

**CİZRE INVESTIGATION AND MONITORING REPORT  
ON DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE ROUND-THE-CLOCK CURFEW  
IMPOSED ON THE TOWN BETWEEN  
DECEMBER 14, 2015 AND MARCH 2, 2016**

**MAZLUMDER CONFLICT INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION GROUP  
MARCH 4-6, 2016**



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**MAZLUMDER CONFLICT INVESTIGATION  
AND RESOLUTION GROUP**

**CURFEW IMPOSED ON CİZRE TOWN OF  
ŞIRNAK PROVINCE**

**INVESTIGATION AND MONITORING REPORT  
COVERING DECEMBER 14, 2015 – MARCH 2,  
2016**

**MARCH 4-6, 2016**



## **A. INTRODUCTION**

A curfew which was imposed on town of Cizre in the southeastern province of Şırnak at 11 p.m. on December 14, 2015 with an announcement from the Şırnak Governor's Office. It remained in place until 5 a.m. on March 2, 2016 when it was announced that the curfew would be partially lifted but would still remain in place between 7:30 pm and 5 am.

The December-March blanket curfew, a curfew imposed on Cizre for the fourth time in the space of a few months, lasted for 78 days and six hours and all entry to the town was completely blocked during this period. It was impossible for any rights group to send a delegation to the town to monitor the clashes [between the Turkish security forces and the armed Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H) which in December 2015 became the Civil Protection Units (YPS) associated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)] and report rights violations there. In addition, media outlets were only able to cover the clashes in Cizre in a limited way. Therefore the investigation of the human rights violations in the district during the course of the clashes was not possible and most residents had to leave their homes and sought shelter in neighboring provinces, towns, and villages with their relatives.

Following the partial lifting of the indefinite curfew on Cizre, the Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed (MAZLUMDER) established a large delegation on behalf of the MAZLUMDER Conflict Investigation and Resolution Group in order to make examinations in the town and report the rights violations there. Several delegations, composed of MAZLUMDER members from Şırnak, Diyarbakır, Mardin, Gaziantep, Bitlis, Bursa, İstanbul and Batman provinces, made examinations in Cizre for three days. The first delegation arrived in Cizre on March 4 and began examinations there. During their three-day stay in the town, delegation members met with public officials and opposition party representatives, visited locals' houses and collected information about the conflict in the area from many families in Cizre. The delegation left the town on March 6.

All the work in Cizre by MAZLUMDER members was carried out through their own means and on a voluntary basis without receiving any financial assistance just as was the case before in the drafting of similar reports by MAZLUMDER.

### **A.1. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DELAGATION AND MONITORING PROCESS**

Several MAZLUMDER delegations that set out from different provinces on March 4 to travel to Cizre aimed to go there via Mardin's Nusaybin district but found out that the Nusaybin road was closed due to the clashes there. So they tried to take the route from Şırnak's İdil district to make their way to Cizre. However, gendarmerie teams waiting at the entrance of İdil did not allow them into the town. Hence, the delegation members went back to Mardin and the first

delegation managed to arrive in Cizre at noon on March 4 using the Midyat and Nusaybin route.

The first MAZLUMDER delegation arrived in Cizre after being subjected to body searches at a police checkpoint at the entrance of the town. The delegation members immediately began examinations in the town mainly focusing on the Cudi neighborhood where the most intense armed clashes took place and where some people allegedly lost their lives after being trapped in basements. The delegation members were divided into groups to work more effectively. Each group arrived in the town at different times because they came from different places, so they concluded their work in the town at different times as well.

The last MAZLUMDER delegation left Cizre on March 6, hence concluding the monitoring process in the town. MAZLUMDER members continued to follow the situation in Cizre through a network of people there. MAZLUMDER delegation members who came from seven branches of the association and nine provinces across Turkey to take part in the examination and monitoring process in Cizre were the following:

Ahmet Faruk Ünsal (President) from MAZLUMDER headquarters in Ankara; İzzet Saldamlı (deputy President) from Bursa branch and Enes Gündüz (executive board member); Ali Öner (executive board member/educator) from İstanbul; Abdullah Ekinci (lawyer/branch head) from Şırnak and Adnan Şanlı (an administrator at Şırnak branch); Reha Ruhavioğlu (deputy secretary-general/educator), Sibel Ateş (lawyer), Atalay Şahin (executive board member/doctor), Mehmet Balık, Mariye Bildirici and Ahmet Aksoy (civil engineer) from Diyarbakır branch; Seyfettin Baysal (lawyer and branch head) from Mardin, Mardin deputy branch head Ayetullah Aşıti, Abdurrahman Hedekoğlu (administrator at Mardin branch), member Rojesir Girasun and Sinan Kızılkaya (executive board member/sociologist) from Mardin; Gaziantep branch head Sabri Sayan (lawyer) and member Zeki Benzer, Serhat Özdili (executive board member/psychologist) and Burhan Aksoy (lawyer).

A 22-member delegation of MAZLUMDER collected data, conducted research, monitoring and interviews for three days in Cizre in circumstances where there were limited possibilities to undertake this work.

## **A.2. Meetings/Interviews**

While MAZLUMDER delegation members made general examinations in Cizre, they also met with families who returned to the homes they had abandoned during the clashes as well as those who stayed in the town at the time of the clashes. Interviews were made with family members to reveal what they went through during the clashes, how their lives were affected before the clashes and during the clashes and the incidents they witnessed. Interviews with families continued for three days in different neighborhoods.

During the drafting stage of the report on Cizre, MAZLUMDER delegation members aimed to meet with Cizre district governor, Cizre chief public prosecutor, representatives from Şırnak Bar Association and Cizre Municipality, Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) deputies, Cizre district branches of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) and the Free Cause Party (HÜDAPAR), *muhtars* (elected headmen) and families who had to leave their houses or whose houses were damaged or destroyed during the clashes as well as with families who have missing relatives. An appointment was requested from Cizre district governor and Cizre chief public prosecutor with the aim of having a wide-ranging discussion of developments in the town.

### **Meeting with Cizre district governor:**

All the questions planned by MAZLUMDER delegation members beforehand were asked during the delegation's meeting at the Cizre District Governor's Office and Cizre District Governor Ahmet Adanur answered all the questions on condition that they were not made public. During this meeting, questions were directed at the district governor on a wide range of issues including the reasons for the 19-day-long curfew that continued to be imposed on the town following the end of the clashes, an incident in which two women who were allegedly tortured in Cizre and photos of whose naked bodies were shared on social media after they were killed, what action was taken concerning the trenches and barricades [dug or set up by the PKK-associated YDG-H] before a curfew was imposed on the town, in view of the consequences what the the military operations meant in terms of human rights and universal norms, whether any rehabilitation program had been offered to conflict-stricken children and women, whether a crisis desk has been established for the locals to seek assistance, the number of civilians, members of the security forces and members of armed organizations who were killed during the clashes and the number of families who had moved from the town during the clashes.

### **Meeting with Cizre chief public prosecutor:**

The same delegation also met with Cizre Chief Public Prosecutor Cuma Çoban who told the delegation members that he would not/could not make any statements about "Cizre" to the group. The prosecutor refused to answer any questions and allegations brought up by the delegation members concerning whether crime scene investigations in the town were made under the supervision of judicial authorities, how the bodies of the victims were collected, whether anyone apart from members of the security forces were allowed into the town during the 19-day-long curfew that continued at the end of the clashes as well as the allegations about the burned bodies in the town.

The report's Meetings with Locals and Testimonials section includes statements from other people who spoke to the MAZLUMDER delegation.

## **B. CASUALTIES DURING THE CURFEW**

Delegation members tried to collect information about the individuals who lost their lives in Cizre throughout the curfew in the town. News reports published by various media outlets on the people who were killed in Cizre were scanned and a comparison was made between the information covered in the news reports and claims made by the locals. Although it was not possible to come up with a complete list of the people who lost their lives in the town, the names of the victims the delegation could find out were included below along with their ages. It is urgent for public authorities to investigate and shed a light on how and where these people were killed in Cizre. Since the names of the security forces members (police officers, soldiers and village guards) who are killed in clashes are announced by the General Chief of Staff and National Police Department to the public, their names have not been included in this report.

- 1) 14.12.2015 – Mevlüde İğdi (15)
- 2) 16.12.2015 – Hediye Şen (30)
- 3) 17.12.2015 – Doğan Aslan (32)
- 4) 18.12.2015 – İbrahim Akhan (15)
- 5) 19.12.2015 – Selahattin Bozkurt (70)
- 6) 19.12.2015 – Lütfü Aksu(25)
- 7) 19.12.2015 – Yılmaz Erz (42)
- 8) 19.12.2015 – Selahattin Bozkurt (70)
- 9) 20.12.2015 – Zeynep Yılmaz (45)
- 10) 22.12.2015 – Cahide Çakıl (35)
- 11) 22.12.2015 – Doğan İşçi (İşli) (32)
- 12) 22.12.2015 – Mehmet Tekin (35)
- 13) 22.12.2015 – Mehmet Saçan (38)
- 14) 23.12.2015 – Dikran Sayaca (30 )



- 15) 23.12.2015 – Azime Aşan (50)
- 16) 24.12.2015 – Ferdi Kalkan (20)
- 17) 24.12.2015 – Abdülmecit Yanık (26)
- 18) 24.12.2015 – Hacı Özdal (26)
- 19) 25.12.2015 – Miray İnce (3 month-old)
- 20) 25.12.2015 – Ramazan İnce (80)
- 21) 28.12.2015 – Kumru Işık (85)
- 22) 28.12.2015 – Hüseyin Ertene (16)
- 23) 28.12.2015 – Hüseyin Selçuk (5)
- 24) 30.12.2015 – Aziz Yural (33)
- 25) 30.12.2015 – Hediye Eren (50)
- 26) 01.01.2016 – Cabbar Taşkın (40)
- 27) 03.01.2016 – Sezai Burçin (43)
- 28) 04.01.2016 – Kazım Tongğ (51)
- 29) 05.01.2016 – Ali Tetik (34)
- 30) 06.01.2016 – Bişeng Garan (12)
- 31) 07.01.2016 – Nidar Sümer(17)
- 32) 07.01.2016 – Halis Sümer (45)
- 33) 07.01.2016 – Osman Telkin (50)
- 34) 08.01.2016 – Tayfun Yaşlı (26)
- 35) 08.01.2016 – Şivan Cebrail Mungan (28)
- 36) 09.01.2016 – Murat Ekinci (22)
- 37) 09.01.2016 – Murat Egül (24)
- 38) 10.01.2016 – Nebi Katlav (23)
- 39) 10.01.2016 – Şükrü Coşkun (22)
- 40) 10.01.2016 – Ahmet Zırığ (35)

- 41) 10.01.2016 – Hacı Tongut (32)
- 42) 10.01.2016 – Ali Bağdur (25)
- 43) 10.01.2016 – Mehmet Şirin Erdiñ
- 44) 11.01.2016 – Garip Mubarız (18)
- 45) 12.01.2016 – Veysi Elçi (32)
- 46) 13.01.2016 – Abdulmenaf Yılmaz (50)
- 47) 14.01.2016 – Selamat Şahin (70)
- 48) 14.01.2016 – Mehmet (Mahmut) Şahin (70)
- 49) 14.01.2016 – Yakup Isırgan (18)
- 50) 14.01.2016 – Yusuf Akalın (12)
- 51) 15.01.2016 – Büşra Akalın (10)
- 52) 17.01.2016 – Abdullah İnedi (25)
- 53) 17.01.2016 – Hayrettin Şınık (10)
- 54) 18.01.2016 – Mehmet Rıdvan Kaymaz (35)
- 55) 18.01.2016 – Mehmet Kaplan (35)
- 56) 18.01.2016 – Serhat Altun (19)
- 57) 20.01.2016 – Abdülhamit Poçal (38)
- 58) 20.01.2016 – Selman Erdođan (45)
- 59) 20.01.2016 – Ahmet Tunç (50)
- 60) 22.01.2016 – Veli Müjde (38)
- 61) 23.01.2016 – Cihan Karaman (25)
- 62) 25.01.2016 – Selami Yıldız (28)
- 63) 26.01.2016 – Selim Turay
- 64) 27.01.2016 – Nusret Bayer
- 65) 30.01.2016 – Sultan Irmak (16)
- 66) 05.02.2016 – Abdullah Gün (15)

There are claims that in addition to the 66 people mentioned above who were killed by firearms, 15 others were also killed by firearms on different dates but they could not be identified because their bodies could not be collected from the streets. Five locals identified as Amine Duman (70), Zeynep Demir (65), Besne Zırığ (55), İbrahim Nas (55), Leyla Elsuyu (85) also lost their lives reportedly because they could not be taken to hospital immediately due to the curfew after developing complications related to chronic health problems.

Moreover, there are claims that bodies of 139 up to 189 people were retrieved from three basement floors in Cudi neighborhood and the bodies of the last six victims on the list above were retrieved from those basements. Although the exact number of the people who were killed during the curfew in Cizre is not known, it is claimed to be at least 203 and is said to rise to 266 with new victim identifications. The accuracy of these figures needs to be investigated by relevant authorities.

Names of some of some of the individuals who allegedly lost their lives after they were trapped in basements and denied assistance in Cizre are as follows: Mehmet Yavuzel, Feride Yıldız, Ferhat Saltık, Ali Fırat Kalkan, Mustafa Vartiyak, Mustafa Aslan, Tahir Çiçek, Rıdvan Ekinci, Dersim Aksay, İslam Balıkesir, Serdar Pişkin, Ferhat Karaduman, Sercan Uğur, Rohat Aktaş, Fehmi Dinç, Hacer Aslan, Gülistan Üstün, Sakine Şiray, Berjin Demirkaya, Ramazan İşçi, Mahmut Duymak, Kasım Yana, Osman Gökhan, İzzet Gündüz, Emek Aydın, Derya Koç, Fatma Demir, Lokman Bilgiç, Murat Keskin, Sinan Kaya, İbrahim İverendi, Fırat Malgaz, Orhan Tunç, Meryem Akyol, Mürsel Dalmış, Star Öztürk, Murat Tunç, Abdülselem Turgut, Mesut Özer, Abdullah Özgür, Agit Aydın, Barış Ağatır, Sahip Edip, Hasan Ayat, Fidan Dadak, Servet Çorak, Ekrem Sevilgen, İsmail Çetin, Yakup Dadak, Yasemin Çıkmaz, Erdal Kar, Cengiz Ceren, Ömer Baran, Mehmet Akın, Mahsum Erdoğan, Hakkı Külten, Abdülkadir Kaya, Mahmut Merse, Mehmet Benzer, Ferhal Balcal, Veysi Bademkiran, Serdar Özbek, Harun Baran, Çimen Pankan, Zeliha Şahin, Mahmut Görer, Fırat Çağlı, Abdullah Erboğan, Sabri Sezgin, Umut Ürek, Azad Yılmaz, Fadıl Küçük, Yakup Yalçın, İbrahim Temel, Doğan Çalış, Halil Çelik, Mehmet Tunç and Müjde Tonga.

Judicial authorities need to investigate all these deaths which were reported by some news outlets. No official statement has been made so far concerning the exact number of the victims and the cause of the deaths. There is a need for an extensive investigation by the Cizre Chief Public Prosecutor's Office to shed a light on these killings in various aspects including how and where these killings took place and who violated these people's right to life. If these victims are claimed to have any links with the warring parties [the PKK or the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H)], public authorities should inform the public on the issue, leaving no doubt in people's minds. It is of crucial importance for the relevant public authorities to investigate thoroughly all details regarding the deaths of these people in Cizre--their identity, place of death, cause of death etc.--reveal the responsible parties no matter who

they are and take the necessary legal action against them and inform the public about the results of the investigation.

## **C. MEETING WITH LOCALS AND WITNESS ACCOUNTS**

### **C.1. Meetings with representatives from local institutions/authorities**

#### **Meeting at Şırnak Bar Association**

MAZLUMDER delegation visited Şırnak Bar Association on March 4 and met with the association's head Nuşirevan Elçi as well as other bar association heads from Bitlis and Muş provinces. Many questions and allegations, which were also raised during meetings with Cizre district governor and chief public prosecutor, were brought up during the meeting at the Şırnak Bar Association as well. Notes from this meeting are as follows:

"We made the collection of some human remains in some basement floors in Cizre. We asked the prosecutor's office to ensure the collection of the bodies in the basements. But the prosecutor refused to go down to the basement, saying that it was not safe. Lawyer friends went to the basements, collected human bones and took them out. I mean the prosecutor did not even see what was inside the basements. Most of the 85 people who died in the first period were civilians. It is claimed [by the state] that if there were PKK militants among them it wasn't revealed, but I am not sure about the accuracy of this claim. Then came the deaths of those in the basements.

While autopsies of the victims were being made in Şırnak, we, as lawyers, convinced the chief public prosecutor after some controversy to allow us to take part in the autopsies but when mass deaths took place in the basements, despite an agreement, lawyers were prevented from taking part in the autopsies on the grounds that the [Justice] ministry did not allow it. The chief prosecutor's office was no longer able to issue such a permission. There was nothing it could do. The prosecutor's office did not allow anybody [into the autopsies] on orders from the military.

Regarding the number of the people killed [in Cizre], we don't have a definite number because we have only just been able to get ourselves together.

We saw the official records at the Forensic Medicine Institution; there is a need for a long evaluation process. The number of bodies found and the number of families claiming the bodies of their relatives do not match up. The number of bodies that were sent to the council is 114 but the figure cited at the conclusion part of the council's report is different. Many autopsies were made in different places such as Şırnak, Silopi, Urfa, Mardin, Antep, Diyarbakır and Malatya. There were also instances when half of a body was sent to Mardin

while the other half was sent to Silopi for an autopsy because some bodies were decapitated. What was given to some families as the "bodies" of their relatives was 4-5 kilograms of human remains, which looked like coal. We estimate that there are more than 140 bodies in the basement floors. We think they were burned to death but not because something like petrol was poured on them and they were set on fire, but there was another kind of burning.

For a while now we have felt that judicial and administrative authorities in the town have been unable to act outside the military's authority. No public official dares to admit this but we feel this is what happens in practice. Let me tell you an example. Once the [Cizre] mayor was going to come to testify to prosecutors during the curfew process and we were planning to accompany them but neither the police chief nor the chief public prosecutor and the judge were able to get permission for this from the military. Entry to a place where the military had control was not possible with the permission of any administrative or judicial authority.

Following the deaths in the basements in Cizre, there was no crime scene investigation and no judicial authority was allowed to enter the basements. Now we are going to try to collect information related to the detentions of individuals, establish a crisis desk and offer legal assistance to people. "

### **Meeting with HÜDAPAR district branch in Cizre**

MAZLUMDER delegation paid a visit to HÜDAPAR Cizre district branch head Salih Elçin on the evening of March 4. The meeting with Elçin was also attended by the presidents of Nur Education Foundation and Mustazaflar Foundation. The developments in Cizre beginning from the day the trenches were dug onwards were discussed at the meeting. The local representatives shared their views about the allegations on some issues in the town as well as making general assessments about how incidents unfolded there. Notes from this meeting are as follows:

"It was obvious that these incidents would take place [in Cizre]. There were trenches, barricades and bombs buried underground on the one hand and there was the state which failed to take action against all these on the other. We are talking about a state which ignored these for three years. Those trenches and barricades first emerged in Cizre following the October 6-8 [2014] protests [demonstrations and violence in the southeast sparked in protest at what was seen as government inaction over the siege of Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)]. When the state remained indifferent to the trenches back then, the public did not voice any disturbance either. Locals were actually unable to drive their vehicles into the town or they had to carry their ill relatives on their back [due to the trenches and barricades in particular neighbourhoods of Cizre].

I am sure that there is not such a destruction like the one in Cizre even in Syria now which has been undergoing a civil war. People have been cornered between the two warring sides here. There is the PKK which buries bombs beneath the ground in front of their houses on the one side and there is the state which intervenes with tanks and fires artillery on the other. In a similar way, both parties used locals' houses as positions for themselves during the clashes. The state has followed a policy here that aimed to leave people exhausted. The state has turned a blind eye to everything at first and then prepared the people for curfew by giving the impression that it would intervene violently once the curfew was imposed. As soon as a daytime announcement was made that a curfew would be imposed at night, people began to leave immediately, nobody could have prevented it and the PKK tried but couldn't prevent it. I think there was a thought that in the presence of civilians, the state would not use too much violence.

Yafes neighborhood was completely evacuated on the 28th day of the curfew. Clashes began in Nur and Cudi neighborhoods. The PKK sent both its men and the locals there. Nur neighborhood also fell [to the control of the security forces] on the 32th day of the curfew. When armed groups were cornered in Cudi and Sur neighborhoods, there was heavy fighting there. We don't know whether security forces opened a corridor and attempted to ensure their [PKK militants'] surrender, we just know what TV channels say. We heard that people went to the hospitals [to find their missing relatives] and were given bags full of human bones and they were told, "This is the body of your relative."

The first basement [where people took refuge] was located on January 23. An attack was staged [on the basement] on January 29 and attacks intensified after February 7 there. There are rumors that an incendiary agent was used [against those in the basement]. We were informed that all the bodies taken to the hospital were in a burnt state.

Houses of our party members were seized in Nur neighborhood. Military forces seized the house of Said Gözüngü and his two sons. We informed the media about this. First they opened fire on the house. That house might have been chosen due to its good location.

[Cizre co-mayor] Leyla İmret's house was also seized. Perhaps hundreds of houses were seized. They used them as their bases. Some people were leaving their houses while others were just moving to the ground floor. One day after military forces opened fire on [Gözüngü's house], they came and seized the house. The military forces said: "We were fired on from here and we reciprocated." Our friends say no one fired on the security forces from there. The second day, they tried to demolish a wall in the house and turn the house into a position for themselves. We raised our voice against this and our general headquarters made a statement in protest at this development. This time our friends were told, 'You filed a complaint against us.' Houses of some of our friends in Cudi and Yafes neighborhoods were destroyed. We don't know who the attackers were."

## **Meeting at the Cizre Municipality**

MAZLUMDER delegation's visit to Cizre Municipality took place on March 5. When the delegation members went to the municipality building for a meeting with Cizre Co-Mayor Kadri Kunur, they found out that sacked Cizre Co-Mayor Leyla İmret, Democratic Regions Party (DBP) Cizre district branch President Mesut Nart, HDP Cizre district branch head Ali Akdemir and HDP deputy Pervin Buldan were also in attendance for the meeting. Later on, HDP Şırnak deputies Filiz Kerestecioğlu and Faysal Sarıyıldız as well as Diyarbakır Mayor Gültan Kışanak also joined the meeting. The delegation members who spoke to Kunur and İmret asked them to share their views about how the entire process in Cizre began from their own perspective, what it meant to them and what the consequences were. Notes from this meeting are as follows:

"A total of 85 people lost their lives before the basement incidents. All those 85 people were locals of Cizre and their official place of residence was Cizre. We knew who they were and where they were living. We have all the official records about them because their bodies were taken to hospital by vehicles belonging to Cizre Municipality. For instance, there were ambulances of the 112 emergency service in the town but apart from the central neighborhoods, they did not go to any of the neighborhoods where there were clashes.

During the time when the clashes were going on, bodies of all those people killed were retrieved by our staff. The circumstances were different back then. It was not possible to offer a normal funeral service to people because we were also faced with the same [harsh] attitude. On several occasions our personnel were subjected to physical attacks. Our staff who went to take an injured person or a dead body from a place, were forced to undergo police checks at four different locations. These staff members were subjected to physical attacks sometimes and verbal attacks at other times. The ambulance staff could not get into an argument [with the security forces]. They just kept their silence and concentrated on their work to save injured persons. To survive there was no other possibility. So I am sure that everyone in the 85-person list are from Cizre. As for the people trapped in the basements, we didn't have any information about them. They were mostly young university students who came to Cizre for solidarity one day before the curfew was imposed. We later learned that they were unable to leave Cizre when the curfew began. We don't know how many people they were exactly but we estimate that the number of those young people was between 40 and 50. One of those people was Cihan Karaman. After he was injured, he could not be taken to hospital and died of his injuries in the basement. There was another student named Helin Öncü. We were able to take her out of the basement where she was injured. A total of 176 people were massacred altogether in three basements.

A large-scale attack was staged on neighborhoods by tanks and artillery. Young people were being arrested and subjected to torture and humiliation before this. People did not want to leave their houses but the state forced them to move. People moved to safer neighborhoods

and close places. The most brutal murders and deaths took place in these neighborhoods [the ones they were forced to move from]. Attempts to enter these neighborhoods and stop the clashes were constantly and violently halted. There are as many as 270 victims. During the 19-day-long period following the end of the clashes, the buildings which were not demolished during the clashes were also destroyed. Debris mixed with human remains were dumped on the banks of the Tigris River."

### **Meeting with HDP Şırnak deputy Faysal Sarıyıldız**

"Before the basement brutality began, we were informed that there were 5-10 injured people as well as bodies in one neighborhood. Since ambulances were not allowed to intervene, we applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) requesting interim measures (injunctions) for the injured. The court accepted our request exclusively for Hüseyin Paksoy, Serhat Altun, Orhan Tunç and several others. The court made a ruling for their transfer to a hospital. Despite the ECtHR's ruling which was conveyed to Turkey, the transfer of these people to hospital was prevented. I could not reach the governor's office no matter how hard I tried and eventually sent a text message [to the governor]. I told him to allow mothers to take their children if the state could not go there. No answer came.

When we called the police, they said they could not send police teams to the area because it was not safe. When we called the 112 emergency services, they said they could not go there without permission from the police. This is what happened from the beginning to the end. The police generally did not allow ambulances to go to the places where there were injured people throughout the entire curfew. They continually directed them to go to next to the central police station, or to Dörtüol or to İpekyolu. At the time of the 85 deaths, ambulances were partially allowed to enter the neighborhood. Then, they began to block their way because most of the locals left the neighborhood and the state reached the conclusion that everyone staying there should be exterminated. I was constantly calling the authorities for the injured. There were 35-40 mothers with me, constantly crying and saying, "Our kids are dying there. Why don't you do anything?" At that time, we met with around 30 mothers, informed the police and then entered the neighborhood [they entered Sur/Cudi, crossing the İpekyolu known as Nusaybin Street]. We did not face any problems. There was an armored vehicle ahead of us, it did not intervene against us.

We picked up four injured people and three bodies from the neighborhood and returned. I called the 112 emergency service as we were coming back. I told them to send an ambulance because we were coming with the injured. They told me they couldn't send an ambulance because the police didn't give permission to them to do so. We got to the İpekyolu [Nusaybin Street] and crossed to safety across the road. At that point an armored vehicle there began



firing. It fired 40-50 bullets all of a sudden. Half of the people there just fell to the ground and there were around 15 people left. We entered a side street but left the bodies there. We went back there again and picked up the bodies risking our lives. We asked the municipality to send funeral vehicles, and when the vehicles arrived, we packed around 15 people into the vehicles and said they should be taken to hospital. Hamid Poçal, a member of our municipal council, was shot in the head. He was fatally injured; perhaps he died just there. Selman Erdoğan was shot in the chest. The injured people were not taken to hospital despite the urgency of their medical condition but to the police station. They were taken to hospital one day later.

State officials say they made calls to the people to come out [of the basements], they say they sent ambulances for the injured but nobody came out. The talk about the ambulances was a dirty plot from the beginning to the end. Ambulances never entered Nusaybin Street because that street was filled with armored vehicles; ambulances were all sent to Dörtüol. Dörtüol is at least 700 meters away from Nusaybin Street. There they would make announcements and give a certain impression of things to the media. There they would open fire and then claim that the "members of the organization [PKK] don't let ambulances in." [Suggesting that there was a deliberate manipulation of the media and shooting by the state to create the impression that the armed groups were blocking the ambulances.] When the prime minister claimed in a public statement that there were no civilians there, I called those who were trapped and asked them to give information about their identities, or else they would be killed. The next day, I shared the names of the people there from my Twitter account.

When state officials said they were unable to go to the area because it was not safe, we told them to allow at least their wives, mothers. Their mothers and wives were here. We told them, "You go there, we are helpless, you are women, they won't harm you." We went there before and they opened fire on us. The women went there; they did not inform anybody about this. They did not inform the media either. They went close to the building [where the people were sheltering in the basement]. They saw armored vehicles there and police officers and soldiers walking together and looking very much at ease. There were no signs of a dangerous situation but those women were detained there and taken to the police station. They were not even allowed [to enter the basement].

Our friends [HDP members of parliament] were at the office of deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmuş. A phone call was made with those trapped in the basement floors. We talked to them on the phone and they decided to go out no matter what happened. Everyone in Kurtulmuş's room listened to our conversations via teleconference. While the phone conversation was going on, the sound of an explosion was heard and the communication was cut off. Everyone heard those sounds. There are sound recordings of these. As of January 30, our communication with those in the basements was completely cut.

The previous [Şırnak] governor had made efforts to get the first trenches filled in, he had tried to keep in touch with us and solve the problem together. I also made a lot of efforts back then

to that effect. We told the friends going to İmralı Island [to meet with jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan as part of the "settlement process"] "Explain the situation in Cizre in particular [to Öcalan]. Young people don't listen to us and a message from him could be binding for them." Then, Mr Dicle [Kurdish politician Hatip Dicle] came and told the youths to "close the trenches." At that time, as many as 50,000 people gathered there but just as Mr. Dicle was going, a boy named Nihat Kazanhan was massacred near the hospital. This happened exactly on that day. While we were filling in the trenches with municipal vehicles several days later despite Kazanhan's killing, an armored vehicle that passed over the trenches we filled in up killed Ümit Kurt that evening. With these events we were put in a difficult position. When a message came from İmralı, we were able to convince the youth to cover up the trenches. We were able to communicate with the governor here at that time. However, public administrators here now just massacre the truth, from start to finish lie to the public.

There was the photo of the dead body of a woman which was made public. We found that photo from the social media accounts of military members who were behind some shadowy operations. We examined the photo and some locals came to us and said the venue where the photo was taken was in front of their house. We informed the authorities about the venue where that photo was taken and which house it was. But no investigation was launched into it. What is worse, they lied about it [district governor's office claiming at the time that it was not from Cizre]. There was a body part retrieved from the banks of the Tigris River. It was a human arm attached to the arm of a sofa. We found the rest of that sofa in the second basement. We informed the prosecutor about the incident through lawyers. The prosecutor said the next day that he asked the police about the issue and was told it was not a body part of a human but an animal. No investigation was launched and the issue was just covered up. When 62 people were trapped in the second basement floor and there were no deaths, one of the people there named Mehmet Tunç called me and said "Mr Deputy we are in such and such a place. We are in one of the houses four or five houses behind the street where Alize Kunefe [café] is. We are trapped here. Mortars are being fired here at the moment. Most of the people here are civilians. We want these people to be taken to hospital." Then our communication was cut.

He called me again the next day and said nine people inside the basement had been burnt. He said some of those people were heavily injured. I made efforts for their transfer to hospital but I failed. Then I asked the general headquarters of our party to intervene. At that time, some media outlets began to run stories saying, "Ambulances were being sent for those trapped in basements but PKK members were not allowing the ambulances to enter the neighborhoods." I told this to the people trapped in basements thinking that perhaps the ambulances were being made to wait at the beginning of the street. After a while, I was told, "Mr Deputy you told us to go out. A 16-year-old boy named İbrahim Gün went out of the basement but he was shot. I see him from the window of the basement and weapons continue to be fired on him." For 20

days following the end of the clashes in Cizre, efforts were made to destroy evidence, bodies were taken away. There was nobody who could see what was done during those days."



*Photo 1. The outer view of the building containing the basement in Bostancı Street*

*-There are claims suggesting that YDGH was acting irresponsibly before the curfew. There are claims about YDGH members' making ID checks and seizing the ignition keys of people's vehicles. Could this kind of behavior not have been controlled?*

"Let me say this, what is called YDGH was a structure composed mostly of the children of the Cizre people and we never had any relation with them. They were acting in line with the rules they created. They were there mostly thanks to the support they got from the public. Some things like you mentioned did happen. For instance, at a time when military operations had begun, the ignition keys of many vehicles on the road had been taken away. I had information on that. We are talking about a structure which is unorganized and dominated by young people, and it was derived from unorganized public reaction."

*-Was not there any authority or person who could convince them to give up such acts?*

"When the first trenches were dug, I went to see them [YDGH members] and talked to the youth near the trenches. But they told me, "Given the state's approach to Kobani and the continuing prison isolation regime Öcalan is in, we will continue our acts" and we failed to convince them [to give up digging trenches and sealing off parts of the neighbourhoods]. After meeting with the relevant parties, we eventually informed the İmralı delegation [about the trenches] and asked them to inform Öcalan about this issue. Just after a message came

from the island, our words began to have a meaning for the youth and the trenches began to be filled in. But the second time round the state declared a war across the entire Kurdistan, there were forest fires simultaneously in many places. As many as 1,500 people were detained in one week and half of them were jailed. When all these things happened, we knew that the youths would no longer listen to us. They actually did not have any relation with us."

*-There are claims that some locals who wanted to leave their houses during the clashes were prevented from doing so [by the YDGH]?*

"No such complaint has come to me. There were just some locals who recently shared their complaints with me saying, 'Mr. deputy, this state is known as barbaric, if only the youths had not brought things to this point.' There were such complaints."

*-Why do you think the state has allowed digging of trenches to this extent?*

"Unfortunately, the state does not intend to solve any problems through negotiations. It believes that it can resolve the trenches issue by using force and violence. For a long while, the state pumped hopes about a solution in order to gain some time. We knew this right from the beginning but we thought this process would force the transformation of the state and still think the same thing today. We tried to make use of even the smallest light of hope. We are doing our best to make use of even the slightest channel of democratic politics and eliminate the weapons. The military operations were at the same time a very harsh blockade on Cizre. When you look at the official circular related to the curfew, it says pharmacies could stay open but no pharmacists were able to go out of their houses. Food shops also remained closed during the first month of the curfew, they were not allowed to be opened either. Then the state did several things in a symbolic move. It brought an aid convoy next to the Almira Supermarket. They distributed aid packages to the people and had photos taken. But how could the needs of people in a town with 100,000 population be addressed with such a show? For instance, here was a town whose sewage system was completely destroyed but there was no state to address the problem. Yesterday, we managed to bring a truckload of aid items to the town with much difficulty after numerous phone calls to the public authorities. Two vehicles came, they were carrying onions and potatoes. They were not allowed to enter the town till the evening. During the curfew four or five trucks carrying food came here. We contacted the district governor to distribute food aid to the people but we were not given permission to do so. Currently there is a serious problem of accommodation. Mortar fire damaged many houses. There are not even a sufficient number of houses for people to rent when they return. There are people whose houses have been partially demolished. They are living in one part of the house, sometimes in one room only. Every house in Cizre was raided following the end of the military operations, televisions were destroyed, bullets were fired at washing machines."

### **Meeting with HDP Şırnak deputy Filiz Kerestecioğlu**

"We made much pressure on [Education Minister] Nabi Avcı to save Helin Öncü [a 20-year-old woman injured during clashes in Cizre and for whom the European Court issued an interim ruling calling on the Turkish authorities to provide urgent medical help to save her life]. I told him that the Şırnak governor was giving biased information to him. I was getting information from Faysal [Sarıyıldız] and relaying it to Nabi Avcı, I was trying to correct the inaccurate information given by the governor. They said, "The woman [Öncü] could walk and come to the area where the ambulance was," while she was lying on the ground because of her injuries. Finally, they decided to send an ambulance to pick her up. But this time, they said, "The ambulance cannot go to the area where the woman is." Öncü's father was waiting at the entrance of Cizre. They [security forces] did not allow him to pick up his daughter. A decision was made for the municipality's ambulance to be sent but the driver of the ambulance was detained. If we had not exerted pressure on Avcı, we would not have been able to get Helin out of the town."

### **Meeting at AK Party Cizre district branch**

MAZLUMDER delegation paid a visit to the AK Party's Cizre district branch on March 5 where they met with AK Party Cizre district branch head Ferzen Güven and the deputy head of the branch. During the meeting, questions were asked to AK Party officials about developments before the imposition of a curfew on Cizre, whether another solution than imposing a curfew might have been possible, and also developments during the curfew period. They were requested to share their views, assessments, criticisms and proposals regarding developments in the town. Notes from this meeting are as follows:

"Before the curfew, youths, called members of the YDGH, were creating much trouble. They closed off most of the streets. We had some relief after the curfew.

Before the curfew, life had come to a halt in Cizre. The intervention by the police was successful. Security forces have acted very carefully but there have inevitably been some civilian losses. We offered our condolences to their families. The civilian losses happened mostly because YDGH used people as shields.

Nobody was able to go out before the curfew and police officers and military members were unable to enter the streets [due to the trenches and barricades]. Even we were unable to go there. They [public authorities] did not take action before fearing that they could harm locals. People did not comply with the remarks of Hatip Dicle. The public wanted to comply with his remarks but YDGH did not. The public did not side with the YDGH. We want a solution which is in favor of the public.

We helped locals to move to neighborhoods where there were not any clashes and met all their needs during that period. We helped their accommodation in a safe place for three months.

Certainly the houses of our people have been damaged during the operations but we are sure that they will be compensated for. "

## **C.2. Meetings with *muhtars* (locally elected neighborhood headmen)**

### **Nur neighborhood *muhtar* Murat Okumaz**

"Our neighborhood has a population of 30,000 people. The trenches were dug before the very eyes of the state. When we told them [the YDGH] not to dig those trenches, they did not listen. The district governor held a meeting 20 days before the imposition of the curfew and told us to "have the trenches removed." We talked to them [YDGH youths] about this and they told us that the state should come and talk to them. Half of the buildings here are destroyed. When the news about an imminent curfew broke, we left our neighborhood immediately. We went to the Konak neighborhood. Twenty percent of the people in the Nur neighborhood left the neighborhood at the beginning. With the beginning of the shelling, people began to leave the neighborhood in large groups. This continued until 35th day of the curfew when the neighborhood was completely emptied. Those who stayed here moved to the Cudi neighborhood. More than 20 people were killed in this neighborhood [Nur] during the clashes. Some of them were YDGH members while some of them were civilians. YDGH members were the sons of this neighborhood. Members of the organization [PKK] may also have come here and directed them. Delivery of weapons increased during the settlement process. All this happened before the eyes of the government. We are cornered between two states, between two deaths. When the curfew was imposed, I called the district governor several times on behalf of the people who had to leave their houses and he said those in need of food could call 155 police hotline. Aid was provided to those who called this number. They were provided only with food and flour. Two thousand packages of food and 80 sacks of flour were delivered to people in our neighborhood. When I returned to my house, I found that it had been destroyed. The front door of the house had been broken, some people had entered, broken the furniture and opened fire inside. There was a school building here. It is being repaired now. It will either be a police station or a medical center. We had a meeting with the district governor. An assessment of damaged houses will be carried out, and it was said everything would be compensated. Yet, we don't know how this is going to happen. We gave the district governor a list of those who are the victims or are poor. It is said that people will be given rent allowances and food aid. Members of the special operations forces are constantly swearing at people and humiliating them. They were taking us with them on house searches. We were made to wait outside the house while they broke the front door of the

house. Then they were calling us during the search of the house. They were constantly telling the residents of the houses things like, "I will kill you, I will do you in."

### **Sur neighborhood *muhtar* Abdullah Avşar**

"It is the state that made a mess of these streets. There were trenches here, the state did not care about them at the beginning. Both sides acted in the same way. We were unable to say anything to them. Out of fear we couldn't say anything to the state or to them. When we said something, they were saying, "I will kill you." What could I do in this situation? And this is the result. No aid was delivered to the destroyed neighborhoods. This neighborhood has a population of close to 20,000 people. The municipality has just begun delivering some food aid to the people. What will the district governor do, he says the state will do what is necessary but that's all. For a while the district governor did not even answer our calls, he didn't even answer the member of parliament's calls here. Just look at what's happened, is this what a state does?"

### **Yafes neighborhood *muhtar* Necmettin Özer**

"You can see what happened before your eyes. We suffered a lot, we were disgraced, we were left hungry; what our people went through is here to see. We have lost everything but our honor. We stayed at home for 23 days. Then we took a white flag and walked out. We went to those who opened their house to us. We suffered much from the tanks and the shells. Our youths made mistakes. We told them not to do this. We were anyway in the first place displaced to this neighborhood [from villages forcibly emptied in the 1990s]. Our youths made mistakes, the state made mistakes. There was a barricade in our neighborhood. The state forces attacked everything for 23 days. We fled the area and don't know what happened afterwards. There was fire on one side, water on the other. We got burned on one side and drowned on the other. A total of 18 cars were burned out in our street (*Sittinefis Caddesi*) and we don't know who did this. We left and don't know what happened next. They [the public authorities] had 34 bodies buried in the unknown persons cemetery. They gave numbers to each grave and did not even identify the victims. Only food packages and bread were sent out to the people who called the 155 police hotline for help. There was aid coming from associations. They were delivered to Cizre's locals and those associations said not to give aid to those who had migrated from villages. There was racism even during aid delivery. No aid packages were given to those who did not call the 155 police hotline and were not Cizre locals during the curfew period. There was no aid extended to those who migrated from villages either from the municipality, or from the district governor's office and from

associations. When those whose houses have been damaged return, most of them will have to rent a house but there are not many houses for rent. The municipality's own association has arrived now, let's see what happens. Most of the people have not yet returned to their houses. What will they do when they are back? "

### **Dicle neighborhood *muhtar* Sabri Yural**

"There were no clashes in our neighborhood, there was just a bomb explosion. Only once was there a clash during which bullets also hit houses. Half of the people in our neighborhood stayed in their houses in the first month of the curfew. More than two-thirds of people left their houses in the second month of the curfew. Most of the residents in our neighborhood left; only those who migrated to our neighborhood from Cudi, Nur and Yafes neighborhoods stayed. We were trying to meet their needs. We did not leave anybody without food. I don't mean the state. I mean we did this through our own means. We made some agreements with supermarkets thanks to the help of some businessmen and delivered shopping tickets to people. We tried to help people who came here not those in the conflict areas. There were people who took refuge in some buildings and mosques. Two supermarkets, next to the municipality, were open but it was not easy to go to these places. The supermarkets were closed for four or five days in the second month of the curfew, then they were open between 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. On many occasions I got caught in the midst of clashes when I was coming. There was a final explosion which killed a guy called Veli Müjde. A rocket or bomb hit this mosque [the Şeyh Seyda Mosque] in the latest clash here, killing a child aged 12. That child lost his life in an area without any clashes.

We did not receive any assistance here either from the state or from the municipality. One day the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) delivered aid here after making criminal record checks known as the GBT [Genel bilgi tarama]. I went to the police station and said there are 20-30 families who are in urgent need of help and we need to help them. They [police] told me "No." They said those families need to call the 155 police hotline and the police will take aid to them with police panzers after making GBT checks. People were scared, they did not accept this. For instance, when a police panzer draws up in front of your house, others may think you are an informer. I met with the district governor as well. Rich people from Cizre sent several trucks loaded with aid supplies. Those trucks were not allowed here, they were made to wait for 10 days. They were sent to Silopi later after the removal of the curfew there. State officials came to us and said: "Go and talk to the neighborhood residents. If these trenches are not filled in, there will be big chaos. Your neighborhood will completely be destroyed if necessary."

We, *muhtars*, and representatives of the chamber of industry went to the Nur neighborhood and talked to the leading figures [of the YDGH]. They told us "We won't fill in the trenches unless a request comes from Kandil [where the PKK leadership is based in northern Iraq]." To



be frank, they actually tried to bargain with the state. They said, "The state should release our friends who have been jailed [in pretrial detention pending completion of criminal investigation] and we will remove the trenches. Or the state should make a promise not to arrest our youths." We conveyed this to the state. In response, they said: "There can be no bargaining with them. The state will act like a state and the people will act accordingly."

Once Hatip Dicle came here and spoke to the youths and the trenches were filled in. Then three or four police panzers entered Ziraat Street in Cudi neighborhood. I don't know what happened there, maybe fire was opened on the police, one boy was killed there. After the killing of that boy, trenches begun to be dug again. That boy was working as a construction worker, doing paintwork. After that they [YDGH members] told us that if they fill in the trenches, the security forces would come, capture them and kill them."

### **C.3. Meetings with families who lost relatives**

#### **Miray and Ramazan İnce's Family**

*Abdurrahman İnce (60, Ramazan's son), Emine İnce (80, Ramazan's wife):*

*Abdurrahman İnce:* "Miray was my nephew's [three-month-old] daughter. Her aunt was taking her to downstairs in her arms. Miray was hit by a cartridge in the face. While Miray was being taken to hospital, the same sniper shot my father Ramazan. I had called the 155 police hotline and told them we have injured people. They told me: "Go out as a group of two men and one woman holding a white flag." My father, brother and sister-in-law went out. I called the police again and told them not to open fire on us. The same sniper opened fire on us before the ambulance arrived. This happened 100 meters away from our house. Both my sister-in-law and father got injured. A second bullet hit Miray and killed her there while my father died of his injuries at hospital. Then, Faysal Sarıyıldız intervened and then came the municipality's ambulance only 1.5 hours later."

*Emine İnce:* "Ramazan was holding a white cloth when he was shot."

*(The stairs of the two-storey house are easily visible from the hill across the house. The front side of the house is clear. The hill, pointed out by Miray's uncle as the location of the police sniper, overlooks the stairs and courtyard of the İnce family's house.)*



*Photo 2. A bullet mark seen in the place where Miray İnce is said to have been shot.*

### **Uncle of male nurse Aziz Yural who was reportedly shot dead in the street**

**Sabri Yural:** Aziz's house was in Nur neighborhood. An elderly woman got injured and nobody was able to pick her up. An ambulance was called but it did not come to take the woman. So that injured woman was waiting there. The woman's house is a little away from Aziz's house but they are in the same neighborhood. The woman's neighbors called Aziz and asked him to tend to her. This what the people there told us. I was not there when this happened. While Aziz was trying to save the woman, he was shot in the back and is said to have collapsed immediately. People there brought him on a stretcher from that neighborhood all the way to the back of the Kadiođlu Hotel. They wrapped him in a blanket there and then he was taken to the state hospital by an ambulance. Nobody knows where the gunfire came from. We don't know for sure but it was most probably snipers who shot him. You know who the snipers are. After he was shot he was carried by people to the back of the Botan Hospital, there there is camera footage of the ambulance. Our relatives were there and they took care of him. And a group of five or six people took him to the ambulance and after he was put in the ambulance nobody escorted him to the hospital. I had talked to him on the morning of the day he was shot. I told him to return to his house because he was here for 15 days. His father was very worried about him. He was his only son, his other son is physically disabled. Now his

father is devastated. Aziz was trying to provide treatment to injured people. His wife was called back to the hospital while Aziz who was a nurse stayed at home to help people. I called him to come to us but he said he could not go anywhere because of the clashes. When that woman was injured that day, he wanted to help her. He was shot in the middle of the street. Until that day, people were coming to his house for treatment."

### **Family of Mahmuttin Duymak who reportedly died in the first basement**

*Lütfiye Duymak (50, Mahmuttin's wife) and Osman Duymak (53, Mahmuttin's uncle)*

L.D: "On the 25th of the curfew, we went one street down. I and my husband stayed in that other neighborhood for several days and then we ran out of food. He went back to home to get some food. When his friend was shot, my husband was stuck there. He could not come back to our side again."

*-Did he stay here because his friend was shot?*

L.D. His friend was shot near him.

*-In the street?*

L.D. He was shot in the street and my husband could not come back again.

*-Could you talk to him on the phone later?*

L.D. Yes, he said "I can't come," and nobody could because of the snipers.

*-Was he in the basement then?*

L.D. Yes, he had sheltered in the basement. My husband and others who took shelter in the first basement had apparently got out from there and taken shelter in the second basement. Then our communication was cut.

*-On which day of the curfew did he leave?*

L.D. We stayed for 30 days [of the curfew], then he went back for food 5-6 days later. Let's say we stayed seven days there [together in the other neighborhood].

*-Were those who took refuge in the shelter armed people?*

L.D. All of them were civilians. There was nobody with arms. All of them were students. As far as we learned from TV, my husband was among the most exhausted ones. He was sending messages.

*-Were you ever able to talk to your husband, then?*

L.D. No, we were unable to speak.

*-You were among the women who tried to go to the basement to collect the injured. What happened on that day?*

L.D. We were 10 women trying to go to the basement to collect our injured relatives there. We went to Cafer Sadık Street. We were completely surrounded [by police]. We were two or three meters away from the basement. There were 10 meters between us and the police officers. The police officers asked us what we were doing there. We told them we had come there to collect the injured. They said, "Don't you know there are mines there." We said if they are going to die, we want to die as well. If they go, we go. We tried to explain to them what we were trying to do. Then someone came from the opposite direction. He did not look like a human, he was like a cruel monster. He pointed his Kalashnikov weapon at our heads as if we were armed and as if we had gone there to fight with them. They took us all to the police station with four police panzers behind us. They searched all of us there, then they took us to the police station on the other side of the bridge (to Banixani). They took our statements one by one. The police officers who dealt with us there were women but they stripped us down to our underwear. This is how they treated us. Then we were taken to the district governor's office where they took our photos, measured our height and weight and identified our eye color. Then, they took us to the hospital from there. It was around 9:30 p.m. The doctor asked us whether the police officers used any violence against us while the police were there. We said they did nothing to us so that they release us right away.

*-Were ambulances sent there?*

L.D. The first ambulance never went there, it went to Banixani (the neighborhood on the other side of the bridge). The second ambulance was sent to Dörtyol, around the Güneş Hotel. It was two kilometers away [from the basement]. It could have gone there. The distance must have been 250 meters. When we set out for the basement, we did not see any bombs on the road. There were no bombs, there were only electricity wires broken off. The state always told lies. The state forces were opening fire on the ambulances and they were saying there is a clash there [around the basement]. When we went there, there were no clashes. There was no gunfire from the basement. Nobody was able to collect the dead bodies of their relatives. We were given some bones and told, "This is the remains of your relative."

*Note: The detention of 10 women who attempted to pick up their injured relatives from a basement in Cizre took place on January 31, 2016.*



*Photo 3. Fragments which are thought to be human bones found during examinations at the basement in Bostancı Street.*

Osman Duymak: We were watching İMC TV. The moment we heard the news about ambulances being sent to pick up those injured in the basements, we heard sounds of bomb explosions.

*-What did you see when you went to pick up your nephew's body?*

O.D. We were made to wait there from morning to evening and treated in a humiliating way before we were able to get the body of my nephew. We saw eight bodies there. We brought my nephew's body to a mosque for funeral services. There was an imam there. He was going make the ritual body washing but the body was not in a state to be washed. There was a pile of bones, weighing 2-3 kilograms, nothing else.

While we were going to the cemetery for the burial, they [security officials] stopped us near Botaş and made a body search of everyone. They opened the coffin and searched the coffin. If we say we are Muslims, then you should know that you cannot touch a dead body if the body had been washed for burial and if you have not performed ritual ablutions (abdest). Perhaps it was a woman's body. Why do they touch it? We were stopped at three checkpoints and searched every single time. There were six or seven vehicles in the funeral procession. At the last checkpoint, they told us that only one person could take the coffin to the cemetery. We told them that one person cannot make the burial of the dead alone. They only allowed one person to remain with the coffin. They asked who the relatives of the dead were. We said they are the people following in several vehicles there. As a punishment, they said we would have

to wait on the roadside for 1,5 hours. Then, they sent the coffin on. They told us, "get lost, f... you." Then they played "Ölürüm Türkiyem" ["I die my Turkey", an ultra-nationalist march] and other marches until we had buried our relative.

### **Abdullah Gün's Family**

*While MAZLUMDER delegation members talked to Cizre locals about the people who were trapped in basements, most people said since one young boy was shot to death the moment he went out of the basement, the others in the basement gave up the idea of going out. That boy was 15-year-old Abdullah Gün. MAZLUMDER delegation met with Gün's parents in order to ask them about the allegations related to their son's killing.*

**İbrahim Gün (father):** Abdullah left the house on the 29th day of the curfew. He stayed in the basement because he wanted to be with his friends. On February 5, he got out of the basement in order to see whether an ambulance was coming to pick up the injured. A sniper shot him to death the moment he went out. Those inside the basement wanted him to go out thinking that they [security forces] would not do anything to him because he was a minor. If an ambulance had arrived, all of them would go out. After he was shot, his body was left on the street as those inside the basement could not take his body in. We don't know what happened to his body. We still have not been able to find his body. Abdullah died immediately after he was shot, he did not survive for one hour as far as we have learned. The ambulance never came to the area but there were police panzers in the surroundings. Ambulances were made to wait and people were told to go out and walk to the ambulances. But there were no explosives or trenches left in the street by then [so, ambulances could have come closer]. There were only police panzers and tanks. They did not allow ambulances to come closer.

**Abdullah's mother:** We went to Mardin and gave blood samples there for DNA testing but his body has not been found yet. We went to Şırnak, there were 12 dead bodies there and three of them had been identified. The rest of them were placed in bags which looked like garbage bags. There were only 4-5 kilograms of bones in the bags, nothing else. Whoever the authorities said the bones, which had become like coal, belonged to, we had to believe them. How can we know whether those bones belong to this person or that person? Perhaps my son's body was burned or it was dumped on the banks of the river. We don't know where it is.

### **C.4. Meetings with families whose houses were destroyed**

#### **Ş. H. (M)**

"We left home. Until the 34th day of the curfew, there was not much trouble. When military operations ended, most of the houses were demolished by construction machines. They

dumped most of the rubble on the banks of the river." *(He also showed the photos that allegedly showed human remains mixed with rubble. Following this, MAZLUMDER delegation went to the riverside to see the pile of rubble.)*

**H. K. (M)**

"I am a voluntary imam at ... mosque. I was living in my own house next to the mosque. We had debts, what are we going to do now? We are totally helpless. Just look at the books [some books in Arabic which are taught at *medrese*] here, they are in tatters."

*-Where was your house?*

"It was here, it was levelled to the ground. No assistance has been extended to us by the government. What will we do now? "

**A.K. (M)**

"There is no such thing as human rights. Where is the respect for human rights here? Nobody can oppose the state's actions. On the day a curfew was imposed, we got out of the house. We were five families. We went to Silopi's Bostancı village. We could not find a house to rent in the center of Cizre. In my own hometown, I have been asked where I am from. The state which called on the people to leave their neighborhood did not even show them a tent to live in. Are we not citizens of this country? "

**A.T. (M)**

"We used to live in Gül Street. We were 25 people in total. We used to live in a three-storey building. We stayed at the Kırmızı Medrese Mosque for some time. We did not get any assistance. There were not trenches here. Where will we live now? How will we live here under these circumstances?"

**M.Ş. (M)**

"We are staying at the Kale neighbourhood mosque. We are nine people. Our house has been damaged. What will we do now? There were trenches in the other street. Nobody is telling us what to do. We have debts, how will we pay them? How will this house stand again? What will we do?"

**R. U. (M)**

"We left our neighborhood on the 37th day of the curfew. We did not want to leave our house at first. We wanted to protect our house and belongings. When a shell hit the building next to our house, we felt obliged to leave. We went to Silopi. We are still staying there. Yesterday officials from the municipality came and asked how we were doing. If only our state had not

done all this. If only it could have found a solution. If only things had not developed like this."

**S. B. (M)**

"We were nine people and living in our own house. We don't have a house now. We were still paying off the loan for the house. Now, it is in ruins. We left our house on the 37th day of the curfew."

**O. T. (M)**

"I am living in the Sur neighborhood. We are 11 people. We left our house on the 31st day of the curfew. They [members of the security forces] used our house, they burned it and made a mess of it. We went to the village from here. We and our children are suffering a lot. Is it not obvious that all that happened is the work of the state? "

**L. I. (M)**

"Our house was a one-storey house but it had three sections. You can't see that now. We were staying there as a family of 11 people. We left the house on the 30th day of the curfew. We moved to another neighborhood in Cizre. Where was the state when the trenches were being dug? Why didn't the state capture the PKK, YDGH members? They [security forces] not only demolished our home but also placed a Turkish flag on the wreckage. Are we the offspring of infidels? Do we have a problem with the Turkish flag? I always carry a Turkish flag on me (*trying a take out a Turkish flag from his pocket*). What message are they giving by placing a Turkish flag here? Am I the citizen of another country and has the state taken control of this place now? "

**C.5. Other witnesses**

**H. Ş.<sup>1</sup> (45, M, Cudi neighborhood)**

"At first a young boy was sent out of the basement to see what would happen. That boy was shot to death. The health minister said those trapped in the basements were not leaving. That boy was sent out to test. He was shot in front of the door of the building and his body was left on the street for five days."

**A. K. (49, M, Cudi neighborhood)** *In Narin Street where the second basement was located.*

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<sup>1</sup> The individuals in this part of the report who spoke to MAZLUMDER's delegation are referred to only with their initials due to concerns about their safety. There were also some individuals who did not want to be referred to by their initials either. Information in parenthesis includes age, gender and name of the neighborhood of the person spoken to.



"We left home on the 20th day of the curfew. We did not meet anybody as we were leaving. We went out easily. We don't know what happened following the 20th day of the curfew. The youths [affiliated with the YDGH] did not tell us 'You cannot get out of your house.' We wanted to leave when a shell hit the building next to our house. The tanks were already stationed at the top of the hill on the second day of the curfew. The trenches were not here but at the beginning of the street. We did not oppose the digging of the trenches because we were unable to say anything to them [YDGH members]. Those clashing with the security forces were not the sons of our neighborhood but the sons of Cizre. Soldiers settled in our house and used it as their base. When we returned, we found an explosive like TNT used by the state in the house. We called the police officers but they made fun of us saying, "Thank God, you called us before children played with it." When they entered Cizre, they let out victory cries as if they were not entering Cizre but Russia."

**(30, F, Cudi neighborhood** *(A woman whose house was just across the first basement floor)*

"I stayed here in my house for one month. I was hit by gunfire. There was mostly artillery fire. When I was injured, I went to the hospital. I was shot in front of my house. A sniper shot me. While there was no gunfire from our side, police shot me in the leg *(The woman did not file any complaint regarding this incident and it was observed that she seemed anxious about doing so.)*

**Y. Y. (26, M, Cudi neighborhood)** - *(Y.Y.s house looks onto the same courtyard as the building where the first basement was located. The holes in the ceiling and walls of the wall caused by gunfire strengthen claims that heavy weaponry was used.)*

"We left our house on the 30th day of the curfew. We stayed until a shell hit. When there was artillery fire, we settled in that place *(known as the first basement)* When we returned to our house, we saw that there were bullet marks everywhere and some people had been in our house, stayed here, used our belongings and cooked meals. They made a mess of everything in the house and left. *(Tins of canned food, said to belong to military members, are seen in the house and were also shown by the owners in other houses.)* Until the 30th day, there were only family members in the basement. Our neighbors also left their houses one or two days later. The people who took shelter in the basement later did so because they thought it was safe just as we had thought. That basement was a normal apartment. My house was adjacent to that basement. The people who took shelter there had no other choice, there was no other place they could go to. There were soldiers everywhere. Now, we don't have a house. My wife and I stay in one relative's house one day and in another's house the next. My wife is pregnant and I cannot take her to hospital either. When we got out of Cizre we stayed with four families in the same place for two months. Only TL1000 was given to the four families and we did not get any other aid."

**(55, M, Cudi Neighborhood)**

"Water tanks of all houses were destroyed or punctured. What we need most is water. Even though the municipality provides water, the water tanks can't hold water. The water tank in my house was pierced from the bottom. It was a deliberate act. What we need most is water. There is already little water supply here. We only get it about two days a week. So when there is no water tank... Every family should be given a water tank of at least one-ton capacity. *(It was learned that the municipality provides water for two or three days in a week due the conditions in Cizre. Hence locals keep water tanks on the roof of their houses with a capacity of 3-5 tons in order to save water during the days when there is running water for days when there is not. In the event of the water tank being damaged, it becomes impossible for locals to have water on days when there is no running water. Other locals also voiced similar allegations suggesting that members of the security forces deliberately damaged the water tanks on their houses).*

**(40, M, Sur Neighborhood):**

"The youths also made mistakes. They planted bombs here where children are playing. Is this the right place to plant a bomb? *(He showed the location of what he said was a remote-controlled bomb planted next to a house).* Yes, they were making people stand guard [around the trenches]. Some people were saying, "Why am I standing guard while others don't?" One person from every house was coming to stand guard. When we left our house, military members began to use it as a base. They seriously damaged the house. *(The house was on a slope beside a place where two tanks were allegedly positioned facing Cizre city center. It was claimed that there was artillery fire from that spot aimed at Cizre city center)"*



*Photo 4: Locations where two tanks were allegedly deployed in Sur neighborhood toward the city center.*

**(30, M, Cudi Neighborhood)**

*(While MAZLUMDER delegation members were speaking to locals, a man in tears approached and , pointing to the Turkish flags placed on the rubble, said:) "Look, I am a teacher. How will I be able to explain these flags to the children? What will I tell my kids after so much destruction? How will I be able to talk about things like unity?" (Then, he left immediately).*

**(35, M, Sur Neighborhood)**

"We left home at the beginning of the curfew. When we came back, our home was in ruins. We moved to Mersin where my brother is living. And we have to go back there again. There was a barricade below our house, there was not any barricade in front of it. Our house was located between the police and the youth. When the police opened fire on the youth, they also hit our courtyard and house several times. This happened before the curfew. We were in a risky place. We left as soon as the curfew was imposed."

**A.A. (40, F, Sur Neighborhood)**

"We stayed here until the third day of the curfew. Police opened fire on our house from the surroundings of the hospital. YDGH members were not here. They were below our house. The gunfire was sometimes hitting our house. It was impossible for us to stay at home. So we fled to the city center and stayed in the Dağkapı neighborhood. After the lifting of the curfew, we came back to find out that all the furniture and the walls in the house were damaged."

**Ş. U. (42, M, Cudi Neighborhood.):**

"Police officers who used our houses showed no respect for our privacy, they entered our bedrooms. They ate and drank whatever they found in the house and then left their faeces everywhere, in the bedroom, on blankets and linens, even in bath gloves. ... They left their faeces in children's bath gloves in our house and placed them into the toilet bowl so that it got blocked. They smeared their faeces on the walls. *(When this person was asked to show this, he said his wife had cleared the house of all dirt in two days. So his allegations could not be confirmed.)*

We left home on the 27th day of the curfew. Until that day, there was shelling only from the hill, from tanks, howitzers whatever they had. There were trenches down across the street but there were not any trenches here. There was heavy shelling as of January 1. My sister-in-law was injured due to the gunfire. She was hit in her two legs by a single bullet when she came to this house from the other house there to pick up something. There was shelling as well as a sniper up on the hill."

**(50, M, Cudi Neighborhood):**

"There was only a trench at the beginning of the street and nobody was standing guard there. How could someone be forced to stand there? You'd stay there for a day or a month but would flee the moment you had the chance. A woman was opening the cupboard (*shows the garden*) there - we were down below - when a bullet fired from above hit her in the shoulder. It was not possible to go to hospital either. I don't know where she got treatment. While we were here, there were no clashes but there was always shelling from above. The trenches were down there, there were not any here. We did not see any clashes. There was shelling from above (*shows hills overlooking Cizre*). Everyone here including me is afraid to speak. We fear that someone may give our names [to the police] and they may detain us for speaking. I have a big family to care for. I sustained a financial damage of TL5,000 but I don't want a penny from anyone."

**(45, M, Cudi Neighborhood):**

"We didn't do anything, our son was injured here. They detained our son and sent him to jail. He was 16. Today they took him from Midyat Prison to Diyarbakır Prison. He was injured in the street above before he could reach our house. Nobody was able to go out. There was the son of our neighbor who hung a copy of the Quran around his neck because he was taking Quran courses. He was shot in the head in the next street. He died after he was hit by a single bullet. He was also 16. My nephew was with him when this incident happened. My nephew fled inside a building when he saw his friend collapse. Our neighbors picked up the boy and notified his family. The boy's family came to take his body. They took the body in an ambulance. (*Since the name of this person who is claimed to have been shot could not be learned, this account could not be confirmed*). Ambulances were not able to enter the neighborhood. They were coming to the street. We were taking the dead bodies to the street where they were picked up by an ambulance and taken to hospital. "

**N. B. (14, F, Sur Neighborhood)**

"We were unable to sleep till morning. Babies were constantly crying. My brother reacts whenever he sees police officers and he hates them. We have no running water and electricity. We did not receive any aid. They are telling lies. They even viewed a two-year-old baby as a terrorist. The schools are closed. The police officers were giving money to children and forcing them to tell them who had fired at them."

**Z. S. (10, M, Sur Neighborhood.)**

"We were unable to sleep due to the sounds of the explosions and bombs at night. We were waking up in fear. My baby brother got ill, we could not take him out. We are still afraid."

**G. A. (11, M, Sur Neighborhood)**

"When children see police panzers, they are running away. Police panzers always play an Ottoman military march (mehter marşı) from the loudspeakers when crossing from our street."

**B. K. (F, 35, Journalist)**

"On the 80th day of the curfew in Cizre, we went to the town with journalists after the curfew was partially lifted. We passed by the long queue of vehicles at the entrance of the town to reach the front and told police officers that we were members of the press. The police officer there told us that he needed to ask the police chief whether he should allow us in. When the police chief came in front of our vehicle, our cameraman friend in the front seat of the vehicle showed his press card. The police chief took the press card and immediately threw it at his face. Before we were allowed to say anything, they told us to go back to the end of the queue. When we had this treatment and heard that a lawyer had been beaten up by police officers, we prepared ourselves for anything that could happen. Since the queue was long, we looked for ways to enter the district via the village road. But we came across police officers and a police chief shouting at them on the village road too. The police officers were very anxious and allowed us in immediately due to the confusion."

**(E, 30, Lawyer)**

"When I went to the police station to provide legal assistance to the individuals who were detained during the curfew period, I witnessed that many detainees had been badly beaten. The police officers were trying to make them sign statements including things that had been added and would get them convicted. They were also exerting pressure on the lawyers and we were hardly able to stop them."

**E. V. (F)**

"We were tenants here, living in Beyazıt Street. We didn't have anywhere to go or the means to go. Those who have relatives or friends elsewhere left at the very beginning. We stayed here. Bombs were being fired. There was nobody left around us. On the 36th day of the curfew, we had to leave too. Our house is in ruins now. What will happen now, how will things be improved?"

**H. K. (M)**

"Nobody was left here. Clashes were intense. On the 37th day of the curfew, we left and went to a village. We don't know to whom we should complain. The state forces are armed, the youths are armed."

**Z. Ş. (M)**

"I was living in Doğuş Street in Cudi neighborhood. I have a store in Ebuliz Street. We are six people in my family. There are shells in our house now. It is in ruins and we cannot enter. We

call the 155 police hotline but they don't answer. What will we do? We are afraid. (*A call was made to police from one of MAZLUMDER member's mobile phone and the man gave his address to the police.*)

#### **D. FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

*During the Cizre investigation by MAZLUMDER's Conflict Monitoring and Resolution delegation, the group's members spoke to families who had settled in the town, those who were returning to the houses they abandoned due to the clashes and those who stayed in the town during the curfew. The group members listened to the experiences of the families during the clashes as well as their sufferings and the incidents they witnessed. In addition to locals, the MAZLUMDER group met with local authorities and relevant officials in the town. The delegation came up with the following conclusions at the end of their three-day work in the town.*

1. Daily life was seriously disrupted in Cizre due to the trenches dug and the barricades built up before a curfew was imposed on the town. Acts by YDGH members such as ID checks, forcing store owners to shut their shops, permanently or temporarily seizing the ignition keys of car owners, blocking roads, searching vehicles, had already created feelings of pressure and anxiety among a large section of the local population and we learnt that some who felt worried about voicing their reactions out of concern for their security had restricted the time they spent outside on the street. In addition, some families complained to authorities about the trenches dug and explosives planted in the surrounding areas. I was judged that these explosives reportedly planted next to or below some houses constituted an explicit threat to the security of life of civilians.

2. It was said that during the period when trenches began to be dug and there was no intervention from the security forces, public and municipal officials, political circles and locals in the town looked for a solution together and they were partially successful in their efforts. However, when the future of the settlement process became vague, it became impossible for these people to convince the YDGH to act in a certain way unlike the situation in the pre-curfew period. There were also claims that arbitrary operations and detentions that took place before the YDGH began to set up barricades and dig trenches again left the efforts of the local authorities to find a solution fruitless. In addition, it was said that the Cizre district governor held a meeting 20 days before the declaration of the curfew which was attended by *muhtars* and asked them to take action to ensure that the trenches were removed. However, it is thought that ongoing curfews and clashes in other places at the time had a negative effect on the *muhtars'* efforts and no solution could be found in the district regarding the trenches.

3. After the Education Ministry sent a text message to the teachers in the town asking them to leave and an announcement was made suggesting that a curfew would begin in the town as of 11 p.m. on Dec. 14, 2015, the anxiety of the locals grew and an intense migration from the town to other places began. The population of Cizre which was 130,000 when the curfew began, rapidly fell to 90,000 and migration from the town continued speedily after the beginning of the clashes. It is estimated that there were around 30,000 people left in the town towards the end of February.

4. Although some families said they faced no intervention from the YDGH while moving from the town, there is information that YDGH tried forcibly to prevent some families, especially those living in the neighborhoods where the YDGH was strong, from leaving the town. This situation resulted in the violation of the security of life of individuals who did not want to stay in the conflict region.

5. According to claims, heavy weaponry such as tanks were deployed in locations overlooking the town and began shelling, leading to extensive damage to many houses in Cizre. It was seen during examinations in the town that houses particularly in some neighborhoods were completely destroyed. The fact that houses in some neighborhoods where around 50,000 people are estimated to live were partially damaged or completely destroyed strengthens the view that intense clashes took place. Many families said they left their homes and moved to other neighborhoods in the town which they thought were safer or other places outside the town after artillery fire hit places close to their homes.

6. It is obvious that trenches, barricades and explosives have violated people's right to freedom of movement, access to health services and safety by blocking their access to vehicles of critical importance such as ambulances and fire engines. It is thought that some locals who were not pleased with the trenches and barricades in their neighborhoods and those who were forced to support such actions failed to raise their objections and complaints against these moves out of security concerns.

7. Based on our observations in the town following the end of the curfew, we think that the trenches were dug and barricades were set up in the peripheries of the Sur, Nur, Yafes and Cudi neighborhoods as well as at the entrances of these neighborhoods. Yet, it has not been possible to make a count of the trenches, barricades and explosives planted underground before the beginning of the curfew, which affected the lives of the civilians in many ways.

8. The YDGH's and security forces' use of the houses of locals as bases during the clashes led to the destruction of many houses and left many civilians caught in the crossfire.

9. The discovery of some bullet casings, cartridge belts, rocket projectiles and similar ammunitions produced by the Turkish Mechanical and Chemical Industry Corporation (MKE) in houses belonging to civilians strengthen claims that those houses were used as bases by the security forces. There are claims that many houses particularly in the area

surrounding the Sur, Nur, Yafes and Cudi neighborhoods were used as an accommodation by the security forces for a long time. The Cizre residents who returned to their houses at the end of the curfew presented some evidence to our delegation (*concerning their claims that security forces members left their faeces in their rooms and on their belongings, wrote some hateful messages on the walls and destroyed their furniture*) and had the view that all these were done deliberately and with an intention to humiliate them.



*Photo 5: The word Turkey name and a crescent and star from on its flag were drawn on a wall in one Cizre resident's house.*

10. In areas where Turkish security forces were in control, house owners frequently said they found the front doors of their houses blown open using explosives. Our observations confirm these claims.

11. There have been claims that snipers deliberately targeted water tanks and damaged them during the course of the clashes in order to leave the residents of Cizre without water. Locals also claimed that when they returned home after the end of the curfew, they found bullet marks on their water tanks and that they were deliberately damaged.

12. There were accounts of people who said they became anxious of the snipers and shelling when they had to leave the town holding white flags or when they had to move in the town. There have been some locals who said some individuals were shot although they waved white flags. The killing of Ramazan İnce and injury of Miray İnce's grandmother happened, according to the family's claims, when they were walking with white flags and after having informed the police.

13. Examinations have been made in the locations of the three basements where many people lost their lives in Cudi neighborhood. Only one of these basements in a building



located in Bostancı Street was partially intact and could be entered. The inside of this basement, which was said to be at risk of collapsing, was completely dark and a heavy smell hung over it. Examinations in this basement of around 80 square-meters with the help of lights showed that there was rubble on the floor due to destruction in the building and that the walls were blackened with smoke and soot. Only metal parts of several beds in the basement were left while fragments that are thought to be filling of quilts were partially burned. Three bone fragments which are thought to have burned were also seen during the examinations in the basement. It was seen that the second basement located in Narin Street and the third basement located between Narin Street and Akdeniz Street were completely destroyed and leveled to the ground. According to claims, the rubble from these buildings was dumped on the banks of the Tigris River during the final 15 days of the curfew. After removal of the rubble, the places where the basements were were filled with rubble. There are claims that there could still be some human remains in the rubble used to fill what was once the basements. In the third basement which was used as an atelier by its owner, metal parts of some machinery were seen.



*Photo 6: The entrance to the basement in Bostancı Street*



*Photo 7: The place where the Narin Street building's basement was filled with rubble*

14. It has not been possible to have exact information about the number of bodies that were taken out of the basements. Yet, there are claims that 32 bodies were retrieved from the first basement, 62 from the second and 45 from the third. But lawyers of the victims' families say there are discrepancies in the number of the victims in the forensic reports. Different sources put the number of bodies taken out of the basements at between 139 and 187. Since not all the victims in the basements have been identified and some families refuse to give blood samples for testing, it is thought that it will take a long time to come up with an exact number of victims in the basements.

15. While public officials claimed that individuals trapped in basements during the last 40 days of the curfew were armed, some locals and political party representatives said most of those people were unarmed civilians and that some of them were injured. We don't have any tangible evidence that backs either of these allegations. However, the fact that almost all those people's bodies were dismembered, were unrecognizable for their relatives and their identities can only be determined with DNA testing, has fueled speculation among the locals about how those mass killings took place and by the use of which weapons. Families of some victims said there were burns on the bones of their relatives given to them for burial, a situation that also shows the need for a thorough investigation into the deaths.



*Photo 8. A fragment found during examinations at the basement in Bostancı Street is thought to be a burned foot bone.*

16. There are widespread claims that some individuals who were injured during clashes were eventually brought to these basements in Cudi neighborhood because they were assumed to be safe. It is also claimed that exits from the Cudi neighborhood were under the control of the security forces as of the 45th day of the curfew, that the ambulances were made to wait in the main street and were not allowed to come closer than 600 metres' distance of the basements.

17. It has been widely claimed that public authorities did not allow any mediators to take action to save the people trapped in the basements, to take those injured to hospital and to convince them to evacuate the basements. It has been also said that insufficient efforts were made to refer these individuals who apparently included civilians to the judicial authorities safely [i.e. to apprehend and detain them and subject them to a judicial process].

18. There was not a crime scene investigation in the location of the third basement in particular, according to a widespread claim. No response has been received from the prosecutor's office about these claims due to the confidentiality of the investigation. During our examinations, we did not come up with any evidence showing that the crime scene investigation was made. According to some lawyers of the victims' families, the prosecutor's office did not supervise the collection of large bone fragments in the basement floor in the Bostancı Street after the lifting of the curfew and the lawyers entered the basement and took out the bone fragments themselves.

19. Following the end of the clashes no statement has been made by public authorities regarding how the bodies were collected from the basements, how the buildings were demolished before or after the clashes and how evidence was collected from the scene. This situation strengthens claims that the security forces did not allow judicial officials to see the basements and make examinations there. In addition, it is claimed that remains of the victims were sent to different places for an autopsy and lawyers in most of the cases were not allowed to attend the autopsy procedure.

20. It is claimed that most of the university students who allegedly came to Cizre in two buses the week before the beginning of the curfew and who were members of a students' association died in the basements. No information could be found about the exact reason of the young students' journey to the town. It is only known that the buses which brought these students to Cizre also could not get out of the town when the curfew began. It is claimed that two burnt out buses at the district bus terminal are the buses that brought the students to Cizre and were deliberately set ablaze by the security forces. The fact that there is no sign of any clash in the bus terminal strengthens this claim.

21. There is the risk of the emergence of serious health problems in the town because its water and sewage infrastructure was damaged during the clashes. Considering Cizre's climate conditions and the arrival of spring, there is a need for an urgent action plan for the reconstruction of the town's water and sewage infrastructure. If this is not carried out it will support a widespread perception among the locals that the district's water and sewage infrastructure was destroyed deliberately as a form of punishment of its residents.

22. It is claimed that as long as people called the 155 police hotline when they ran out of food during the curfew, police took them food. However, it was frequently said by the locals that police first made criminal record checks or GBT checks on people who requested food and did not supply food to those who turned out to have criminal records. This situation apparently prevented some locals from seeking any help from the police fearing that they could be treated as "suspects." *Muhtars* said aid packages donated by Cizre businessmen could only be delivered to families in the conflict-free areas and that the needs of those families were met. Yet it was claimed that trucks that were carrying food packages supplied by Cizre businessmen and the municipality were not allowed to enter the town during the curfew. Most families said they did not receive any food aid and experienced hard times due to shortage of food during the curfew.

23. Concerning aid deliveries and compensation of financial loss sustained by locals, it is said that around 800 houses in Cizre were damaged during the eight-day-long curfew imposed from September 5-12, 2015. There have been some claims that YDGH prevented some locals whose houses were damaged from applying to the commissions at the district governor's office for the compensation of their losses. Since those applications, which are required to be made in line with law number 5233, could only be made for losses caused by

terror and the fight against terrorism according to the law, some people criticized this on the grounds that it validates state's unjust use of violence in return for compensation. There have also been claims that YDGH exerted pressure on lawyers not to extend legal assistance to locals who seek compensation. While locals also have objections against the content of the law and the application method for compensation, preventing them from using the only way to get compensation is unacceptable. In addition, the name of the aforementioned law should be changed in a way that will eliminate the reservations of some people.

24. Despite statements from government officials suggesting that rent allowances would be given to people who left their homes and took refuge near their relatives in neighboring towns or those who rented a house, most families said they received no such public aid or any other assistance aimed at reducing their hardship and that most of the people who left their homes survive thanks to assistance from their relatives.

25. There are witness claims suggesting that some individuals who were detained during the curfew period were subjected to ill-treatment and violence and that police added information to the statements they took from these detainees and attempted to force their lawyers to sign the statements with such additions.

26. It has been found out that civilians who were injured during the clashes were reluctant to go to hospital for treatment. Given the fact that the hospital was used like a police station, it is thought that injured or ailing people believed they would be subjected to ill-treatment or treated as "suspects" if they went to the hospital, a situation which made them avoid seeking treatment.

27. According to information received from people who stayed in Cizre during the curfew, no clashes took place after the 45th day of the curfew.

28. It is claimed that the curfew continued for 19 days despite the end of the clashes, that no official statement was made to the public as to why it continued for such a long time and that no delegation was allowed into the town to conduct an investigation during this period. This makes it difficult to learn what happened after the end of the operations, increasing local people's concerns that the security forces destroyed evidence. It has been also observed that public authorities' failure to inform people accurately during the course of the curfew fueled rumors and various allegations about what really happened.

29. Media reports revealed before the curfews were imposed that trenches were dug on the roads near schools, that some schools were raided by YDGH members and teachers were threatened by YDGH members not to continue teaching. This situation led to the violation of the right to education for some children. On December 13, 2015 when educational activities were still going on, the Education Ministry sent a text message to teachers in the town saying: "All of our teachers and school administrators are being sent on in-service training by our ministry as of December 14, 2015. Teachers can receive this training in their own

hometowns." This message, which talked about a kind of training unprecedented before, told all the teachers in the town that they could leave Cizre. Following all these developments, educational activities in the town halted completely, depriving around 10,000 students of their right to education. It is thought that supplementary education programs, announced by government officials for students in conflict regions, have not met the needs of the students who have been traumatized by the clashes. There is also no information regarding whether the children who migrated to other places attend school there. In addition, Cizre students taking the Transition to Higher Education Examination (YGS) exam were required to take the exam in remote provinces such as Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Bitlis, Siirt, instead of in directly neighboring provinces, a situation which created accommodation problems for the students, hence led to a loss of motivation to do the exam and created various inequalities during the YGS process.

30. Conflicts are times which harm individuals' and the societies' sense of safety and security and lead to the development of emotional and psychological traumas, anxiety disorders and depression. The individuals who witness the conflicts, the women, children and the elderly in particular, frequently experience this. The clashes in the town are thought to have had far-reaching effects on the locals. The perception of power and the relation between the powerful and the weak as revealed by the clashes could make the concept of justice lose its meaning and it could normalize use of violence to seek one's rights.

31. It was observed that many grave stones in the cemetery where PKK members are buried in Cizre had been destroyed.

32. The frequency and the content of the messages left on the walls in the streets or in the locals' houses in Cizre are the same or similar to the messages left in other towns under curfew, a situation which strengthens the assumption that those writings are not exceptional. It is thought that investigations launched into such conduct by public officials have not proved a deterrent to the security forces, prompting them to continue similar acts as they go unpunished. Writing of such messages on the walls during operations which are claimed to be aimed at ensuring public security show that members of the security forces are filled with feelings of hatred and hostility towards the civilians in the towns where they conduct security operations.



*Photo 9. A note on the wall says: "Enough of so many concessions. You will see the power of the Turk."*

33. The fact that security forces wrote sexist messages on the walls of some houses they used, scattered women's underwear randomly in the house, hung Turkish flags in the houses without the owners' permission, left used condoms in the house and left racist notes insulting the family owning the house is not only likely to create feelings of hatred and hostility to the state among Cizre residents but also among other Kurdish citizens who followed these incidents elsewhere. The fact that photos of controversial messages written on the walls in Cizre were shared on social media by some users during the curfew strengthens the perception that those actions were deliberate and aimed to insult people, hence destroying the social bonds among people.



*Photo 10: A home used by security forces, showing women's underwear and personal belongings strewn around.*

34. Since the Cizre Chief Public Prosecutor's Office and Cizre District Governor's Office refused to give information to our delegation members during meetings with them, some of the suspicions and views we formed during our field work have not been answered. So we think there is a need to inform the public in a satisfactory way about the issues and allegations mentioned below.

- Why was there no assistance provided to the families who had to migrate, both when they were migrating and after they moved to a new place?
- Why were the individuals trapped in the basements not brought out alive? Did clashes with them take place causing their bodies to be burned and dismembered, and which weapons were used by the security forces in the areas termed "basements"?
- How were the crime scene investigations conducted?
- Were some lawyers prevented from attending autopsies of the victims?
- Considering the claims that clashes ended as of the 45th day of the curfew and there were at least none except in the Cudi neighborhood, why were members of the press and a monitoring delegation not allowed into the town?
- Why did the curfew last 19 more days despite claims that military operations ended 19 days before it was lifted?



- What kind of measures have been taken to address health problems that are likely to emerge in the town because of the destruction of the water and sewage systems?
- Were those who asked for food aid in the town subjected to criminal record checks before they were provided with food?
- The public authorities should make statements to eliminate all the concerns of the local population regarding the implementation of an emergency support program aiming to address the financial losses sustained.

*In addition, it is judged that investigations should be launched into the allegations and issues mentioned below and legal proceedings started against anyone involved in any wrongdoing or crime*

- Humiliating treatment people who returned to Cizre after the lifting of the curfew were subjected to as they were put through security checks at the entrance of the town
- The claim that ultra-nationalist songs and anthems were played from loudspeakers during and after the security operations
- The use of the locals' houses by the security forces without permission, destruction of the houses and their furniture and hateful messages written on the walls
- The claim that some houses in particular were fouled deliberately as an act of insult
- The claim that those detained during the curfew were subjected to ill-treatment
- The killing of civilians who got out holding white flags; Abdülhamit Poçal and Selman Erdoğan (video footage posted online shows these two people were shot while holding white flags) and Ramazan İnce who was shot while trying to take his great granddaughter, Miray İnce, who had been injured to an ambulance with permission from the security forces.
- -The insulting attitude allegedly faced by the families who retrieved the bodies of their relatives from the authorities

35. Unlike the practice in towns where curfews were previously imposed, a police checkpoint was set up at the entry and exit point of the town and people and vehicles were allowed into the town after they were searched in detail after waiting for hours in long queues. There are witnesses who claim that people were subjected to ill-treatment and insults during the searches. In a similar way, MAZLUMDER delegation members without a lawyer

identification card were made to wait in long queues, searched and subjected to harsh behavior from security officials as they were trying to enter the town.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Cizre has witnessed unprecedented destruction following clashes which took place during a curfew lasting over 78 days. In the town, which seems like a war zone now, most of the 4/5 of the residents of the town who moved to other places during the curfew confronted heavy destruction, whose marks are still visible, when they returned to Cizre. Unlike in curfews before, the curfew in Cizre saw mass killings.

It has been observed that the clashes which moved to the city center had very heavy consequences during this period and that human rights and freedoms were severely violated. It is obvious that any action or method is unsustainable that leaves civilians exposed to indiscriminate violence, leads to injuries, deaths, trauma, disease, homelessness, unemployment and internal migration, creates an environment in which fundamental rights, foremost among them the right to life, plus the right to education, right to have access to healthcare services, to accommodation, and the right to travel are violated and a city destroyed.

The elimination of the marks of destruction in the Cizre streets and neighborhoods does not seem possible in the short-run. And the agony caused by the deaths of many people will certainly be more severe. It has been observed that the mass killings that took place in what are referred to as "basements" unfolded gradually under the scrutiny of the public, and the fact that most locals believe those deaths were the result of a deliberate action will lead to serious trauma and mental scars which will be hard to heal.

It is noted that locals' concerns about their security of life reached a climax during the lengthy curfews and clashes and an unknown number of civilian deaths occurred as a result of the use of weapons by both parties. It seems that snipers and heavy shelling are also responsible for the civilian deaths. According to claims, security forces did not show any sensitivity when it came to putting the lives and properties of civilians at risk during the operations. Individuals speaking to the MAZLUMDER delegation in Cizre also claimed that security forces used heavy weapons during the operations.

As the MAZLUMDER delegation was drafting its report on Cizre, they got the perception based on what they listened to from the locals that Cizre people think they have been subjected to collective punishment.

The fact that security forces used locals' houses as accommodation in a way that violated the owners' privacy and damaged the houses and people's belongings in it as well as writing

hateful messages on the walls of the houses are likely to create feelings of hatred [against the state and security forces] among the victims.

It seems that human rights violations that frequently occurred owing to the digging of trenches and building of barricades before the curfew culminated in the right to education and access to health services being completely suspended with the curfew.

Public authorities should never ignore the fact that the students who had to leave Cizre with their families due to the clashes in the town were faced with a serious interruption in their academic lives which will have a negative impact on their lives. There is also the fact that the Cizre students who were unjustly made to take the YGS exam in remote provinces perceive this move as another act of punishment. Therefore, there is a need to address in a holistic manner the difficulties faced by middle and high school students who entered national examinations during a period when they were affected and traumatized by the heavy conflict. The Education Ministry should make sure to come up with solutions that will compensate for the rights violations and inequality faced by these students in the exams.

Taking Cizre's climatic conditions and the arrival of spring into consideration, it is very likely that the town's destroyed water and sewage systems will lead to serious and widespread health problems. In addition, the fact that houses of more than 10,000 families have been destroyed during the clashes and there is a limited number of houses in the town will likely create an accommodation problem.

It is very obvious that most residents of Cizre are now unable to support themselves due to the financial losses they sustained during the clashes.

There has apparently been insufficient effort by the public authorities to prevent/eliminate problems faced by the locals in the post-curfew period. No solutions have been developed to address the various problems - mainly connected with accommodation - and these have created new problems. Therefore, it is of crucial importance for the authorities to take the necessary steps to eliminate the problems families experience related to accommodation, supporting their lives, access to healthcare and education.

The fact that the curfew imposed on Cizre was not immediately lifted following the end of the clashes and lasted for 19 days more and no statement was made to the public about the reasons for its extension and no investigations were carried out over the 19-day period into the killings leads to allegations that the security forces may have destroyed evidence during that period. Since there is no evidence suggesting that crime scene investigations were carried out - particularly in the basements where many people allegedly lost their lives - and there was no official statement, and the rubble of some buildings was removed without an investigation, has fueled suspicion and questions among local people in addition to undermining confidence that a thorough investigation will be conducted into the killings.

It is of utmost importance that all allegations regarding the human rights violations that reportedly took place before and after the curfew be investigated by judicial authorities, the necessary legal action be taken against those responsible, that evidence related to the incidents is preserved and that all legal proceedings are conducted in a fair, transparent and efficient way. This is crucial in order to dispel people's perception that there is an effort to cover up the incidents.

Given the undeniable legitimacy of pursuing through civil and political struggle all kinds of social and political rights and demands, as cited in international agreements signed by Turkey and recognized by the UN, when armed organizations opt for digging trenches, building barricades, setting up booby traps and perpetrating armed attacks this leads to an inextricable spiral of violence. It makes loss of civilians and damage to property inevitable, leads to gross human rights violations such as violations of the rights to life, health and education by making residential areas a venue for clashes, leaving civilians caught in the middle.

We emphasize once again that every kind of action that leads to human rights violations increases violence further, and acts of violence by the PKK and the YDGH in residential areas in particular and the military operations carried out in response to them prepares the ground not for a solution but for an impasse (the lack of a solution) and leads to many heavy consequences, chiefly violation of the right to life. It is also certain that routine curfews, which are perceived as a form of collective punishment by the people, deepen the current problems further.

It is of utmost importance to end the imposition of such lengthy curfews which are imposed without taking any necessary measures and disregarding the problems they could trigger. It is also of critical importance for the authorities to conduct thorough investigations into rights violations that allegedly took place during curfews and military operations and bring those responsible to account in order to maintain public trust in the country's justice system. If not, the widespread belief that crimes against civilians go unpunished will lead to serious mistrust of the state among the population and strengthen feelings of alienation and a perception of being the "other". In addition, a failure to punish those who perpetrate rights violations will contribute to the perpetration of new violations in the future.

As MAZLUMDER Conflict Resolution and Monitoring Group, we once again highlight the seriousness of the situation and the problems in Cizre and repeat our call to the PKK and all the other organizations affiliated with it to end all their armed activities. As for the state authorities, the only reasonable route to solving the problem is to make permanent the steps to secure a settlement process again by declaring a ceasefire, engaging in dialogue and negotiations and not military practices or political trials which were employed in the past. This is the only appropriate way for the solution of the problem. We demand that a new search for a solution should be made with the participation of all circles in the society and recognition of their demands this time.

An environment of conflict and curfews threatens the social peace, justice, peace and security by creating the circumstances in which fundamental human rights and freedoms are violated.

All the parties need to take responsibility to maintain a conflict-free environment and then look for a permanent solution.

Given the current circumstances in the region, it is of crucial importance more than ever for the parties to end the clashes and prepare ground for dialogue and negotiations to maintain a permanent societal peace and justice with the creation and support of an independent monitoring delegation.

We demand an agreement to be made on solutions that give priority to human life, human rights and will create a just and free society in which there is equality for all. We also demand that all fundamental rights and freedoms of Kurdish citizens be guaranteed in the Constitution.

### **MAZLUMDER Conflict Resolution and Monitoring Group**



*Photo 11: "Heroes sacrifice their lives to make the homeland live," says a graffiti.*

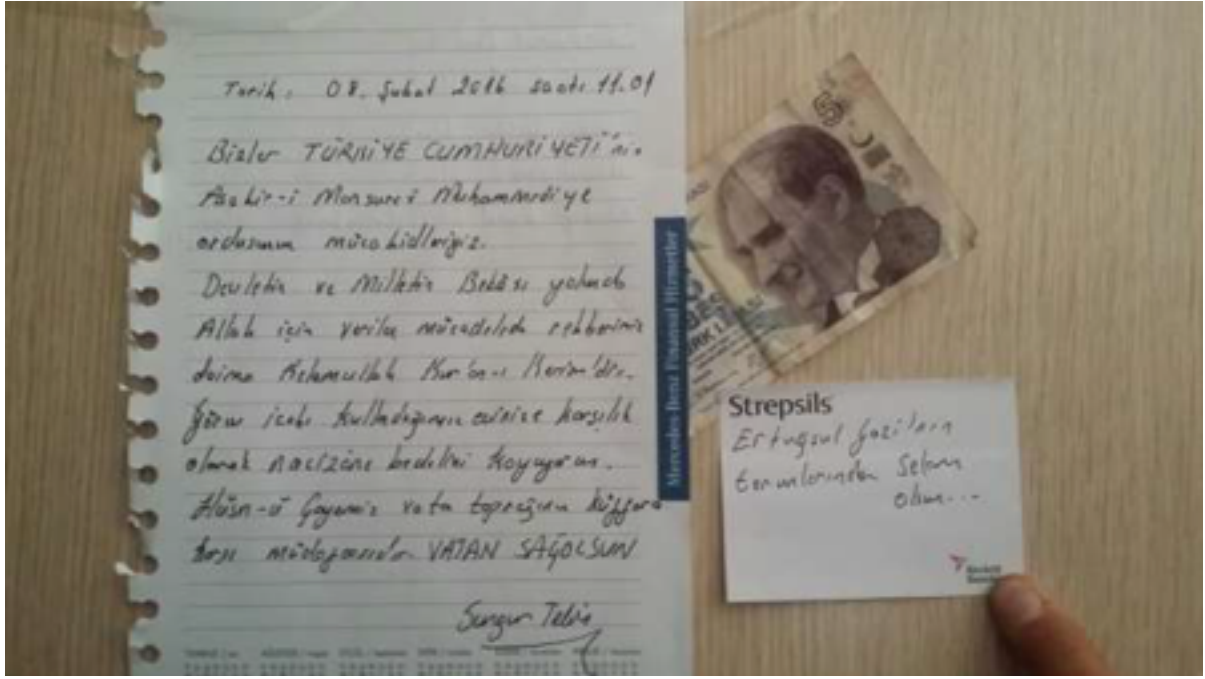


Photo 12: A note and a little money left in a house.

#### E. Views from Cizre after the lifting of the curfew















