

THE CIZRE REPORT

April 17, 2016

Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP)



This report, *The 79-day Siege of Cizre, announced on the 14th of December, 2015*, consists of interviews, accounts and observation that the HDP Cizre Working Committee undertook between March 3-12, 2016.

INTRODUCTION

The Cizre Siege and how it has been experienced is one of the most important social and economic consequences of the termination of the Peace Process. It revealed how precious peace was and how conflicts lead to irrecoverable damages in all parts of society.

Since March 1993, the PKK (The Kurdistan Worker's Party) had declared ceasefire on several occasions for the sake of a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish question. It made calls to the involved parties for a solution. These efforts continued even after Mr. Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of PKK, was handed over to Turkey as a result of an international conspiracy. With the rise of conflicts in 2012, the state started to meet regularly with Mr. Abdullah Öcalan. 2012 is regarded as the first year in which the state searched for a political solution to the Kurdish question. By the end of 2012, this process, declared the "Peace Process" to the public, was received favorably by the majority of society and revived the hope for peace among the people.

The first political meeting with Mr. Abdullah Öcalan was held in İmralı by a committee of the BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) on January 3, 2013. Mr. Öcalan declared that the peace process started "officially" in a letter he sent to the Newroz celebrations in Amed, and the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) declared a ceasefire on March 23. Mr. Öcalan, who met the İmralı team on April 14, 2013, noted that the democratic peace process was continuing with extreme care and that they were carrying out intense work to maintain the ceasefire process. Following this meeting, the KCK publically announced their decision to "withdraw" for the sake of the peace through a declaration on May 8, 2013, and the first group reached Kandil on May 14. In the subsequent period, negotiations between İmralı and the state, İmralı and BDP/HDP, and finally BDP/HDP and Kandil, continued.

Because of the state's termination of the peace process in İmralı, their nonrecognition of the Dolmabahçe Agreement, their decision to go to war, to start operations in guerilla zones, to bomb the graveyards that Kurdish people built for their children who died in the 40 years of war before, their response to people's democratic demands with violence and arrests—in some provinces and towns of Kurdistan, the people declared their will for self-governance in order to protect themselves from this concept of violence in the places they live.

By initiating a comprehensive military war, state forces paved the way for a period in which thousands of people have lost their lives. Thousands of hectare of forestland have been burned down; Silvan, Silopi, İdil, Nusaybin, Yüksekova and especially Cizre and Sur have been destroyed with artillery shooting that continued for days. As a result of extensive detentions and arrests, more than 5,000 people have been detained, approximately 1,200 people were arrested, including 19 municipality co-mayors, 35 municipality vice co-mayors and aldermen. Today, there are 756 ill prisoners, 300 of whom are seriously ill, who are left to their fate in prisons. In 2015 alone, there were 482 reported cases of violations of prisoner rights.

Official state sources reported that 355,000 citizen had to migrate, especially from Diyarbakır Sur, Şırnak Cizre and Silopi, since the conflicts started in 2015. But according to non-governmental organization and local sources, this number is much higher. They report that at least 1,377,000 people's most basic rights to life, education, travel, and health were violated.

127 regions in Dersim, Hakkari, Mardin and Şırnak were declared special security zones and were closed to civilian access. 12 graveyards were destroyed and torn down by state forces.

505 academics faced administrative and judicial prosecution and 37 academics were dismissed for signing the peace petition signed by 1,128 academics and organized by the Academics for Peace Initiative to stop the war and conflicts in the country.

In the time following, government circles confessed that government and state institutions had prepared a road map entitled “The Termination Plan” as negotiations and peace talks were under way, with the aim of silencing Kurdish democratic politics and the opposition in Turkey.

Since July 2015, the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government has declared curfews and laid siege to 22 towns across 7 cities at 63 different times for a total number of 817 days and counting. Siege under the name of “curfew” is still effective in Şırnak’s Cizre and İdil towns between 9:30pm and 4:30pm; in Yüksekova, Şırnak’s center; Nusaybin, Silopi and certain neighborhoods of Diyarbakır’s Sur all day long. 282 people were killed just in the beleaguered town of Cizre since July 2015. 33 people died in the Suruç massacre, 8 people in the bombardment of Zergelê village and 100 people in the Ankara massacre; 127 civilians were killed by state forces in protests and demonstrations, 600 civilians in areas under siege, amounting to the death of 868 civilians, 102 of them children and 99 women. All were killed as a result of the AKP’s ‘special war concept’.¹

Undoubtedly, Cizre is the leading place in which these sieges and curfews turned into barbarity and destruction. The report gives a large part to the information that we as the HDP have been gathering before and after the siege through observation and interviews. We reached the conclusion that what people experienced under siege in residential areas, especially in Cizre, is not only due to military operations meant to close the ditches, but also an initiative to intimidate and silence the Kurdish political movement’s popular base through enforced migration and massacres via heavy bombardment of residential areas. Besides showing the destructive character of naked terror, which the state implemented in Cizre, the report also gives examples of racist, fascist and sexist attitudes that amount to revenge and massacre toward the Kurds.

¹ HDP report from April 17, 2016

PURPOSE AND METHOD

The governorship of Sirnak imposed a curfew at 11:00 pm on December 14, 2015 and the curfew was effective for 79 days. During the curfew, state forces did not let anyone enter or leave the town of Cizre. Only after the Minister of Interior Affairs, Efkan Ala, stated that “the operations in Cizre have ended,” were individuals and institutions able to access Cizre. Our committee also visited Cizre after this statement.

The purpose of this report is to report what happened in Cizre, to record and document the rights violations and violence, and collect individual testimonies. The report aims to record public opinions on the self-governance declaration and understand the dimensions of resistance as well as people’s thoughts on the recent events. After reporting the massacre in Cizre in different dimensions, the report also aims to point out what is needed on the ground and present a list of suggestions for reconstruction.

The fieldwork for the report was conducted by four HDP members: a lawyer, a sociologist, a journalist, and a political scientist. Following the statement that “operations have ended,” the committee intensified their activities, reviewed the media on a daily basis, and prepared directives for structured interviews with individuals and institutions. In preparing these directives, the team also used the HDP’s daily information reports.

The work team arrived in Cizre on March 3, 2016, the day after the siege was lifted, and stayed for ten days. During this time, the team conducted interviews with various institutions and professional organizations based in Cizre to observe all aspects of the siege and the rights violations as well as to give the stage to the ones who directly experienced the siege and rights violations in Cizre. 73 face-to-face interviews were conducted with people whose rights to health, education, accommodation, travel, and worship were suspended and violated. While 32 of these interviews were with the institutions and professional organizations, other 41 interviews were carried out with eyewitnesses. Almost all of the interviews were recorded with an audio recorder. In five interviews including the interviews with two people who survived the attacks in basements, interviewees did not want to be audio recorded. In these interviews, the committee took notes with notebooks and computers. The average interview time was 45 minutes. The interviews were mainly conducted in Kurdish. The audio recordings were transcribed by Kurdish-speaking volunteers. The list of the interviews is also provided in the appendix.

The individual testimonies were mainly collected in Cudi, Yafes, Nur, and Sur neighborhoods where the barricades were concentrated and the siege was imposed harshly. These neighborhoods also constituted 70% of Cizre. While the committee conducted interviews with the ones whose relatives were killed, they were still accepting condolences. Since houses were mainly damaged by tank and artillery fire, people were gathering in either relatively less-damaged rooms or in gardens to present and accept the condolences. The committee tried to conduct the interviews in quiet atmospheres. The committee also asked not to have children in the room where the interviews were being conducted because of the possibility that the interview content might negatively affect the children.

One team member was actually from Cizre and this increased the team's ability to navigate there. The team members stayed together for security concerns. Although the team members did not face any physical oppression by the state forces, they experienced psychological pressure from the state forces while conducting interviews in the neighborhoods. The team members felt under pressure and thus acted very cautiously, especially when carrying and using their camera.

The report was written by committee members. To better record and report the experiences of the women during the siege, a political scientist working in our women's group joined the team.

The wounded in the basements of horror asked to be taken to hospital via TV channels for days. The committee asked for the recordings of the interviews that the wounded had given to the TV channels from the İMC TV, Nuçe TV, and Özgür Gün TV stations. These TV interviews were transcribed and mentioned in the report. Since the team could not conduct face-to-face interviews with Şebnem Korur, a professor of forensic medicine, or with the İMC TV correspondents, Saadet Yıldız and Refik Tekin in Cizre, they carried out interview with them via email.

In addition to the pictures taken by the committee in Cizre, pictures by DİHA correspondent Cihan Ölmez and photographers Ferhat Arslan, Mürsel Çoban, Reşad Ayaz and Ubeydullah Hakan were also used in the report. While the report was being written, Reşad Ayaz and Ubeydullah Hakan prepared and presented a short documentary about Cizre to the work team. We would like to thank to our photographer and producer friends for their volunteer work and contribution.

This report focused on a 79-day period between December 14, 2015 and March 2, 2016, during which access to Cizre was strictly prevented. Based on interviews and observations, the work team divided the siege of Cizre into three phases and organized the report according to them.

The first phase covers the time period from the imposition of the siege to emergence of the basements of horror. The second phase refers to the period in which the basements of horror emerged and the public focused the survival of the people stuck in the basements of horror. The third phase starts with the Interior Minister Efkan Ala's "operations in Cizre have ended" statement. In this phase, clashes were not occurring but the siege continued and state forces plundered the town. In this section, the report also focuses on the sexist attitude which deployed state violence against women. Also, the report discusses how state forces targeted everything animate or inanimate to obstruct the reconstruction of daily life in the town. It discusses how animals and fruit trees were directly targeted and, in doing so, the state forces aimed to destroy the overall life on the ground. In the last section, the report examines the relationship between state and the rule of law. It looks at how the judiciary has approached state violence since the 1990s and discusses the judiciary's role in the construction of social peace. The rights violations committed during the siege are examined in reference to national and international law. The report analyzes whether an effective investigation was conducted for a possible court process on the rights violations or not. It discusses whether the evidence that can be used in the court process was legally and properly collected or not.

For 79 days, the people of Cizre witnessed an exceptional massacre in history. For the sake of a humane and free life, they lost their daughters and sons during the resistance. Yet they have not surrendered, and have not asked for mercy.

We are indebted to the self-sacrificing and resistant people of Cizre, who hosted us in their houses while their houses were mostly damaged with artillery fire during our fieldwork. This report is dedicated to the memory of those who were killed, to those who were wounded, and to the people of Cizre.

A TOWN UNDER SIEGE: THEY ATTACKED WITH TANKS AND ARTILLERY

At the end of its 79 days, the Cizre Siege that started on December 1, 2015, turned into a brutal massacre that will be remembered as a black mark in history. Tens of people were killed while cooking in their kitchens, drinking tea in their living rooms, going to the bathroom, and walking in the streets at both daytime and nighttime. Acting upon a ruthless and brutal feeling of hatred, state forces terrorized Cizre as if they were taking revenge. During the siege, journalists, representatives from various institutions and agencies as well as elected officials were not allowed to access Cizre. Apart from the ones who had been in Cizre before the siege was imposed,² no one could witness and know what happened there. Before the siege, residents of Cizre were forced to leave their houses, through artillery fires, threatening announcements, such as “this is last call for you to evacuate your houses,³” and other methods of psychological oppression. In doing so, state forces thought that Cizre had been “sterilized,” and started an extensive massacre by declaring all the residents who stayed in the town “terrorists.⁴”

Curfews had been imposed in four different periods in Cizre. During the first curfew, 23 citizens were killed. The curfew which had been imposed on December 14, 2015, was lifted during the day between 5:00 am and 7:30 pm on March 2, 2016, the seventh day of the curfew. On March 28, 2016, the curfew started to be imposed between 9:30 pm and 4:30 am. The curfew has been imposed in this way until today.

The bans that have been imposed in Cizre have neither legal nor constitutional basis. The curfews relied on Article 11 of the Provincial Administration Law (No. 5442). According to this article, “within the provincial borders, the duty of providing peace and security, personal inviolability, safety for individual discretion, and public welfare as well as preemptive law enforcement are among the governor’s duties and tasks.” The curfews were, however, imposed by governors and district governors who were executing their authorities beyond legal and constitutional limits and

² The foremost among those who stayed in Cizre was Faysal Sarıyıldız, Şırnak representative to parliament. Sarıyıldız did not leave the city during the siege. Also, Aycan İrmek and Ferhat Encü, other Şırnak representatives to parliament, who were situated in Silopi, and Leyla Birlik, another Şırnak representative to the parliament, who was situated in Central Şırnak, did not leave the city during the siege.

³ The fact that these types of announcements were made is voiced in most of our interviews. However, even after these announcements, a serious mass migration from Cizre did not take place. The most substantial migration from the city started on the 29th and 30th days of the siege, when rumours about “the usage of chemical weapons” were spread. This topic will be discussed in detail in the report.

⁴ A similar attitude could be observed in Nusaybin and Yükseköve at the moment.

responsibilities. These curfews, in fact, created senses of terror, fear, and panic among the people instead of providing peace and security.

Before the curfew of December 14, an unusual incident happened in Cizre. On December 13, 2015, the curfew was “unofficially declared” through text messages sent to the school teachers. The teachers in towns of Cizre and Silopi received text messages saying that they would go through “in-service training.” Upon these messages, school teachers started leaving Cizre.

In the text messages, it was stated that all teachers and school administrators were being placed into in-service training programs, and they could take those “trainings in their home cities.”

Following these messages, most of the 1,298 school teachers, who were teaching 431,127 students in 104 different schools, started to leave the town. After having lined up in front of the banks to withdraw money, these teachers left the town with their luggage. While some teachers left the town with their cars, others tried to take intercity buses. It was reported that those teachers created an unusual density in the intercity bus station. Some other teachers could not catch the intercity buses and walked for 5 kilometers to the inter-city road (the Silk Road) to hitchhike with passing cars and buses and waited under the rain. The exodus of school teachers worried the residents of Cizre.⁵

This exodus also damaged the sense of security and trust among the students who liked and trusted their teachers the most, after their families. The in-service trainings for school teachers were also incompatible with the continuity in education principle. This situation is also incompatible with the constitutional right to receive education. It also disappointed the teachers who stayed in Cizre. It created a discord among school teachers. The remaining school teachers expressed that they were feeling that their colleagues did not only desert the town but also themselves. The exodus of school teachers created irrecoverable disappointments, especially among the students.

The minister of national education, Nabi Avcı stated that the regular service of education will be reinstated and the missed classes due to the bans will be recovered through additional classes following the restoration of normal life in Cizre.⁶ However, the teachers whom we interviewed expressed that the minister’s statement was not convincing and the students’ losses cannot be compensated through additional classes. They underlined that it will be impossible for students to resume their lives as if nothing happened.

It was also expressed that many school buildings were turned into military headquarters and stations in Cizre. From the pictures and videos shared in social media, it was clear that the schools were used as headquarters during the siege. For example, in one of those pictures, soldiers and police officers wrote “this our turn for education” on school black boards. This picture was widely discussed in social media.

Families also feel very depressed about the education life of their children. Turning schools into military stations was found unacceptable by the families. With the politics of oppression deployed by state forces during the siege, families are significantly frustrated with the situation of education in their town.

⁵ http://www.dha.com.tr/sms-geldi-tum-ogretmenler-o-iki-ilceyi-terk-ediyor_1093936.html

⁶ <http://www.meb.gov.tr/bakan-avci-ntvnin-canli-yayin-konugu-oldu/haber/10162/tr>

THE INJURED AND THE DECEASED

During the Cizre Siege, 251 people, including 176 who died in the basements of horror, were slaughtered mercilessly. Among the dead there were 27 children, 20 women, and 79 people who have not been identified yet.

Some of these people were killed in the middle of the street, others in the living rooms or the kitchens of their own houses. The resisters and civilians who lost their lives were slaughtered with a disproportionate force. The tank bullets and mortars were arbitrarily fired at the neighborhoods. Tens of civilians including unborn babies, three-year-old Miray İnce, an eighty-year-old man and fifty-year-old mothers were subject to state violence, and lost their lives along with tens of others who were injured.

Only a week after the declaration of the siege on Cizre, attacks in the neighborhoods of Cudi, Nur and Yasef were intensified. Cizre was subject to intense artillery shooting and serious attacks that continued over entire days and undertaken by tanks that were situated on the hill of Aşk that oversees the Nur neighborhood; the hill of Şahin that oversees Sur neighborhood; the hill of Caferi Sadık that oversees Cudi neighborhood and the hill of Hastane that oversees Yasef neighborhood.

During 41 days that passed before the events in the horror basements were known publicly, 66 people lost their lives. Here, we want to give a few examples from those who lost their lives and were injured.

The prosecutor placed a confidentiality order (meaning lawyers would not be able to reach the details of the case) on the investigation that was initiated to investigate the murder of 32-year-old Hediye Şen, mother of three, who was shot on the second day of the siege inside her house in the Cudi neighborhood. Because of the “confidentiality order,” the autopsy report was not given to the lawyer of the family but it was determined that Hediye Şen was targeted and killed with eight bullets. Hediye Şen, who was a teacher at a Quran school, was giving voluntary Quran classes in the neighborhood. According to the statements of both her husband and neighbors, Şen was a beloved person. Hediye Şen was the first civilian who lost her life in Cizre.

A woman in Nusaybin lost her life as a result of gunfire due to a “technical error” from atop armed police vehicles. As also brought to the Turkish Parliament (TBMM) by HDP Mardin MP Ali Atalan⁷, even though there was no curfew on the 19th of February 2016, Dilşa Ak, mother of 8, who was going to her neighbor with her daughter was killed due to a “technical error.” The Governor of Mardin corroborated the incident and stated that Dilşa Ak lost her life due to “ a technical glitch in the firing mechanism of the armored vehicle.”⁸. People have been killed by pressing the buttons in the systems of armored vehicles. A dark blur or movement can be caught in the surveillance system of the vehicle, and the police without consideration to the identity of the person, can kill with assumed impunity, and call it a “technical error.”

In Cizre, as well as in massacres which have occurred in other towns of Kurdistan, ambulances which have been called numerous times for the wounded never arrived, or arrived hours later, only after the injured lost their lives. In addition to this, we have heard of many instances where no authority was able to be reached. Many people are known to have died from blood loss. Hediye Şen could have been saved with a timely intervention but by creating this crisis also her partner was subjected to torturous turmoil.

State officials have claimed that everyone who was killed during the 79 day Cizre seige were “terrorists.” Even Prime Minister Davutoğlu has said that there were no civilians killed amongst those in Cizre.⁷The fact that the AKP government has deemed babies and children “terrorists” is not new. In 2006, the prime minister of the time Tayyip Erdoğan made clear his opinion and the ultimate power given to state forces by saying that against those who were, “whether woman or child, necessary action will be taken.”⁸

Using ditches as an excuse, state forces in Cizre terrorized the city for days. Yet, the casualties did not solely occur in the neighborhoods where the ditches were. In a neighborhood where barricades and ditches were not present, near the tomb of Mem u Zin on Şen Street, 17 year old Nidar Sümer, was wounded by an armored vehicle stationed by the hospital near her house the night of January 7 2016. 45 year old Halis Sümer who went to rescue his sister was also heavily injured by gunfire. Sister and Brother Nidar and Halis Sümer lost their lives despite all the efforts at the Cizre State Hospital.

The story of Garip Mubarrıs, acts almost as a summary of the state cruelty since the 90s and the resistance shown in the face of it. Born in 1994, Garip Mubarrıs, is from Cizre’s Yeşilyurt Village. Yeşilyurt Village is the village known for the incident of forced feeding of feces in 1989. His father Kemal Mubarrıs, was arrested by the police in 1994 and has been missing ever since. Garip had lived with his uncle since childhood and lost his life during the siege of Cizre.

One of the critical stages in the siege of Cizre was the firing upon at Nusaybin Street of the delegation who went to retrieve the wounded from the neighborhood of Cudi on January 20 2016. 2 people lost their lives in this incident and 12 people, including IMC TV reporter Refik Tekin were injured. This incident is exemplary because it shows that state forces have become so reckless as to target civilians during the day in the city center. The gravity of the situation is compounded when one considers that this delegation also included Şırnak MP Faysal Sarıyıldız. The witnesses have indicated that state forces fired randomly without clear targets suggesting that a premeditated massacre might have been in the plans.

LIFE UNDER SIEGE: THE DAYS WHEN EVERYTHING PERTAINING TO LIFE IS BANNED

During the siege all aspects of life in Cizre took place under extraordinary circumstances. Daily life was completely paralyzed. People were not able to leave their homes and had to stay there for days. This was a time when people who looked out from their door were targeted by snipers in tall buildings. Most of the people did not want to leave their houses during the initial days but when the attacks became unbearable later on they had to leave their houses. The constant announcements in the neighborhoods of “Leave the Area!” and the playing of the Mehter Anthem (an Ottoman Empire War March Anthem) from armored vehicles resulted in psychological oppression. People who were having trouble staying in their houses eventually had to go into their basements , and eventually when life became unbearable there as well they had to leave their neighborhoods. Those who were forced out of their villages in the 90s were unable to withstand heavy attacks once again and were forced to leave their neighborhoods.

During the siege imposed on Cizre, children of all ages lost their lives, including unborn babies and a three-month-old, whose name was Miray İnce. Many children with chronic illnesses were

prevented from receiving treatment, and vaccination could not be properly administered. With the schools closed, children forfeited their rights to education and suffered from severe psychological problems. Interviews with families revealed that children were anxious at night, they wetted their beds, could not play with friends in the streets, and were constantly crying in a worrisome and aggressive mood, because of fear.⁷

History will remember the siege of Cizre as a time in which everyday life was entirely suspended, and where this suspension and its effects, although similar to other sieges around Kurdish towns, were much harsher. After the message sent to schoolteachers had been heard among the general public, Cizre residents rushed to bakeries, markets and groceries to prepare for the dark days, the length of which they did not know. Long queues were formed especially at the bakeries and markets, but stocks quickly finished and people were condemned to hunger and thirst.

During the siege, the Cizre State Hospital was used by the state forces as a base—and continued to be used afterwards as such—because of its strategic location with a view on the town. The hospital itself was blockaded by armored vehicles, and used as a refectory and for logistics by state forces, which caused anxiety among the personnel. As it was not possible to provide significant intervention, casualties had to be transferred to the Şırnak State Hospital, at a distance of 46 km, which raised the risk of death from bleeding. Interviews with health care providers revealed that after the arrival of National Medical Rescue Teams (UMKE) in Cizre, trust issues emerged among the personnel, that after that point, health care providers were allowed to treat only the civilians and that they were witness of UMKE teams' maltreatment of civilians.

Patients with chronic illnesses were among the most affected during the siege. Although they needed regular treatment, they were denied their right to healthcare. Several people who were injured, had chronic illnesses, or who were close to dying had to be carried to the hospital with white flags so as to not be taken as targets.

It was impossible to procure medication during the siege. Most pharmacies were closed, and it was impossible for some to reach the ones that remained open. The pharmacists that we contacted indicated that there was a dramatic difference between the amount of medication sold during normal times, and the amount during the siege.

Electricity and water are two basic necessities of life. They were denied during the siege and used as a medium for punishment. Although before the siege the state attempted to scare the residents

⁷ The committee found it inappropriate to conduct interviews with children according to its ethical responsibility. The level of trauma experienced by the children could be revealed with the work that would be conducted by experts on the subject. The "Cizre Observation Report" prepared by the *Gündem Çocuk Derneği* in collaboration with *İHD*, *TİHV*, Diyarbakır Bar Association and *SES* provides detailed information on this subject. Please see: <http://tihv.org.tr/79-gunluk-sokaga-cikma-yasagi-ardindan-cizre-ortak-gozlem-raporu/>

Also, the Preliminary Report prepared by *Mezopotamya Hukukçular Derneği*, *Özgürlükçü Hukukçular Derneği*, *Asrın Hukuk Bürosu*, *Toplum ve Hukuk Araştırmaları Vakfı* could provide further information. <http://t24.com.tr/haber/avukatlarin-cizre-raporundan-envanter-disi-silahlar-memesi-kesilenler-ezilerek-oldurulenler.334843>

so that they would leave their homes, as soon as the siege started, water valves were made to blow up, water tanks on the roofs were shot, and electric poles were destroyed to cut the electricity in town.

The people who did not leave their homes despite the warnings were condemned to darkness and cold. State forces wanted to discipline these people by exploding water tanks and thereby denying them water. They had to face freezing cold, they could not use their electric heaters and were afraid of lighting wood and coal burning stoves, as they thought the smoke would turn their homes into open targets for the state forces.

The siege also brought economic life to a standstill and commerce stopped almost completely. The capital owners we interviewed indicated that the entire population was aggrieved, that all parts were economically affected and that many tradesmen went bankrupt, but they also added that they did not feel like even talking, considering all those who lost their lives or were injured.

The crimes in violation of law, the human rights abuses, and the massacres that took place during the siege of Cizre were reported by DİHA, JİNHA and İMC correspondents, and residents or witnesses using social media. During these 79 days under siege, journalists had to perform their duties in spite of the risk of detention and death. A number of journalists did indeed lose their lives, or were injured or detained. Rohat Aktaş, the editor in chief of Azadiya Welat, from whom no news had been received, was found dead. He was known to be stuck in a basement in Cizre. 12 people, including Refik Tekin, the cameraman of İMC TV, were injured as a result of police shooting.

The Şırnak Police Department informed the Mardin Police Department that Refik Tekin, the injured cameraman of İMC TV who was under treatment in the State Hospital in Mardin, was “a member of the separatist terrorist organization.” JİNHA correspondent Beritan İrlan was detained for curfew violation, and was announced to be a “Serbian spy” by *Star* newspaper. She was released after a fine of 219 TL. Another JİNHA correspondent Asmin Bayram indicated that they had to hide their cameras in bags so as not to become the targets of snipers. State forces spared no effort to hide the truth, which turned journalists into open targets.

Cizre, where the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) got 91.7 % of the vote during the elections of 7 June 2015, and 93.2 % on 1 November 2015, is a place where Kurdish politics were also very strong during the 1990s. After June 7, Erdoğan and the AKP government, fully bound by his will, took the developments in Rojava into consideration, returned to the concept of war, and ended the peace process, in his words “deep-freezing” the latter. The curfew was declared in Cizre on September 4, 2015, resulting in the death of 22 people. Despite the heavy attacks, the HDP received even more votes during the elections of November 1. The people of Cizre supported the declarations of self-government and asserted their will to self-determination based on peace.

The state responded to this clear attitude with terrible attacks, and more recently with the declaration of a siege on December 14, 2015, lasting for 79 days, resulting in the death of another 251 people. Facing great suffering, the people of Cizre answered back with a strong resistance, according to our interviews. People suffered but did not submit. The calls for submission that the state forces often wrote on the walls of Cizre had no repercussion among the general public. As a resident stated “Cizre was injured but is still alive and will not collapse. It will know how to heal its wounds.”

The People’s Democratic Party (HDP) raised the issue by submitting several parliamentary questions to the Parliamentary Speaker’s Office during the sieges of Cizre, Silopi and Sur, but

almost all were declined for being incongruent with the internal regulation of the Parliament. The ones that were not declined, and that HDP attempted to bring to the General Assembly for further investigation (as the Advisory Committee could not come up with any kind of consensus) were rejected by AKP and MHP votes.

BASEMENTS OF HORROR

Since the very first day of the curfew, the buildings, streets and avenues in the city center have been attacked by tanks, mortars and other forms of heavy weapons via state powers. In Cizre, which physically resembles a bowl, with a topography where the peripheries are located in higher altitudes compared to the center, tanks and armored vehicles as well as snipers have aimed at and shot many individuals in the streets and avenues. As a result of these attacks, thousands of homes and businesses have been destroyed, burnt and have become unusable. As a result of the damaged and demolished homes due to escalating violent attacks over a thousand people had to leave the district.

While an average of 3 to 4 people were killed in Cizre on a daily basis up to the 41st day of the curfew, starting on January 22, 2016, security forces have staged attacks that qualify as massacres. Basements that housed civilians, including injured individuals, who had taken refuge from the attacks in town (which was within the knowledge of security forces) have been hit with tanks, mortars and other heavy weapons. These basements where citizens took refuge, and which exemplified the merciless behavior of the state towards the injured have been named “basements of horror” and became a part of the national agenda on January 23, 2016.

In Cudi and Sur neighborhoods of Cizre 177 corpses, including those of 25 children, have been unearthed from the ruins of mainly three buildings and surrounding streets. While 103 people who have lost their lives have been identified, 74 individuals had to be buried without being identified because their bodies had become unrecognizable because they were burned or torn into pieces.

Our committee has investigated the ruins which housed the basements, as well as the streets they were located two days after the lifting of the curfew, on March 4, 2016. During the on-site inspections, the committee has observed that the buildings and the streets that housed the basements of horror have become completely ruined and burnt due to shootings involving tanks, mortars and other heavy weaponry. Among the rubbles of the basements, we have observed and photographed a large number of tank and mortar bullets and cartridges. While heavy corpse smells were still discernable in the streets outside of basements of horror, we also observed blood stains in the interior and exterior walls of the houses.

We have seen human bones and spoils of military products. Forensic medicine experts have found pieces of bones that admittedly belong to children.

The fact that the corpses were torn and burnt has suggested that chemical weapons and heavy explosives not yet identified have been used during the attacks on the basements.

We have detected that the three basements were approximately 200-250 meters from each other. Below are the results of our investigations:

The First Basement of Horror (Cudi Neighborhood Bostanci Street No: 23):

The building referred to as the first horror basement, and which made it to the news on January 23, had five floors. However, we have observed that all of the upper floors had been destroyed during the attacks by the security forces and that most of the ruins of the building had been carried away. While the basement where the injured took shelter was damaged heavily, it had not collapsed. We have observed that the belongings of the citizens who lost their lives following the attacks by the security forces were all burnt, and that the basement walls had been covered with ashes and smut. We have also observed that the citizens were visiting the basement of horror in question in masses, and that some women were lamenting at the entrance and inside the basement.

The Second Basement of Horror (Cudi Neighborhood Narin Street No: 6):

We have observed that the ruins of the building that had housed the second basement of horror had been completely removed, and that only the foundation of the building remained. Compared to the other basements of horror, the smell of corpses was stronger. Many citizens who had been in Cizre during the curfew have testified that there was a very powerful blast on February 7, 2016, the day of the attack on the second basement. This blast felt almost like an earthquake, causing the windows on buildings a kilometer way (around Cizre Municipality) to break. Many with whom we spoke have reported that a very high explosive was used on the second basement, as a result of which the building was completely destroyed.

The Third Basement of Horror (Sur Neighborhood Akdeniz Street):

The third basement belonged to a five-story building, which at the time was still under construction. We have observed artillery and bomb pieces and traces on upper floors, bullet marks on the front façade of the building, and clothing, beds and blankets that featured heavy blood stains in the basement. We have detected that bombs and artillery were aimed into the basement through the windows facing the street. We found a high number of plastic bottles in the building, some of which had melted and burnt. We had two meetings with both of the two individuals who had escaped from the third basement. One of the witnesses told us in their account that the soldiers threw bottles full of gasoline inside the buildings, which they then set on fire with lighters they threw in. We have extensively quoted from these two witnesses' accounts in our report.

We have observed a two-story building right next to the third basement with two apartments facing each other on its top floor. The witnesses who were able to escape the basement recounted that the injured were in the basement, and those who were not injured were on the aforementioned top floor. We detected a hole for passage on the wall connecting the basement with this building. All of the rooms in the house next to the basement were damaged due to attacks. In the upper floor that reportedly housed the uninjured citizens, we observed heavy blood stains on the walls, furniture, beds and blankets. We also observed that some rooms were burnt down, and saw some clothing items in the house, some of which were blood-stained. Sahip Edin's corpse was found by citizens in a room on the second floor of the building the day the curfew was lifted.

We have observed that the streets housing the basements had received the largest scale attacks, and that the columns and beams of all the buildings had been targeted. Our committee has documented the interiors of the basements of horror as well as the ruins via photography and video.

We also have archived photographs of corpses that were burnt and splintered into pieces to the extent that they were unrecognizable during autopsy and funeral procedures. We will not publish these horrifying photographs out of respect for those who have lost their lives, and in order to prevent the normalization of violence. Our committee has been unable to document the smell of the corpses that permeated the basements, which have helped us feel the horror deeply.

In all our meetings and conversations we have heard and felt that the basements of horror, which have been etched into the collective memory of the Kurdish people, and in particular those in Cizre, have become a critical emotional fault line. People of all ages, and especially women, have expressed during interviews their deep hurt at the public's silence in the face of the state's massacre of mostly injured civilians in the basements.

In many of the interviews we conducted in the city, we have witnessed an almost collective outcry of "we wish the entire Cizre had been burnt down, our homes had been burnt down instead of burning down our youth in the basements."

We have identified that the majority of the people who lost their lives during the first days of the siege of Cizre as well as those massacred in the basements are those whose villages have been emptied and burnt down as part of the state's displacement policies of the 1990s, or those whose relatives have been victims to "unaccounted for" assassinations. During the witness and family interviews we conducted, people told us that during Cizre's 79 day siege, they observed levels of state violence incomparably higher than what we witnessed during the periods of September 12 and the 1990s.

The 1990s constitute the most intense years of the previous war, and are referred to as "dark days" in Kurdish people's memories due to the still unresolved assassinations, evacuation of villages, forced migrations, torture and extra judicial executions. The new security regime that has been instated via curfews in the Kurdish districts such as Silopi, Sur, Cizre, Silvan and Yüksekova following the one-sided breach of the post-2013-Newroz-declaration peace process by the government will be remembered as "the darkest days."

Universal human values engrained in rights such as the right to live in peace, the right to health, and the right to shelter won after centuries of struggle, have been breached with the large-scale destruction in Cizre. The politics of attack and massacre the state has followed even contradicts the internal rules of war. The climate of fear and violence created in Turkey has silenced those voices that might have been raised against the heavy violations of rights and crimes against humanity, and have openly suppressed them with a politics of detention and violence. But the most important lesson learned from the Dersim, Zilan, Ağrı, Maraş, Çorum, Sivas and Roboski massacres, and all other slaughters before and after those, is that no crime against humanity will go unpunished in the supreme court of history.

THE PROCESS FOLLOWING THE DECLARATION OF THE END OF OPERATIONS

As the siege on Cizre that started on December 14, 2015 had been ongoing, on February 11, 2016, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Efkan Ala, made a declaration to the press claiming that the siege on Cizre was over. Despite this declaration on February 11, 2016, the siege was restructured and reinstated on March 2 to continue at night, and entry into and exit from the district continued to be outlawed until March 2. During this period, some people who had to take refuge in different neighborhoods and wanted to return to their homes were fined for violating the curfew.

During the twenty days since, the siege has continued with the excuse of “cleaning up.” Our observations in Cizre and the information from witness accounts make it clear that the official narrative is far from the truth. The “cleaning” in Cizre that the AKP government refers to has taken place quite similar to “extermination” under fascist and racist regimes. The “cleaning” discourse that has been perpetrated by high officials as well as internet (body)guards (of the state) has been turned into true contamination thanks to state officials. For instance, the ammunition that had not been blown off and that was supposed to be exterminated took the lives of two children on March 31, 49 days after the declaration that the operations were over.

Everything that happened during the twenty days “without clashes” took place under categories such as the destruction of criminal evidence, the transformation of everything dead and alive into targets by operational forces, the continued plundering, destruction, sexist and racist practices, and the targeting of cultural values and are all detailed in our report.

After the operations were over, state powers have arbitrarily entered homes under the auspices of “police search” and have either burnt those homes or have destroyed and rendered unusable the furniture inside. In most of the homes we were in during our work in Cizre, we have observed that electrical and household appliances were particularly targeted and were destroyed and rendered useless. While there is not a single bullet hole in the walls right next to appliances, the many bullet marks on the appliances point to an intentional intervention. During the 20 days in Cizre, witnesses have also stated that buildings without much damage from the outside have been entered and burnt.

During and in the aftermath of the operations, state forces have entered people’s homes, and have turned parts of those homes into dormitories and headquarters. These were completely illegal interventions in people’s private lives and overall privacy. Let alone doing away with the distinction between public and private, state forces have occupied private spaces and have turned them into military bases.

The witness accounts also illustrate that state forces have left their feces on the couches, beds and blankets, plates and pots and in entryways during the twenty days when they invaded homes. The accounts also state that in some cases of “police search,” valuable items that belonged to household members were stolen.

Besides human lives, all other living beings in Cizre have also come under attack. Most of the chicken and roosters people were breeding in the courtyards of their homes have been killed, and some have been thrown inside the homes.

During this process, another space that has become the target of state's fury are cemeteries. The cemeteries in Kale neighborhood, where there were no trenches and where people chose to seek protection, were demolished. Targeting tombstones and signs in remembrance of the deceased shows that the state's grudge extends to the dead.

We can see from all this that the atrocities range from things to nature to humans, and that the real goal is not "providing security" but rendering their (these people's) geography unlivable. The torture and killing of cats and chicken in order to leave deep marks regarding brutality in people's memories are concrete signs of the cultivated long-term animosity and intolerance towards the people of the region. They are also the most significant evidence for the insincerity of the discourse of "our Kurdish brothers and sisters" that has become staple in the state's official language.

We believe that one of the things accomplished by security forces in Cizre between the end of the operations and the partial lifting of the siege (which continued during the nights) has been the destruction of evidence for the crimes they committed. When we entered Cizre, there were only rubbles in the place of the second basement of horror where 62 people lost their lives. What used to be a five-story building had literally disappeared into the ground. Where there should have been debris was flattened out enough to walk over it, and the excavations had been dumped along the Dicle River. The fact that the diggings belonging to the second basement had been carried away, and that there were no shells on the ground despite the intensity of the clashes makes us think that the "cleaning" activities also involved cleaning up of evidence.

The people who lived under siege for 79 days without food or water and under constant attack, people whose electricity was cut and whose water tanks were destroyed in order to force them to leave their homes, came back to their town to find uninhabitable homes. Besides buildings that were completely destroyed, those that were somewhat intact had been damaged enough to render them impossible to live in. What the people of Cizre had to live through upon their return to the city can be considered a second process of state violence where mourning was impossible due to the psychological war in place and where anger was prevalent.

Witnesses have recounted that during the siege and after, state forces have played nationalist songs praising Turkishness via loudspeakers and through military vehicles. In addition, state forces have spray painted the interiors of the houses they entered as well as street walls with racist and sexist slogans and have hung the "Turkish flag" on numerous houses and buildings.

With these flags erected on roofs, they aimed at showing that "the state has won." The racist discourse used in the writings on the walls has left the people of Cizre with the impression that the state is at war with its own people and sees its own citizens enemies.

The fact that the JÖH (Gendarmie Special Operations Command) and PÖH (Police Special Operation Department) have put up Turkish flags in the homes they destroyed and burnt down, have left sexist, offensive and humiliating writings on walls, and used hate speech proves that there is conscious and systematic racism at play in these incidents.

Just as much as daily life has been targeted in Cizre, so have history and tradition, and cultural memory. The burning down of the 450-year-old Seyidan Mosque, the purposeful raking of traditional garments, the burning of photos and books related to Kurdish history and culture demonstrates a desire to erase memory via cultural massacre.

The witness accounts regarding what happened in Cizre during the operations show that a special and systematic genocidal project was put in place step by step. For instance, the fact that corpses were found at homes in chests following the 20 day long “police search” operations points not only to a goal to instill horror (in people) but also to a white collar political design.

STATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DURING THE BLOCKADE

During blockades, the state directly targeted women and murdered 20 women. The state violence against women was not only limited to massacres. During the last blockade that ceaselessly lasted for 79 days, a deliberative and systematic violence was exercised on all women in Cizre. In our interviews, women from Cizre indicated that the state violence against women was experienced as a destruction of all domains of life. Blockades created a confined and isolated setting for the state’s masculine approach, preventing the witnessing of the lived realities.

People’s homes were forcefully converted into military quarters and looted. Kitchen appliances, TVs, refrigerators, cabinets, mattresses, and all other sorts of household items were specifically sacked and shot at, and their broken pieces were exhibited on the floor. The sacking of the houses were observed by our delegation and documented through photography. The destruction and sacking of the houses were exercised with such enmity that these wanton acts created a sense that they were done to leave nothing human or feminine behind. In the period when the blockade was over but military operations were continuing, it became obvious that not only those converted into military quarters but also other houses were broken in and deliberately looted.

Another example of the state’s sexist practices is the graffiti on mirrors, doors and walls inside houses. Chauvinist and sexist graffiti were observed on nearly all streets and houses. The most inhumane practice that illustrated the misogyny of the AKP government was the circulation of a photograph of a tortured female body through social media accounts that were used to wage psychological warfare during the blockade. Although the state denied the authenticity of the photograph through a statement by the Şırnak governorate, the fact that people from Cizre were able to clearly identify where the photo was taken has proven that truth cannot be hidden no matter what.

Torturing of the female body was especially exercised on corpses. Cizre people called the heavy torture on female corpses “ISIS methods.” Testimonies indicate that physicians and lawyers were prevented from attending to the autopsies of female corpses. Mothers and other female kin who went to pick up the corpses of their relatives were verbally assaulted. Detained mothers were subjected to ill treatment.

State violence against women that was documented in detail through women’s testimonies is not limited to lootings, torture, sexist discourse and graffiti. During the blockade, state violence targeted all life activities. Electricity and tap water were deliberately cut off and women were prevented from accessing staple food items, even those needed for their children. Flour sacks in houses were shot at and women were not even allowed to bake bread in their gardens. Pregnant women who could not access health services were deliberately tormented. Yahya İdin, the deputy co-head of the DBP (Party of Democratic Regions, formerly BDP) in Şırnak province who carried out work with health workers during the blockades, described the miscarriages that took place in the climate of violence as “another form of massacre.”

Cizre women often resorted to the still alive collective memories of the 1990s to describe the extent of violence. According to their narratives, the recent violence exceeded that of the 1990s and some of the things that were done could only be explained with reference to the violent methods of the ISIS.

State violence systematically targeted women’s private items, life spaces, solidarity networks, dignity, and women themselves. Kurdish mothers, who were not even allowed to mourn their children, expressed their anger at the AKP government and the state very clearly. It became obvious that losing their children meant for them not only grief or pain but also the determination to embrace their children’s struggle for a dignified life.

Women, who did not leave their homes until it was no longer habitable, also resisted the AKP government’s sexist policies that only increased the violence produced by tanks and artillery. They stayed together in cohesion and solidarity against the violence that destroyed their everyday life. Although their life spaces were demolished, they showed great determination by not leaving their homes and lands. Upon their arrival in Cizre, the first people to greet the HDP delegation were also women. The sectarian and sexist policies of the AKP government could not break women’s resistance. After the blockade ended, those who steadfastly waited for delegations in front of their houses on torn down streets were women too.

In Cizre, a strategic and planned dirty war was waged upon the Kurdish people and this war specifically targeted women. The long organized struggle of the Kurdish women has led to a social transformation, dissolving the feudal sexist and masculine social structures. In this way, women have become actors of their own lives and developed their own approaches to the woman question. The state strategically targeted women because it realized women’s power to build a free and democratic society. Women who resist the racism and misogyny of the AKP government are seen as a threat to the system. This is why a decimation policy was put in motion to break the will of the society. Conscious of their own power, Kurdish women resist against all exterminatory policies and lead the struggle against fascism in Turkey, just like they did in the past. This power of leadership, this power to make themselves be should be understood as a call from all organized and unorganized women of Cizre to a collective struggle against the misogyny of the AKP.

THE STATE'S ORDEAL WITH LAW

This part focuses on the legal dimensions of the Cizre experience, especially on what state violence meant for the people in Cizre. Because nearly all the families we talked to mentioned that they were affected by the state terror in the 1990s. Most of the denizens of the Cudi quarter, which was the target of the most intensive attacks during blockades, said that they were forced to migrate from their evacuated villages and to settle in the city center. It was also seen that some those who resisted state violence had also been directly influenced by the 1990s' extrajudicial killings, village evacuations, and house burnings.

People's accounts illustrate that the state's insistent denial of responsibility for the extrajudicial acts of officers and collaborating paramilitary forces has deeply shaken the Kurdish people's trust of the legal system of the Turkish Republic. Moreover, the people of Cizre perceived the acquittal of Cemal Temizöz, the ex-gendarmerie commander of the Cizre province, right between the two largest Cizre blockades, as a message. The existence of senior-age state security forces within the operating squads the created the impression that they were the perpetrators of past incidents.

The state ensured the continuity of violence through the impunity and rewarding of perpetrators. Neither punishments nor reparations have become realized. People who remain uncompensated or received miniscule reparations for everything they lost said that this situation stood in the way of reconciliatory justice and social peace. The ineffectiveness of the European Court of Human Rights in this process is discussed in this section.

The lack of a legal ground for the curfews announced in city centers and provinces since August 16 and the citizens' position vis-à-vis the government is also discussed in this section. The effects of the government's one-sided power to act under the presumption of legal and executive accordance on citizens, the characteristics and consequences of these actions are explained in this process. This approach of the government determines all blockade processes, ranging from curfews to interments, urgent confiscations to compensations.

Finally, crimes perpetrated during the blockade have been documented; yet, crimes have not been analyzed one by one since that would be beyond the aim of this report. It has been discussed whether or not these crimes have become systematic and whether they can be considered as crimes against humanity.

CONCLUSION

The Dolmabahçe Accord was announced by State and government officials, together with the İmralı Committee, to resolve the country's most ancient problem, the Kurdish issue, by peaceful and democratic means. However, the AKP-Palace government rejected this accord in order to maintain its power through making an agreement with the Ergenekon elements and launched an assault against Kurdish people with heavy weaponry by sieging the Kurdish towns.

This war was actually planned step-by-step under the framework of the September 2014 "Collapse Plan," which was prepared by the Undersecretariat of Public Security, and executed with the calculation of every minute detail, including city sieges, ambulance and fire fighter instructions, the restriction on the freedom of the press, the repression of social opposition, arrests and the escalation of detentions. Although the ditches and declaration of self-governance were used as the justification for these attacks, actually it is understood that this "grand termination plan" was being prepared during the peace and peace process, and they have been waiting for the right time.

The state added a new instance to the crimes against humanity that have been perpetrated throughout history by putting under siege a city inside its own borders with tens of thousands of soldiers and police and cruelly killing hundreds of people. During the siege, by using violence outside the confines of law, ethics, and humanity, the state military forces and the paramilitary forces that accompanied them committed atrocities that will not go away from the collective memory of the people of Turkey for hundreds of years. Considering the beginning, continuation, and ending of curfews that were declared since July 24, 2015, by the governorships of the cities, and sometimes extended based solely on discretion, what has been done in these cities is almost identical to the techniques used by ISIS.

As detailed by the report, the warning message sent before the declaration of the curfew to the teachers triggered fear and panic, and people started to leave the city in queues fearing for their lives. Those who didn't leave the city were subjected to fires from heavy weaponry, and when that wasn't enough, knowing that the Halapja Massacre was fresh in collective memory, they instilled fear among the population with rumors about the possible use of chemical weapons, and people living in the neighborhood left their homes with as much as they could carry.

Subsequently, the city was under random fire for days, and the four neighborhoods and parts of other neighborhoods that constitute 70% of Cizre were bombarded with tanks and artillery shells. Before the world's eyes, the state forces in their desire to have them bow in, incinerated 176 people alive even though they had the chance to get to the hospital alive. As can be seen in the report, almost all of their corpses were beyond recognition in autopsy.

Later on the activities carried out under the name of "cleansing" resulted in "pillaging" of each and every house in the region. The entire operation could be considered a manifestation of a "how dare you not bow to us?" mentality. The racist, sexist, and fascist slogans that were written on the walls could be read as projections of masculinity voicing its desire to conquer. An attitude of pillaging and inflicting damage mixed with hatred and revenge seems to have come to life. A

member of parliament who stood for the people who voted for him in a city which was under siege for 79 days was subject to attacks that could be considered “murder with the intent to kill.” Thousands of people from all over Turkey, from Urfa, Silopi, Silvan, Amed, İstanbul, rushed to Cizre to offer their support to the people, but most of the time they were stopped by state security forces just a few kilometers before reaching the district and were subject to violence.

Even if there were barricades or ditches, the state cannot on any basis suspend the law to commit inhumane massacres against its own people. Nothing can justify this state terror that resulted in massacre. The problem stems from the AKP government completely shutting down dialogue and negotiation channels and reverting to war mentality. The AKP government, which takes credit for ending the state of emergency in the region, reenacted a war mentality that is not called a state of emergency, but is even worse. The main motivation behind the establishment of temporary military security zones, special security zones, curfews is to intimidate the Kurdish population. Therefore, alongside the physical damage, the desire of the people of Cizre to live together in the country is also fading away.

Findings and recommendations

1. War and conflict kills. Peace ensures life. For 40 years, the state has tried to solve a problem by military means that could have been solved through dialogue and negotiations. This method has not produced a solution, and actually has aggravated the problem. The siege of Cizre caused death of hundreds, including civilians, resistors, police, soldiers, and as a result, created a multitude of problems that has become more difficult to resolve. Despite all this destruction and politics of war, we are not yet on the road of no return. It is necessary to lift the state of total isolation imposed on Mr. Abdullah Öcalan that has been in place for over a year and to resume the peace and resolution process and create the conditions for negotiations.
2. It is not possible to talk about social justice under conditions where problems are not resolved on the basis of mutual dialogue and negotiations. The only way to have coexistence among our people is to pierce the shield of impunity and to put into practice reconciliatory judicial mechanisms. In order to conduct an effective investigation, it is crucial that the crime scene investigation and the autopsy be conducted by an independent committee and the evidence not be destroyed and also collected in an appropriate and professional manner. The Cizre Investigation Committee, which will involve those who lost their lives and property as a direct result of the siege as well as independent and trustworthy people and experts with different occupational backgrounds, will play a big role in both the revealing of truths and implementation of recuperative justice mechanisms.
3. Even after the end of the siege, the delegations coming to Cizre for inspections were treated as "potential terrorists" by State officials. The people and organizations coming to Cizre in solidarity were blocked from doing their work. Some of the members of the GABB (Union of Southeastern Anatolia Region Municipalities) Damage Assessment Team were taken into custody. Rojava Association employees are still being blocked in their effort to offer relief. It is unacceptable that the state authorities, who should be facilitating the work of humanitarian groups in Cizre, is treating them as “enemies.” Unfortunately, this ill treatment also applies to documentation work.

The declarations of President Erdoğan encourage the state forces and authorities in the region to prevent the work of these other institutions. The AKP government must give up this attitude as soon as possible and adopt an approach that would facilitate the conduct of activities in solidarity with the population of Cizre undertaken by committees, teams, municipal officials, and volunteers working to rebuild the destruction in the district.

4. The declaration that President Erdoğan made on January 26 to the appointed district governors saying “Don’t be bothered with what is written in the regulations. When it is necessary, put the regulations aside and use your own judgement,” is a sign that state forces and governors in the region would not face trial for any crime they would have committed. The picture that emerged after the declarations of the “end of operations” gives the impression that crimes were committed carelessly and without regard for legal consequences.
5. The only way to recuperate the damage done to the cities under siege is to establish independent commissions. However, the approach of hastily declaring these places risky areas and the quickly expropriating property belonging to people and the city would only exacerbate the problems. During AKP government rule, The “Urgent Expropriation” measure that was brought about as an extraordinary expropriation practice under the “Law of War” has become regular practice. The method of urgent expropriation, which has been used to bypass legislation in urban renewal and dam construction, has also been used for “emergency security needs.” As an example of the AKP’s war politics, through a Council of Ministers decision (No. 2016/8432), urgent expropriation was deployed to establish 39 new security points on January 28, 2016. As an element of the current law of war, urgent expropriation has been used to confiscate the property of the people who were killed and/or whose houses were destroyed in Sur, Silopi, and Cizre. Through expropriations, the AKP government tries to hide the massacres that it conducted and destroy the people’s memory of their culture and resistance. The spatial reconstruction of Cizre and moving the provincial capital to Cizre will destroy the culture that has been identified with Cizre. Through high-rise apartment blocks, people will be removed from their houses and gardens and will be locked up into small apartment units. This will completely destroy the centuries-old sociological structure of Cizre. In fact, the aim of redesigning the cities under security concerns is not new. Prime Minister Davutoglu once stated, “those areas needed urban renewal, even if these events did not happen.” This statement proves the existence of that aim. Democratic forces must stand against this process of dispossession that is carried out through urgent expropriation.
6. The committed massacres and the basements of horror will remain imprinted in the collective memory of the people of Cizre. So much so that, when the siege was lifted, people visited the basements before checking upon their houses to commit the sight to their memories and never forget what happened. Against the state’s policy of effacing this memory and destroying the truth, the people of Cizre have been resisting to preserve their memory. As a symbol of this memory, people of Cizre have been demanding to turn the basements of horror into sites of memory with the aim of preventing new massacres from happening and seeking justice for the committed massacres.
7. A separate study must be conducted to reveal the women’s truth about the women’s resistance as well as the war crimes committed against the women during the sieges.