trial in Absentia," *Irish Times* (Dublin), October 14, 1997, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/pkk-leader-s-trial-in-absentia-1.115454>.
  - **September 20, 1997:** Turkish forces launch Operation Dawn in northern Iraq with 15,000 soldiers intended to create a buffer zone between the PKK and Turkey. Turkey claims to kill 855 militants during the three-week operation.  
Turkey claims to kill 855 militants during the three-week operation. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **May 12, 1997 - July 7, 1997:** Turkish forces carry out the unsuccessful Operation Hammer in northern Iraq to destroy PKK forces in that area and counter Iranian influence.  
Source: Andrew Lee Butters, "Hitting the Kurds from All Sides," *Time*, December 27, 2007, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1698549,00.html>.
  - The *New York Times* reports that insurgent activity in Turkey is at a new low, with only an estimated 3,000 insurgents of various groups operating in the country.  
On March 13, the Turkish government announces it will permit the public celebration of Newroz, the largely Kurdish festival, for the third year in a row. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **December 23, 1996:** Öcalan calls for a political settlement between the PKK and Turkish government warning that in the absence of such a settlement the PKK will unleash a wave of suicide bombings on Turkey's cities.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - The PKK announces a unilateral ceasefire, which the Turkish government rejects.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **July 4, 1995 - July 11, 1995:** Turkish security forces launch an incursion into northern Iraq with 3,000 soldiers, claiming to kill 167 PKK militants and losing 26 soldiers.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
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***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

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- **June 26, 1995:** The Turkish government claims that more than 11,000 PKK militants, 3,825 security forces, and 4,727 civilians have been killed in 11 years of fighting.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **May 8, 1995:** Turkish security forces detain three PKK militants planning attacks on tourism facilities.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **May 4, 1995:** Turkey withdraws its remaining troops from northern Iraq as the local Kurdish government, the KDP, pledges to prevent the PKK from using its territory to stage attacks against Turkey.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **March 20, 1995:** Turkish military launches new anti-PKK operation in Iraq and deploys over 35,000 troops.  
Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; "Timeline: Turkey's Military Operations in Iraq and Syria," Reuters, October 11, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-turkey-operations-time/timeline-turkeys-military-operations-in-iraq-and-syria-idUSKBN1WQ274>; Hugh Pope, "Most Turkish Troops Said to Be Out of Iraq: Mideast: Ankara's Army Says It Killed 555 Kurdish Militants and Lost 61 Soldiers," *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1995, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-05-05-mn-62674-story.html>.
  - **November 25, 1994:** Human rights officials in southeast Turkey claim 1,900 out of the 12,000 communities in the region are partially or fully empty due to the fighting, with 12,000 Kurdish refugees having fled to Iraq since April.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **October 11, 1994:** Turkey's minister of human rights accuses the government of state-sponsored terrorism against its Kurdish population.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **September 21, 1994 - October 12, 1994:** Turkish security forces destroy at least 17 Kurdish villages in the Tunceli province, displacing at least 5,000 civilians in what Ankara claims are anti-PKK operations.  
Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; Martin van Bruinessen, *Forced Evacuations and Destruction of Villages in Dersim (Tunceli) and Western Bingöl, Turkish Kurdistan, September-November 1994* (Amsterdam: Netherlands Kurdistan Society, 1995), <https://bit.ly/2wwDOrB>.
  - **May 1, 1994 - July 31, 1994:** Six thousand Turkish Kurds flee to Iraq due to fighting between Turkish security forces and the PKK.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **October 7, 1993:** Kurds said that Turkish security forces are forcing the evacuation of many Kurdish villages near PKK strongholds in the Cudi mountains.  
They also accuse the Turks of attacking many of these villages. Human rights activists said that 729 southeastern villages had been emptied since October 1991. The Turkish government claimed that the PKK was responsible for this. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **September 15, 1993:** The head of the pro-Kurdish People's Labor Party (HEP) is detained.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **September 5, 1993:** The number of pro-Kurdish DEP/HEP (People's Labor Party) members murdered reaches 54. There deaths are largely blamed on the Turkish government.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **July 22, 1993:** Turkey invests \$220 million in programs in southeast Turkey in attempt to appease Kurdish rebels.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **July 14, 1993:** The HEP is banned by the Turkish parliament for pro-Kurdish rhetoric.  
Sources: "Factbox: Turkey's History of Banning Parties," Reuters, May 3, 2010, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-constitution-banned-factbox/factbox-turkeys-history-of-banning-parties-idUSTRE6423UA20100503>; *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1993-Turkey*, U.S. Department of State (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 1994), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6aa7d18.html>.
  - **June 8, 1993:** Öcalan declares the end of the PKK's unilateral ceasefire because Turkey had not met the group's conditions.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **May 23, 1993:** The Turkish government offers amnesty to Kurdish militants who have committed crimes if they surrender.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **April 16, 1993:** Representatives of the People's Labor Party (HEP), the only party actively promoting Kurdish rights, travel to Lebanon in an attempt to convince the PKK to extend the ceasefire.  
Öcalan agrees to extend the ceasefire on the condition that the Turkish government ceases their search operations. Prime Minister Demirel rejects the condition. Sources: Cengiz Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: From Protest to Resistance*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 163; "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; Mustafa Cos'ar U'nal, "Is It Ripe Yet? Resolving Turkey's 30 Years of Conflict with the PKK," *Turkish Studies* 17, no. 1 (2016), 98, <https://bit.ly/39aPVYB>.
  - **March 26, 1993:** The Turkish government begins military operations in seven majority-Kurdish provinces as the ceasefire falls apart.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
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### *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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- **March 23, 1993:** Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel refuses to negotiate with the PKK but acknowledges the ills of forced assimilation in the past.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **March 17, 1993:** Abdullah Öcalan calls for a ceasefire during Newroz beginning on March 20.  
Only minor outbreaks of violence occur despite major turnout for the celebration. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **February 10, 1993:** A majority of the 1,000 prisoners in the Diyarbakir Prison, where prominent PKK leaders are being held and allegedly tortured, begin a hunger strike.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **November 30, 1992:** Turkish troops withdraw from Iraq, claiming to have killed 2,000 PKK militants with only 23 deaths among Turkish security forces after the two-month campaign.  
At least 1,400 Turkish Kurds are captured in Iraq during the operation. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **November 17, 1992:** The PKK and Iraqi Kurdistan reach an agreement under a new accord.  
Turkish Kurds lift their embargo and release three Turkish soldiers. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **October 6, 1992:** The Turkish government deploys 20,000 soldiers in an offensive against PKK in the Qandil Mountains of Iraq with the support of Iraqi Kurds.  
Sources: "Turkey Profile—Timeline," BBC News, June 24, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17994865>; "Kurdish People Fast Facts," CNN, November 4, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2014/08/18/world/kurdish-people-fast-facts/index.html>.
  - **October 4, 1992:** Iraqi Kurds force Turkish Kurds out of Iraqi Kurdistan and the PKK retaliates by once again blocking trade routes.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **September 28, 1992:** Eight People's Labor Party (HEP) members are arrested after making pro-PKK statements at an internal party gathering. Five members are later released. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **September 14, 1992:** Iran's interior minister pledges to aid Turkey in its fight against Kurdish insurgents.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **August 1, 1992 - September 30, 1992:** Three-thousand Iraqi Kurdish refugees return to Iraq from Turkey.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **July 31, 1992:** The PKK cuts off a supply route bringing food and aid to Iraqi Kurdistan after the local government pledged to prevent PKK attacks from within Iraqi territory.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **April 17, 1992:** Turkish and Syrian leaders sign an agreement to work together to close PKK training camps in Beka'a Valley.  
Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Workers' Party of Kurdistan," Federation of American Scientists, <https://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/studies3.htm>; Reuters, "Syria, Turkey Sign Anti-Terrorism Accord," *Los Angeles Times*, April 19, 1992, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-04-19-mn-798-story.html>.
  - **March 21, 1992:** Tens of thousands of Kurds in Turkey protest on the largely Kurdish holiday of Newroz.  
Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; Hugh Pope, "More Than 20 Killed as Turkish Forces, Kurds Clash During New Year Protests," *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1992, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-03-22-mn-7336-story.html>.
  - **November 27, 1991:** More than 1,500 shops are shut down in southeast Turkey to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the founding of the PKK.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - The PKK endorses the pro-Kurdish People's Labor Party (HEP). The HEP deny affiliation with the PKK.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **July 9, 1991:** The Turkish government is accused of murdering the PKK-endorsed, pro-Kurdish HEP party chairman, Vahdet Aydin.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **March 15, 1991:** Turkish forces open fire on protesters in the southeast, injuring many, and arrest 200.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **March 7, 1991:** Turkish forces open fire on the 2,000 Kurdish protesters in Dargeçit.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
  - **March 6, 1991:** Thirty Kurdish protesters occupy the Oslo Airport to draw attention to the killing of Kurds by Turkish security forces.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
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### *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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- **February 1, 1991:** Turkey eases its ban on the Kurdish language, lifting the bans on speaking Kurdish in public and Kurdish-language music while maintaining the bans on Kurdish-language printing material.  
Sources: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>; "IX. Restrictions on the Use of the Kurdish Language," Human Rights Watch, 1991, [https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/turkey/turkey993-08.htm#P985\\_226179](https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/turkey/turkey993-08.htm#P985_226179).
- **August 28, 1990:** A Kurdish representative to the U.N. states that Turkey is using the Gulf Crisis to forcibly remove Kurds from their homes on threat of death in southeast Turkey.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- **April 20, 1990:** Turkish security forces beat 20 relatives of Kurdish political prisoners.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- Nine Turkish Kurds occupy the Turkish Airlines office in the Copenhagen airport in protest over the arrest and killings of Kurdish protesters in Turkey that month.  
Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- **February 5, 1990:** Approximately 5,000 Iraqi Kurdish refugees stage a protest against Saddam Hussein in Diyarbakir, Turkey, leading to clashes with Turkish security forces.  
Ninety-five protesters are arrested. Source: "Chronology for Kurds in Turkey," Minorities at Risk Project, University of Maryland, July 16, 2010, <http://www.mar.umd.edu/chronology.asp?groupId=64005>.
- **June 3, 1981:** The PKK holds its first conference in Syria with the permission of President Hafez Assad and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).  
The conference is held at Helve Camp with 60 members in attendance. Source: "PKK nas'ı kuruldu ve güçlendi?," Al Jazeera, December 23, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/dosya/pkk-nasil-kuruldu-ve-guclendi>.
- **June 2, 1980:** PKK leaders leave Turkey to find refuge under the Syrian government in Lebanon's Beka'a Valley.  
Source: "Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK)," International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, January 1, 2003, <http://www.ict.org.il/Article/1587/Kurdistan-Workers-Party#gsc.tab=0>.
- Abdullah Öcalan flees to Syria  
Source: Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 48.
- Abdullah Öcalan and his partners meet in Lice, Diyarbakir and name their organization the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).  
Sources: Cengiz Candar, "Turkey-PKK Peace Process Unravels in Lice," Al-Monitor, June 9, 2014, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/06/candar-pkk-turkey-peace-process-lice-erdogan-ocalan.html>; "PKK nas'ı kuruldu ve güçlendi?," Al Jazeera, December 23, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/dosya/pkk-nasil-kuruldu-ve-guclendi>.
- A member of the Kurdish Revolutionaries is killed by a man from the Suleymanlar tribe.  
Source: Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), <https://bit.ly/2QIlvXr>.
- Abdullah Öcalan founds a Kurdish insurgent group.  
Source: "Chapter 6—Terrorist Groups," U.S. Department of State, April 27, 2005, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/45394.htm>.

## *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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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>

- **October 2, 2023:** Turkish intelligence carry out an operation in Qamishli district, northern Syria, where they “neutralize” Muzdelif Taskin, a PKK officer accused of masterminding a 2007 attack that killed 12 Turkish troops in Hakkari, southeastern Turkey. Taskin's tenure with the PKK reportedly spanned 35 years, during which he organized and participated in numerous attacks.<sup>122</sup>
- **October 1, 2023:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive outside of Turkey's Interior Ministry building in Ankara. The explosion kills one and injures at least two others. Another attacker was “neutralized” at the scene. The assailants, who were members of the PKK, drove to the building's entrance where they were equipped with different types of guns, hand grenades, a rocket launcher, and explosives. The Turkish military responded to the attack by later destroying 20 PKK warehouses and hideouts in northern Iraq.<sup>123</sup>
- **August 10, 2023:** Under the cross-border operation Claw-Lock, Turkish troops clash with PKK fighters in Zap, northern Iraq. The militants kill six soldiers during combat.<sup>124</sup>
- **August 5, 2023:** PKK members attempt to plant explosives in a shopping mall and urban forest in Istanbul. After investigating a bag that suddenly caught fire at the mall, police detain two members who claim they were in contact with a foreign person who sent them money for preparing explosives which were later assembled by other PKK members. The police detain a total of 11 members, of which police determine, were also responsible for leaving devices in Sultangazi Urban Forest with the intention of starting a wildfire.<sup>125</sup>
- **July 10, 2023:** PKK members in Syria ambush Turkey-backed Syrian opposition forces in Afrin, northern Syria. The attack kills at least five.<sup>126</sup>
- **May 22, 2023:** Suspected PKK members vandalize a mosque in Bad Bentheim in northwestern Germany. The mosque, which is run by the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), had never been subjected to vandalism in its 17 years of operation.<sup>127</sup>
- **May 8, 2023:** Suspected PKK sympathizers attack Turkish citizens in Amsterdam. No casualties are reported. The assailants targeted Turkish citizens who were abroad and sought to cast votes for the May 14 presidential and parliamentary elections. Dutch police quickly intervened to prevent further violence.<sup>128</sup>
- **May 2, 2023:** Alleged PKK supporters ambush Turkish citizens seeking to cast votes at a polling station set up by Turkey's diplomatic mission in Marseille, France. The ambush injures one child. Security forces release tear gas to stop the attack and arrest the assailants.<sup>129</sup>
- **December 29, 2022:** Hundreds of alleged PKK supporters hold demonstrations in Dortmund, Germany. Demonstrators reportedly engage in verbal attacks and attack one or more people with flagpoles and destroy property. No casualties are reported.<sup>130</sup>
- **December 24, 2022:** Thousands of alleged PKK supporters demonstrate in the streets of Paris, France, following a targeted shooting that killed three and injured three others at a Kurdish cultural center on December 23. The assailant, who is reportedly a French national identified as William M., has previously been charged with racist violence and has also been linked to two attempted murders in 2016 and 2021. Violent altercations resulted, and at least 31 security personnel were injured.<sup>131</sup>
- **December 16, 2022:** A car bomb detonates as a police minibus passes on a highway in Diyarbakir, southeastern Turkey. The explosion injures nine people and leads to the arrest of five suspected members of the PKK.<sup>132</sup>
- **November 13, 2022:** A bomb detonates on a busy pedestrian road in central Istanbul. The explosion—the deadliest in Turkey in over five years—kills six people and injures at least 81 others. In the days following the attack police detain 50 people including Ahlam Albashir, a

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

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Syrian woman suspected of planting the bomb. Additional suspects in custody include brothers as Ammar J. and Ahmed J., who were allegedly tasked with transporting Albashir to Greece after the attack and driving another suspect to the border with Bulgaria. Turkish authorities claim Albashir was sent to Turkey from Syria by Kurdish militants belonging to the YPG. The PKK denies any involvement in the explosion. Upon Albashir's interrogation, the self-described member of the PKK eventually confesses to planting the bomb.<sup>133</sup>

- **September 26, 2022:** Suspected PKK assailants carry out an attack on a police guesthouse in Mersin province, southern Turkey. In the attack, two female attackers opened fire and detonated bombs, killing one policeman and injuring another. Turkish authorities later detain 22 people in connection to the incident.<sup>134</sup>
- **July 20, 2022:** A strike targets a mountain resort in the Kurdish region of Dohuk Governorate, Iraq. The strike kills nine and wounds more than 20 others. According to Iraqi state media, Turkish forces were responsible for the shelling, but the Turkish government claims the PKK was behind the strike. Turkish forces are deployed in the area to counter attacks from the PKK as well as the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia.<sup>135</sup>
- **February 14, 2021:** Amid a Turkish military operation against the PKK, Turkish military forces discover the executed bodies of 13 Turkish hostages, including soldiers and police officers. Many of the hostages were reportedly kidnapped in Turkey in the summer of 2015, following unsuccessful peace talks between the PKK and the government.<sup>136</sup>
- **October 28, 2020:** A bombing in Mardin province temporarily disables an oil pipeline running from Iraq to Turkey. The PKK claims responsibility.<sup>137</sup>
- **September 14, 2020:** Masked assailants ambush a Turkish Red Crescent vehicle between the towns of al-Rai and al-Bab and open fire on three personnel on board. The attack kills one and injures another. That same day, an explosive-laden vehicle detonates in Afrin. The attack kills nine and injures at least 43. The Turkish Defense Ministry suspects the YPG to be behind the Afrin attack.<sup>138</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>139</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>140</sup>
- **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>141</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>142</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>143</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>144</sup>
- **July 2019:** Thirteen Turkish security members and 23 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with four civilians.<sup>145</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>146</sup>
- **June 2019:** Fifteen Turkish security members and 49 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with six civilians.<sup>147</sup>
- **May 2019:** Seventeen Turkish security members and 40 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with three civilians.<sup>148</sup>
- **April 2019:** Five Turkish security members and 29 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>149</sup>
- **March 2019:** Four Turkish security members and 11 PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>150</sup>
- **February 2019:** One PKK militant is killed in fighting.<sup>151</sup>
- **January 2019:** One Turkish security member and four PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>152</sup>
- **December 2018:** One Turkish security member and five PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>153</sup>

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

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- **November 2018:** Ten Turkish security members and 33 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>154</sup>
  - **October 2018:** Thirteen Turkish security members and 15 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>155</sup>
  - **September 2018:** Four Turkish security members and 50 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>156</sup>
  - **August 2018:** Twelve Turkish security members and 59 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>157</sup>
  - **July 2018:** Seven Turkish security members and 82 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 4 civilians.<sup>158</sup>
  - **June 2018:** Twenty-three Turkish security members and 71 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>159</sup>
  - **May 2018:** Eleven Turkish security members and 27 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>160</sup>
  - **April 2018:** Sixteen Turkish security members and 46 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>161</sup>
  - **March 2018:** Eighteen Turkish security members and 61 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>162</sup>
  - **March 21, 2018:** PKK militants kill two Turkish soldiers in Hakkari province, Turkey.<sup>163</sup>
  - **March 29, 2018:** PKK militants kill seven and wound six members of a village guard militia in Siirt province.<sup>164</sup>
  - **February 2018:** Seven Turkish security members and 10 PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>165</sup>
  - **January 2018:** Two Turkish security members and two PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>166</sup>
  - **December 2017:** Four Turkish security members and 22 PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>167</sup>
  - **November 2017:** Fourteen Turkish security members and 61 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>168</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>169</sup>
  - **October 2017:** Seventeen Turkish security members and 25 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with six civilians.<sup>170</sup>
  - **September 2017:** Twelve Turkish security members and 79 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 11 civilians.<sup>171</sup>
  - **August 2017:** Fourteen Turkish security members and 44 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with nine civilians.<sup>172</sup>
  - **July 2017:** Twelve Turkish security members and 74 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 10 civilians.<sup>173</sup>
  - **June 2017:** Twenty-eight Turkish security members and 61 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>174</sup>
  - **May 2017:** Twenty-one Turkish security members and 41 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>175</sup>
  - **April 2017:** Twenty-three Turkish security members and 84 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with one civilian.<sup>176</sup>
  - **April 11, 2017:** PKK militants kill three police officers in an IED attack on a police headquarters in Diyarbakir, Turkey.<sup>177</sup>
  - **March 2017:** Eight Turkish security members and 82 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with two civilians.<sup>178</sup>
  - **February 2017:** Twenty-seven PKK militants and four civilians are killed in fighting.<sup>179</sup>
  - **January 2017:** Eleven Turkish security members and 16 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with three civilians.<sup>180</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>181</sup>
  - **November 2016:** Eighteen Turkish security members and 68 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 16 civilians.<sup>182</sup>
  - **October 2016:** Forty-eight Turkish security members and 103 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 19 civilians.<sup>183</sup>
  - **September 2016:** Sixty-five Turkish security members and 129 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with eight civilians.<sup>184</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>185</sup>
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***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

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- **August 2016:** Sixty-four Turkish security members and 88 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 19 civilians.<sup>186</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>187</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>188</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>189</sup>
  - **July 8, 2016:** The Turkish government blames the PKK for a carbomb attack that kills 11 in Istanbul.<sup>190</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>191</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>192</sup>
  - **April 2016:** Fifty-seven Turkish security members and 161 PKK militants are killed in fighting, along with 17 civilians.<sup>193</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>194</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>195</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>196</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>197</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>198</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>199</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>200</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>201</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>202</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>203</sup>
  - **July 24, 2015:** The PKK kills two Turkish police officers in Sanliurfa whom they claimed were working with ISIS.<sup>204</sup>
  - **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>205</sup>
  - **August 20, 2012:** PKK militants use a car bomb to kill eight Turkish soldiers in Gaziantep.<sup>206</sup>
  - **October 2011:** PKK militants kill 11 Turkish soldiers in near the border with Iraq. The attack was the deadliest attack since 1993.<sup>207</sup>
  - **September 2011:** A car bomb explodes in Ankara near government buildings killing 4 and wounding 15. TAK claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>208</sup>
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***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

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- **July 14, 2011:** PKK militants kill 13 Turkish soldiers.<sup>209</sup>
- **September 16, 2010:** PKK militants kill 10 people and wound three in a car bomb attack in Hakkari province.<sup>210</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>211</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>212</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>213</sup>
- **June 7, 2001:** Five PKK militants die in clashes with Turkish security forces in Hakkari province.<sup>214</sup>
- **May 21, 2001:** PKK militants kill a Turkish soldier during clashes in southeast Turkey. Soldiers kill 15 PKK militants.<sup>215</sup>
- **March 15, 2001:** One soldier and nine PKK militants die in clashes in eastern Anatolia.<sup>216</sup>
- **October 12, 2000:** Three members of the Turkish security forces are wounded and seven PKK militants die in clashes in Sirnak province.<sup>217</sup>
- **August 30, 2000:** Seven people die in clashes between the PKK and Turkish security forces in the Hakkari province.<sup>218</sup>
- **August 25, 2000:** One member of the Turkish security forces and three PKK militants die in clashes in Sirnak province.<sup>219</sup>
- **November 18, 1999:** One soldier and eight PKK militants die in a clash in the province of Diyarbakir.<sup>220</sup>
- **July 25, 1999:** Suspected PKK militants kill two soldiers and wound two others in clashes in Elazig Province.<sup>221</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>222</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 Elaziq, 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>223</sup>
- **May 1999:** The PKK threatens bombings across the country in retaliation for Öcalan's arrest.<sup>224</sup>
- **May 5, 1999:** PKK militants ambush Turkish forces in eastern Turkey, killing nine and wounding four.<sup>225</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>226</sup>
- **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>227</sup>
- **November 10, 1998:** PKK militants kill 21 Turkish security forces and wound 18 others.<sup>228</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>229</sup>
- **August 15, 1998:** PKK militants destroy three Turkish oil wells. Turkish forces respond by killing six militants in two separate attacks.<sup>230</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>231</sup>
- **June 14, 1998:** Seven Turkish security forces members and 18 PKK militants are killed in clashes across the southeast of the country.<sup>232</sup>
- **June 3, 1998:** PKK militants kill a religious leader and 10 other civilians in Tunceli, Turkey.<sup>233</sup>
- **December 25-27, 1997:** Turkish forces kill 18 PKK militants in a series of clashes along the Iraqi border.<sup>234</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>235</sup>



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

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- **June 15, 1997:** PKK militants attack a Turkish freight train with rockets, killing two soldiers. Turkey retaliates by killing 52 militants.<sup>236</sup>
  - **June 3, 1997:** PKK militants kill five Kurdish civilians in Dikgobaz, Turkey.<sup>237</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>238</sup>
  - **November 8, 1996:** Seventeen Turkish security forces and 22 PKK militants are killed in fighting.<sup>239</sup>
  - **October 1996:** At least 14 Turkish security forces and 150 PKK militants are killed in fighting in October.<sup>240</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>241</sup>
  - **October 3, 1996:** PKK militants clash with Turkish soldiers throughout southeast Turkey, leaving three soldiers and 32 PKK militants dead.<sup>242</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>243</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>244</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>245</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>246</sup>
  - **March 9, 1996:** Seven Turkish security members and five PKK militants are killed in fighting in eastern Turkey.<sup>247</sup>
  - **January 16, 1996:** PKK militants kill 11 village guards and civilians in Tashonek, Turkey, in violation of their ceasefire.<sup>248</sup>
  - **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>249</sup>
  - **August 30, 1995:** The PKK begins a protracted conflict with northern Iraq's ruling Kurdish party, the KDP.<sup>250</sup>
  - **April 8, 1995:** PKK militants kill the Turkish mayor of a Kurdish town whom they accuse of collaboration.<sup>251</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>252</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>253</sup>
  - **November 4, 1993:** PKK supporters attack several Turkish businesses in Germany and the United Kingdom.<sup>254</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>255</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>256</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>257</sup>
  - **October 15, 1993:** Oil company Mobil suspends operations in southeastern Turkey due to repeated attacks and extortion attempts by the PKK.<sup>258</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>259</sup>
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***Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)***

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- **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>260</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>261</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>262</sup>
- **June 11, 1993:** PKK militants kidnap a Turkish tourism ministry official as they warn tourists to stay away from the country.<sup>263</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>264</sup>
- **May 27, 1993:** PKK militants abduct 16 construction workers in Diyarbakir, Turkey.<sup>265</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>266</sup>
- **April 1993:** Two Turkish security members and 17 PKK militants are killed in fighting in April. Turkish forces arrest 27 Kurds.<sup>267</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>268</sup>
- **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>269</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>270</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>271</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>272</sup>
- **February 27, 1993:** Suspected PKK militants kill a member of Hezbollah during a dispute between the two groups.<sup>273</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>274</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>275</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>276</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>277</sup>
- **October 23, 1992:** Armed Kurds seize the Turkish consulate in Strasburg, France.<sup>278</sup>
- **October 8, 1992:** PKK militants execute two of their own who are accused of “betraying the organization.”<sup>279</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 raid a village in Bitlis province. The PKK also captures two Turks and briefly abducts six foreign tourists.<sup>280</sup>

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

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- **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>281</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>282</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>283</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>284</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>285</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>286</sup>
  - **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>287</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>288</sup>
  - **December 1991:** Ten Turkish security members and 15 PKK militants are killed in fighting in December along with 11 civilians.<sup>289</sup>
  - **December 27, 1991:** Kurdish protesters attack the Turkish consulates in Frankfurt, Germany, Stuttgart, Germany, Rotterdam, Netherlands, and Brussels, Belgium.<sup>290</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>291</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>292</sup>
  - **September 1991:** Six Turkish security members and 19 PKK militants are killed in fighting in September along with at least 5 civilians.<sup>293</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>294</sup>
  - **August 1991:** Three Turkish security members and 22 PKK militants are killed in fighting in August along with 14 civilians.<sup>295</sup>
  - **August 31, 1991:** PKK militants kidnap five western tourists in eastern Turkey.<sup>296</sup>
  - **August 8-9, 1991:** Turkish Kurds attack or occupy Turkish businesses in Berlin, Norway, the Hague, and Brussels.<sup>297</sup>
  - **August 3, 1991:** Two PKK militants abduct 10 German tourists in eastern Turkey, releasing them one week later.<sup>298</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>299</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>300</sup>
  - **June 1991:** Six Turkish security members and four PKK militants are killed in fighting in June along with dozens of civilians.<sup>301</sup>
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### *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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- **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>302</sup>
  - **April 1991:** Nine civilians are killed amid clashes between Turkish forces and PKK militants while the government arrests 35 Kurds.<sup>303</sup>
  - **March 1991:** Three PKK militants and four civilians are killed in fighting in March while PKK militants kidnap two civilians.<sup>304</sup>
  - **February 1991:** Nine PKK militants and one civilian are killed in fighting in February.<sup>305</sup>
  - **December 1990:** Twelve PKK militants and an unknown number of state security forces are killed in fighting in 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>306</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>307</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>308</sup>
  - **August 1990:** Sixteen PKK militants are killed in fighting in August along with five civilians.<sup>309</sup>
  - **July 1990:** Twelve Turkish security members and 47 PKK militants are killed in fighting in July.<sup>310</sup>
  - **June 1990:** Twelve Turkish security members and 20 PKK militants are killed in fighting in June along with 32 civilians.<sup>311</sup>
  - **May 1990:** Six Turkish security members and 40 PKK militants are killed in fighting in May along with 12 civilians.<sup>312</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>313</sup>
  - **March 1990:** Three Turkish security members and 22 PKK militants are killed in fighting in March along with 14 civilians.<sup>314</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>315</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 Pinarçik in the Mardin province, killing 30 people, including 16 children. The PKK later claims the attack in its *Serxwebun* magazine.<sup>316</sup>
  - **1984:** The PKK conducts raids on jandarma and police stations in Siirt and Semdinli. Jandarma commando Süleyman Ayd?n and Sergeant Memi? Ar?ba? were killed in the attacks.<sup>317</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>318</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>319</sup>

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

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**Designations:**

*Designations by U.S. Government:*

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**October 8, 1997:** The State Department designates the “Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK, a.k.a. Kongra-Gel)” as a foreign terrorist organization.  
<sup>320</sup> On March 1, 2019 the U.S. reviewed and maintained their designation.<sup>321</sup>

*Designations by Foreign Governments:*

•

Australia—Designated as a terrorist organization on December 17, 2005, and renewed on August 4, 2018.<sup>322</sup>

•

Canada—Designated the PKK as a foreign terrorist group on December 10, 2002 and renewed on November 21, 2018.<sup>323</sup>

•

European Union—Designated the PKK as a terrorist group in 2014 and reaffirmed in 2018.<sup>324</sup>

•

Japan—Designated the PKK as a terrorist group on July 5, 2002.<sup>325</sup>

•

Kyrgyzstan—Designated the PKK as a terrorist group on June 12, 2008.<sup>326</sup>

•

New Zealand—Designated the PKK as a terrorist group on February 10, 2010 and renewed on January 30, 2019.<sup>327</sup>

•

Turkey—Designated the PKK as a terrorist organization in 1984.<sup>328</sup>

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## *Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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### **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>329</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>330</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>331</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>332</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>333</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>334</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>335</sup>

- **PJAK (The Free Life Party of Kurdistan)**

The less prevalent Iranian Kurdish political party.<sup>336</sup>

- **PCDK (Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party)**

Iraqi Kurdish branch of the PKK. The party is banned from formal political activity in Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>337</sup>

- **PYD (Democratic Union Party)**

The PYD is the political party of the Syrian Kurdish branch of the KCK. The PYD (Hezb 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>338</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>339</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>340</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>341</sup>

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

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>342</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>343</sup>

• **YPG (Peoples' Protection Units)**

The YPG is the military arm of the PYD.<sup>344</sup>

• **YPJ (Women's Protection Units)**

Women's branch of the YPG.<sup>345</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>346</sup>

- <sup>329</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>.
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- <sup>338</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).
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*Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*

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**Rhetoric:**

*Kurdish fighter Zind Ruken, 2016*

“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>347</sup>

*Abdullah Öcalan, 1977*

“If a people embraces its own tradition, uses its own religion, makes its culture come alive, this too is a rebellion.”<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>347</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>.

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