

# TERRORISM THREAT AGAINST HUMANITY AND DEMOCRACY: THE PKK CASE

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REPORT



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# **A TERRORISM THREAT AGAINST HUMANITY AND DEMOCRACY: THE PKK CASE**



## TERRORISM THREAT AGAINST HUMANITY AND DEMOCRACY: THE PKK CASE

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## Executive Summary

Operating under the umbrella of the Kurdish Communities Union (KCK); the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, is a terror group that aims to disrupt state structures in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. Therefore, the organization poses an immediate threat to both regional and international peace and security. Despite posing such a significant threat, Turkey is left alone in its fight against terrorism in the international arena, which hampers its struggle against the PKK.

However, the PKK is a terrorist organization engaged in serious crimes against humanity just as Daesh and Al Qaeda. The terrorist organization frequently resorts to atrocious terror acts such as civilian killings, suicide attacks, the recruitment of children in armed conflicts, forced recruitments, ethnic cleansing and forced displacement. In view of this, PKK poses a major threat to universal humanitarian and democratic values.

In spite of its threat against humanity and democracy, the civil war in Syria demonstrates that international efforts in the fight against the PKK remain insufficient. At this point, international actors argue that counter-terrorism efforts must primarily target Daesh and Al Qaeda by condoning the fact that the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the People's Protection Units (YPG) are the Syrian offshoots of the PKK. Obviously, such approaches in the international arena undermine international peace and security along with humanitarian and democratic values. This study focuses on PKK's activities against humanity, democratic values and the free market economy and argues that international community must take joint action against the terror group as in the cases of Daesh and Al Qaeda. Accordingly, PKK's acts against humanity and democracy can briefly be listed as follows:

The PKK is a terrorist organization engaged in serious crimes against humanity just as Daesh and Al Qaeda. The terrorist organization frequently resorts to atrocious terror acts such as civilian killings, suicide attacks, the recruitment of children in armed conflicts, forced recruitments, ethnic cleansing and forced displacement.

PKK is also a transnational crime organization that is involved in both drug and human trafficking on an international level. PKK's crimes regarding drug and human trafficking are a well-known fact recognized by the international community.

- » Resorting to terror attacks that target civilians since its establishment, the PKK poses a serious threat to fundamental human rights. In the violent terror attacks it has organized over the past 35 years, the PKK has killed thousands of civilians, including children and women.
- » There is no difference between the PKK and other terrorist organizations like Daesh and Al Qaeda as the group sees no harm in organizing suicide attacks against security forces and civilians.
- » A number of independent international observation missions reported that the PKK has been recruiting children in their armed conflicts in both Syria and Turkey. The terrorist organization has been maintaining its offenses against humanity before the eyes of the international community for years now.
- » PKK's Syrian offshoots PYD/YPG systematically provide forced military training in the areas they control.
- » Ethnic cleansing and forced displacement are among PKK's actions in Syria. The PKK's Syrian offshoots PYD/YPG have been destroying Arab and Turkmen villages in Syria while mass murdering and displacing their locals.
- » PKK is also a transnational crime organization that is involved in both drug and human trafficking on an international level. PKK's crimes regarding drug and human trafficking are a well-known fact recognized by the international community
- » A well-functioning liberal economy based on a free competitive environment requires freedom of work, freedom of entrepreneurship and freedom of consumption without facing any physical and psychological limitations. From this point, PKK/KCK is endeavoring to impede proper functioning of the free market economy and the equal distribution of economic welfare across all the regions of Turkey.

## Introduction

**T**errorism has become one of the most serious threats to democratic values, international peace and security in the 21st century. With the aim of protecting its democratic political system and contributing to international peace and security, the Republic of Turkey has been one of the leading countries across the world maintaining an effective counter-terror fight by incurring heavy costs. Turkey plays a key role in international fight against terrorist organizations such as Daesh and Al Qaeda. Moreover, Turkey is also the leading actor in the fight against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) despite the fact that it is left alone in the international arena by its allies.

Turkey's history of counter-terror fight dates back to many years ago. Among these efforts, the fight against PKK deserves a particular emphasis. Although its roots date back to much earlier, PKK was founded during the late 1970s. The terrorist organization organized its first armed attack in Eruh a district of Siirt in 1984. With numerous attacks it organized as of this date, the organization has killed thousands of people and aspires to hamper Turkey's development and progress in every sense, particularly in the eastern and southeastern regions. Therefore, for around 40 years, the PKK and its umbrella organization, namely the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), has inflicted a great number of casualties while causing tremendous social, political and economic losses in the country, thus constituting the greatest problem confronting Turkey. In addition to the damage it has caused to the country and citizens, the PKK evolved into a terrorist organization that threatens not only regional but also international peace and security over the years.

By the year, the PKK and its armed political offshoots and divisions have converged under the umbrella of KCK, thus evolving into a terrorist organization that aims to undermine state structures in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. To that end, the terrorist organization has been maintaining its activities with the PKK in Turkey, the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its armed wing People's Protection Units (YPG) in Syria, the Kurdistan

Turkey plays a key role in the international fight against terrorist organizations such as Daesh and Al Qaeda. Moreover, Turkey is also the leading actor in the fight against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) despite the fact that it is left alone in the international arena by its allies.

Democratic Solution Party (PÇDK) in Iraq and the Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK) in Iran.

On the other hand, the ongoing Syrian civil war demonstrates that international efforts with regard to the anti-PKK fight has remained insufficient. It has been observed that although the PKK and its umbrella organization KCK are threatening regional and international peace and security, international actors have been reluctant to fight against the terrorist organization whereas some have even engaged in alliances with the organization. At this point, international actors argue that the counter-terrorism efforts must primarily target Daesh and Al Qaeda by condoning fact that the PYD/YPG are Syrian offshoots of the PKK.

The PKK often resorts to intra-organizational executions and exerts deadly pressures on its rival groups in Turkey and the Middle East.

However, the lack of support in the fight against KCK and its sub-groups and the disruption of the anti-PKK fight by cooperating with this terrorist network jeopardize the universal humanitarian and democratic values that comprise the common sense of humanity. Above all, the PKK represents a structure which leaves no room for freedom of thought, which is among the fundamental human rights and forms the basis of democratic society. Originally emerging as a Marxist-Leninist group, the PKK evolved into an ethnicity-oriented terror movement. Additionally, by excluding and eradicating all other political and civil movements by declaring them as enemies, the PKK imposes a problematic mindset on its proponents<sup>1</sup> This problematic mindset is prevalent in every leg of the group, including its ideological basis and field of action. In line with this imposing characteristic of the group, the PKK often resorts to intra-organizational executions and exerts deadly pressures on its rival groups in Turkey and the Middle East.

Along with its oppressive and imposing nature, the PKK also violates the right to life just like Daesh and Al Qaeda with its actions. The PKK's violations include a wide range of violent acts such as civilian killings, suicide attacks, the recruitment of children in armed conflicts, forced recruitments and ethnic cleansing and forced displacement. In this framework, this study contends that there is no difference between the PKK and other internationally blacklisted terrorist organizations such as Daesh and Al

Qaeda considering their common features and violent acts. Consequently, the cooperation of the international community against the PKK as in the cases of Daesh and Al Qaeda will make great contributions to the protection of humanitarian and democratic values and international peace and security. To that end, this study focuses on PKK's acts of violence against humanity, democratic values and the progress of the liberal economy.



# **PKK'S ACTS AGAINST HUMANITARIAN AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES**

- » Civilian Killings
- » Suicide Attacks
- » Recruitment of Children in Armed Conflicts
- » Forced Recruitments
- » Ethnic Cleansing and Forced Displacement
- » Drug and Human Trafficking



## PKK's Acts Against Humanitarian and Democratic Values

**D**emocracy is the ideal political system to protect the rule of law and fundamental human rights thanks to its pluralist and liberal characteristics. Ensuring the continuity of this system depends on the protection and improvement of political, social, economic and liberal values. But today, terrorist organizations are the structures perpetrating the most unacceptable crimes against humanity and democracy by attacking civilians. Targeting civilians for years, the PKK has been the centerpiece of this terrorist threat that targets humanity and free democratic society.

The PKK's terror attacks against the democratic social order include serious offenses against humanity such as civilian killings, suicide attacks, the recruitment of children in armed conflicts, forced recruitments, ethnic cleansing, forced displacement and the violation of economic freedom. A detailed look at these offenses is crucial to better illustrate the threat the PKK poses to humanity and democracy.

### Civilian Killings

It must be noted that the PKK poses a serious threat to fundamental human rights by often resorting to terror assaults against civilians since its foundation. In the violent terror attacks it has organized over the past 35 years, the PKK has killed thousands of civilians, including women and children.<sup>2</sup> The Pınarcık Village Massacre is among their most deadly attacks. On June 20, 1987, PKK militants raided this village located in Mardin province's Ömerli district, predominantly inhabited by the families of voluntary village guards. During the raid, they brutally murdered a total of 30 people, including 16 children and six women. After the incident, a number of newspapers released the photos taken in the village following the attack, which portrayed and proved the atrocity committed by the PKK militants in Pınarcık village.<sup>3</sup> PKK's slaughter in Pınarcık was also acknowledged by the pro-PKK media outlet Serxwebûn<sup>4</sup>.

In the violent terror attacks it has organized over the past 35 years, the PKK has killed thousands of civilians, including women and children.

Dozens of terror attacks against civilians followed the mass murder in Pınarcık. Some of the attacks for which the PKK claimed responsibility include the following:

- » The mass murder in Kılıçkaya village's Milan neighborhood (August 19-20, 1987): 14 children, including one three-day-old and one six-day-old baby, and 11 adults were killed.<sup>5</sup>
- » Taşköyü Behmenin neighborhood mass murder (May 9, 1988): 11 people, including 8 children and 2 women, were killed.<sup>6</sup>
- » Başbağlar mass murder (July 5, 1993): 33 people were killed. 28 of them were shot to death while the remaining 5 were burnt alive.<sup>7</sup>
- » Yolalan murder (October 25, 1993): 1 child and 4 teachers were killed.<sup>8</sup>
- » Savur murder (January 21, 1994): 21 people, including 11 children, were killed.<sup>9</sup>
- » Hamzalı murder (January 1, 1995): 20 people, most of whom were women and children, were killed.<sup>10</sup>
- » Diyarbakır-Yenişehir bombing (January 3, 2008): 7 people, including 6 students, were killed.
- » Ankara Merasim Street attack (February 17, 2016): 29 were killed, 87 were injured.
- » Ankara Güvenpark attack (March 13, 2016): 36 were killed, 349 were injured.
- » Car-bomb attack at the İzmir Bayraklı Courthouse (January 5, 2017): one was killed, 12 were injured.
- » Batman-Kozluk attack (June 9, 2017): One teacher, named Aybüke Yalçın, was killed.
- » On June 16, 2017, a group of PKK militants killed a teacher named Necmettin Yılmaz after setting fire to his car on Tunceli-Pülümür highway and abducting him.
- » The rocket attacks on Hatay and Kilis: Civilians have been killed in the rocket attacks organized by the PKK's Syrian offshoots PYD/YPG to residential areas.



*An Image from Ankara Güvenpark Attack Organized by PKK*

The recent mass civilian killings of the PKK have been perpetrated by its Syrian offshoots PYD/YPG. ‘Syrian Network for Human Rights’, an independent international human rights organization, have issued several reports on torture and killings in Syria perpetrated by PKK/PYD/YPG.<sup>11</sup> The photographs and videos presented in the reports portray the extent of violence the PKK engages in. These photos and videos were also published by several official bodies such as Anadolu Agency.

The recent mass civilian killings of the PKK have been perpetrated by its Syrian offshoots PYD/YPG.



*PKK's Tortures and Executions in Syria*

Considering the PKK's suicide attacks, it can be seen that the PKK has no difference from Daesh and Al Qaeda as the group has no hesitation in resorting to suicide attacks against security forces and civilians.

### Suicide Attacks

Suicide attacks, organized with bomb vehicles, suicide vests, kamikaze jets and so on, constitute one of the primary methods that the terror groups resort to. They differ from other terrorist methods in that the purpose of such attacks is not only to kill the targeted group but also the terrorist him/herself. Thus, such attacks are especially noteworthy as they show the militants' level of engagement and commitment to their cause. The terrorists or terror groups organizing the suicide attacks generally employ ideological radicalization to dangerous levels and therefore pose a serious threat to societal freedom and the democratic system as a whole.

Suicide attacks can be regarded as the furthest means a terrorist group could employ as part of their violent strategies to achieve their political goals. The main purpose of such attacks is to impose a change in society's principles and rules and to intimidate people to that end by killing as many people as possible with the most violent means possible. Accordingly, Pape states that suicide attacks by nature, mostly target countries with democratic political systems.<sup>12</sup> Considering the PKK's suicide attacks, it can be seen that the PKK has no difference from Daesh and Al Qaeda as the group has no hesitation in resorting to suicide attacks against security forces and civilians.

In PKK's IV. Conference organized in May 1996, the issue of suicide attacks was discussed in detail and the group's final decision was announced to its militants as follows: "[...] Each state will send suicide teams with the approval of the headquarters, and preliminary and infrastructural works must be conducted to that end [...]". Following this announcement, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan encouraged and praised suicide attacks. For instance, during a broadcast on a pro-PKK television channel MED TV aired on August 22, 1996, Öcalan made the following remarks:

*The intensity of our operations is forcing us to defend ourselves to the full extent. [...] A big development can be expected in suicide attacks if we see the implementation of such methods again. No one should think that we are incompetent to organize [suicide attacks]. Zeynep Kınacı's<sup>13</sup> heroism demonstrated the power of our suicide attacker guerrillas. In fact, each PKK member is a suicide guerilla. I am not saying this as a threat; this is our reality. Also, everyone adhering to PKK is a suicide guerilla. We can make them stage every kind of act as we wish.*

It is possible to give further examples illustrating Öcalan's encouragement of suicide attacks. In another MED TV broadcast on October 31, 1996, Öcalan said: "[...] I believe that we have numerous women supporters who could explode their own bodies as this young girl of our people. Our suicide attacks will go on in the forthcoming days [...]"

“Each PKK member is a suicide guerilla.”

Among the suicide attacks organized by the PKK against civilians in recent history, the attack on Ankara's Anafartalar Street on May 22, 2007 is the most notable. The attack, which killed nine civilians. Responsibility was claimed by PKK's offshoot Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK). The Ankara Güvenpark attack is another major suicide attack by the PKK. In this attack on March 13, 2016, a car-bomb killed 36 civilians in Ankara. The PKK claimed responsibility for the attack on March 17, 2016 through the pro-PKK Fırat News Agency.<sup>14</sup>

The PKK organizes such attacks especially in eastern and southeastern Turkey. For instance, on October 9, 2016; 18 people, including eight civilians, were killed in a suicide attack organized with a car-bomb at a checkpoint in the southeastern province Hakkari. TAK again claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>15</sup> In addition, it must be underscored that the PKK organized 11 suicide attacks with car-bombs in Turkey just between the dates of August 2, 2015 and August 25, 2016, which clearly shows that PKK is a terror group which frequently resort to suicide attacks.

Also, it must be pointed out that female militants have been employed in the majority of PKK suicide attacks. It has been observed that the female militants have generally wrapped explosives around their abdomen, pretending to be pregnant. In the guise of pregnant ladies, they are able to fly under the radar and cause maximum casualties.<sup>16</sup>

**Table: PKK's Suicide Attacks with Bomb Vehicles (2 August 2015-25 August 2016)**

Date	Place/location	Casualties (military-police officers)	Casualties (civilians)
2 August 2015	Ağrı Doğubayazıt Karabulak Gendarmerie Station	2 killed, 24 wounded	-
17 February 2016	Ankara Çankaya Merasim Street (Military buses)	28 killed, 61 wounded	-
13 March 2016	Ankara Çankaya Kızılay Güvenpark	1 killed, 16 wounded	36 killed, 296 wounded
24 March 2016	Diyarbakır Lice Gendarmerie Station	3 killed, 24 wounded	-
25 May 2016	Mardin Midyat Anıtlı Gendarmerie Station	3 killed, 1 wounded	-
7 June 2016	İstanbul Beyazıt Vezneciler Street (Riot police shuttle bus)	6 killed, 17 wounded	6 killed, 26 wounded
8 June 2016	Mardin Midyat Police Department	3 killed	3 killed, 52 wounded
10 June 2016	Şırnak Military Checkpoint	-	-
27 July 2016	Hakkari Depin Checkpoint	2 killed, 13 wounded	4 wounded
18 August 2016	Elazığ Provincial Security Directorate	3 killed, 125 wounded	108 wounded
25 August 2016	Şırnak Cizre Riot Police branch office	11 killed, 75 wounded	3 wounded

### The Recruitment of Children in Armed Conflicts

Many independent international observation missions have reported that the PKK often recruits and deploys children by force in their terrorist attacks in Turkey and Syria. For years, the PKK has been engaging in such activities before the eyes of the international community. Although this situation has been reported by Turkish authorities since the 1980s, it only caught the attention of the international community for the first time in 2010. The issue was first brought to the agenda following a report publis-

hed in a Denmark-based daily newspaper named Berlingske Tidende. The report revealed that there were around 3000 children in PKK's training camps and even children aged between 8 and 9 were given weapon exercise and explosive substance training.<sup>17</sup>

These acts of the PKK were also brought to the agenda of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). In a bulletin released on June 1, 2010, UNICEF stated that they were deeply concerned about the children in the PKK rank.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the public outcry on the subject, the PKK is still using and thus exploiting children in conflicts by abducting and forcibly training them. Among all the responses; in May, 2014, mothers from different regions of Turkey gathered in Diyarbakır province and staged a sit-in protest against PKK's recruitment of children. Expressing their reaction to the PKK, the protesting mothers demanded the release of the children abducted and recruited by the PKK, who are generally aged between 14 and 15.<sup>19</sup>

Currently, the PKK is commonly using children in its armed conflicts particularly in Syrian territory. This situation has also been stated in 'Human Rights Watch' reports. According to a report published by 'Human Rights Watch'; the PKK/PYD/YPG are assigning active duties to children aged under 18 in their reconnaissance activities and armed conflicts and using them as sentinels. Among the children forced to fight in the ranks of PKK/PYD/YPG, even children under the age of 15 can often be found.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore; the 'Kurd Watch', another independent initiative that observes the human rights violations Kurds are subjected to in Syria, reported that PKK/PYD/YPG have been abducting Kurdish children and

In a bulletin released on June 1, 2010, UNICEF stated that they were deeply concerned about the children in the PKK rank.



*A child swearing on a weapon by the force of PKK's Syrian offshoots PYD/YPG.*

deploying them without their families' consent. Details about some of the children abducted by the organization are as follows:<sup>21</sup>

**Table: Some of the children abducted by PKK**

Name	Age	Date of Abduction
Rojin Muhammed Hüseyin	14	May 2014
Fatma Salim	12	10 May 2014
Ali Abdullah Ali	13	20 September 2014
Şivan Muhammed Sadık Ahmed	Secondary school student	4 November 2014
Najah Nervan Ahmed	15	4 November 2014
Kazım Adnan Ferman	14	6 November 2014
Nurman İbrahim Halife	13	November 2014
Hamrin Abdulhamid Hüseyin	Ninth-grader	23 December 2014
Hizbiyah Velid Şeyhmus	Eight-grader	28 December 2014
Dilber Ahmed Hacı	16	3 April 2015

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In addition, some flash disc photos found in the pockets of a militant who was apprehended as part of Operation Olive Branch documented the organization's systematic use of children in armed conflicts. The photos clearly portray the ideological indoctrination and weapon training that the children are subjected to in PKK's training camps.<sup>22</sup>



Children's Military Training Given by the PKK/PYD/YPG



Children's Ideological Training Given by the PKK/PYD/YPG

## Forced Recruitments

PKK's Syrian offshoots the PYD/YPG systematically provide forced military training in the areas they control. The best-known case illustrating this situation is the organization's declaration of a so-called conscription law that requires a 6-month compulsory military service in the name of "the law on the fulfillment of defense duty" or "compulsory military service law" in Syria. According to this, men between the ages of 18 and 30 are forcibly recruited for a six months period and assigned as militants in conflicts. With this approach, the organization forcibly recruits one individual from each family in the locations they control in Syria. They mostly execute this method by abducting men in their raids to coffee houses and internet cafes or through arbitrary detainments in the checkpoints they established.<sup>23</sup>

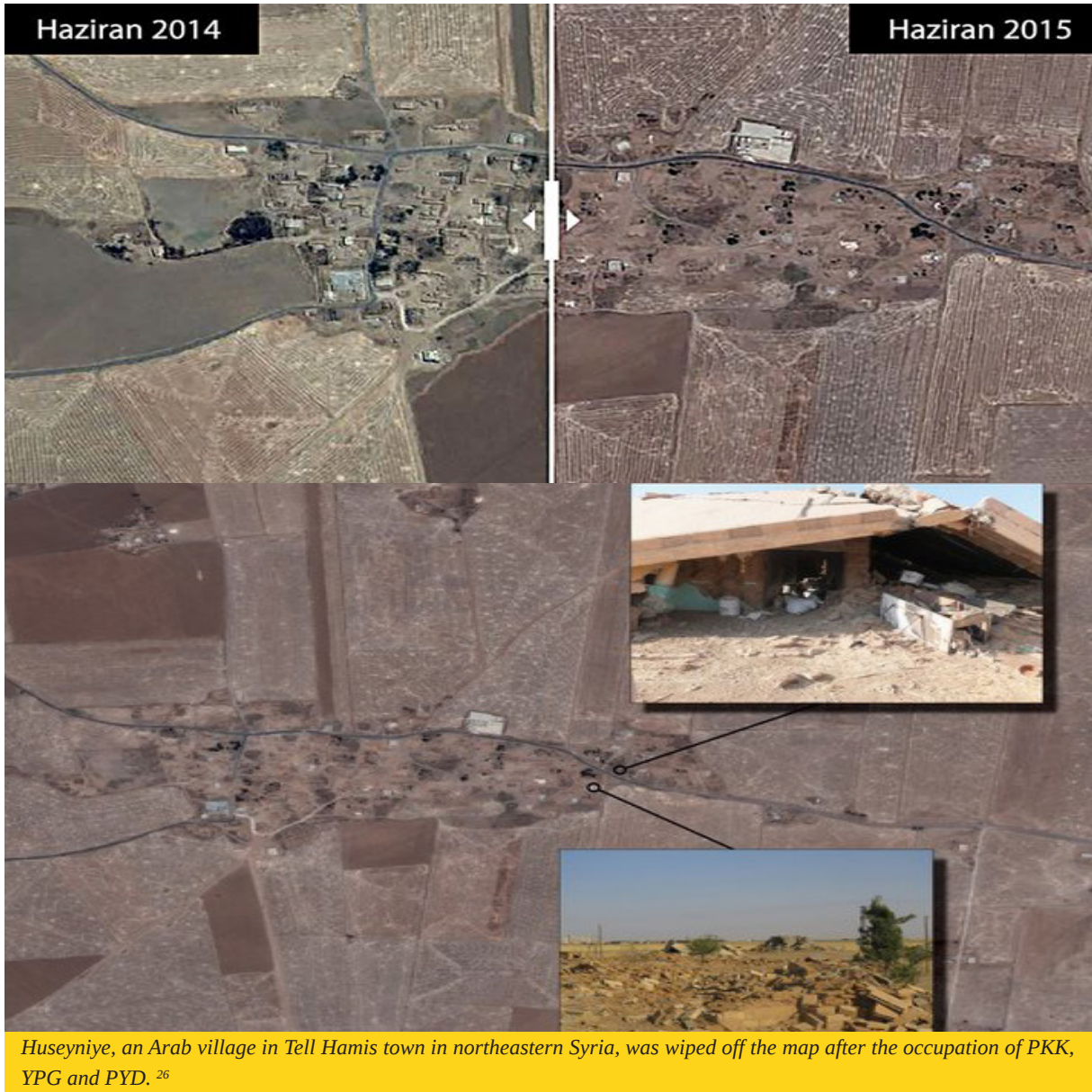
Those refusing to conform to this practice are punished along with their families. Many Kurdish, Arab or Turkmen families who fled from the organization's forced recruitment took refuge in Turkey or Northern Iraq. The number of Kurdish refugees has reached around 400.000 in Northern Iraq and 350.000 in Turkey.<sup>24</sup>

## Ethnic Cleansing and Forced Displacement

A United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Commission of Experts, which authorized by the resolution no 780 on October 6, 1992, defines ethnic cleansing as "a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas."<sup>25</sup>

Ethnic cleansing and forced displacement are among the activities the PKK is involved in especially in Syria. With the violent acts of the PYD/YPG, the Arab and Turkmen villages in Syria are being destroyed and their locals killed or subjected to forced displacement. The photos below show a destroyed Arab village:

Those refusing to conform to PKK's forced recruitment practice are punished along with their families. Many Kurdish, Arab or Turkmen families who fled from the organization's forced recruitment took refuge in Turkey or Northern Iraq.



*Huseyniye, an Arab village in Tell Hamis town in northeastern Syria, was wiped off the map after the occupation of PKK, YPG and PYD.<sup>26</sup>*

The ethnic cleansing and forced displacement imposed by the PKK/PYD/YPG are often reported by independent international human rights organizations.

The ethnic cleansing and forced displacement imposed by the PKK/PYD/YPG are often reported by independent international human rights organizations. 'Amnesty International' states that the PYD/YPG have been implementing a systematic forced displacement policy by destroying villages in Syria. For instance, in Huseyniye, an Arab village in Tell Hamis town in northeastern Syria, 211 out of a total of 225 buildings were destroyed by the PYD/YPG while the locals were forced to evacuate the neighborhood.

Numerous instances of ethnic cleansing and forced displacement by the PYD/YPG have been observed in the Arab and Turkmen villages located in Al-Hasakah, Tell Abyad, Ras al-Ayn, Tell Tamer and Ar-Raqqa. These cases have also been reported by several other human rights organizations such as the 'Syrian Network for Human Rights'.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to this, it has also been reported that the PKK/PYD/YPG has perpetrated mass killings in the locations where people resisted acts of ethnic cleansing and forced displacement. Accordingly, in the mass killings perpetrated by these groups in 2013 and 2014 in the Al-Hasakah region, 91 civilians, including 17 children and 7 women, were killed. The report states that these mass killings, which can be considered within the scope of ethnic cleansing, were perpetrated in the town of Al Aghbesh on November 21, 2013, Tell Brak town on February 23, 2014 and in Al Hajiya and Tell Halil on September 13, 2014.<sup>28</sup>

The PKK/PYD/YPG has perpetrated mass killings in the locations where people resisted acts of ethnic cleansing and forced displacement.

### Drug and Human Trafficking

International law recognizes drug trafficking as an unlawful activity. Within this scope, not only the distribution and sales of drugs, but also the cultivation of their raw material and the production of drugs are defined as drug trafficking activities.<sup>29</sup> Drug trafficking poses a direct threat to international peace and security as it is within the scope of international organized criminal enterprises' and terror groups' activities. The financial gain obtained through human trafficking is employed by and terror or crime organizations against nations, who are legitimate actors in the international system.

Human trafficking, on the other hand, is recognized as a serious cross-border and organized crime and a grave violation of human rights in the international arena especially as of the early 2000s. 'The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime', adopted by the United Nations in 2000, and its supplementing protocols, namely 'the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women, and Children' and 'the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by

The PKK's drug and human trafficking activities have been reported by various official and non-governmental organizations.

Land, Sea, and Air', addresses human trafficking as a jeopardy to international peace and security and calls upon nations to recognize human trafficking as a serious criminal offense in their legislations and to take joint action against this offense.<sup>30</sup>

In view of this, the PKK also appears as a transnational crime organization which must be combated in the international arena due to its involvement in both drug and human trafficking on an international level. Accordingly, the international community recognizes the PKK's involvement in these offenses. The PKK's drug and human trafficking activities have been reported by various official and non-governmental organizations. According to 'EUROPOL Te-Sat 2011: EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report', which was released by EUROPOL in 2011, the PKK is a transnational crime and terror organization involved in the trafficking of drugs and human beings as a means of raising funds for their terrorist activities.<sup>31</sup>

The 'Turkish National Drug Report', issued by the Turkish National Police Counter Narcotics Department in 2017, presents vital information on the PKK's drug trafficking activities. According to the report, the PKK and its umbrella organization the KCK play key roles both in the heroin sent to Europe via Turkey and synthetic material trafficking from Europe to Turkey. Also, the PKK/KCK engage in heroin production in the heroin laboratories they have established in northern Iraq. The terror group is estimated to gain \$1.5 billion annually from drug trafficking.<sup>32</sup> In addition, it has been reported that the PKK controls between 70 to 80 percent of the drug trafficking activities to Europe.<sup>33</sup>

Some of the PKK's drug trafficking activities have been unraveled with operations launched against the organization by security forces. In an operation launched against the PKK in Diyarbakır province in 2014, a total of 4.700 kg of cannabis sativa, a plant used as a source of drugs, was seized. Also, in 2015, a clash took place after stopping a suspected car during which six terrorists were apprehended and one killed. 1.7 kg drugs were found in the car. In 2016, as a result of the operations launched on the PKK/KCK, a total of 19.676 kg of cannabis, 37.5 kg of heroin, 2g of cocaine, 5.784 ecstasy pills and 68 million hemp seeds were seized.<sup>34</sup>

PKK's human trafficking activities have a similar pattern to their drug trafficking activities. The terror group also regards human trafficking as a way to raise funds for its terrorism activities. In this manner, the group systematically engages in human trafficking. Many experts on the subject point out that the organization is the centerpiece of the human trafficking and immigrant smuggling activities conducted through Turkey to Europe and annually earns an average of \$300 million from these activities.<sup>35</sup>

Many experts on the subject point out that the organization is the centerpiece of the human trafficking and immigrant smuggling activities conducted through Turkey to Europe and annually earns an average of \$300 million from these activities.



# **PKK'S ACTS AGAINST LIBERAL ECONOMY**

- » Obstruction of Regional Investments
- » Obstruction of Private Enterprises
- » Forcing Shopkeepers to Take Down the Shutters
- » Racketeering Activities



## PKK's Acts Against Liberal Economy

**I**n our age, liberal economy, in which free enterprise based on free market economy is supported, is one of the main pillars for the ideal implementation of pluralist democracy. Based on the principles of individual freedom and the restriction of the state's activities with constitutional and democratic principles by taking fundamental rights and liberties into account, the pluralist political system cannot be sustainable unless supported with certain economic principles such as the free market economy, free trade and state passivity in the economy.

Economic freedom that is necessary for the smooth functioning of the liberal economy, which is based on free competition, means that employees can work at any workplace they want, while an entrepreneur can start an enterprise and a consumer can shop wherever they want. In general, terror groups constitute one of the greatest impediments to economic freedom along with their humanitarian, social and political damages to society. In this sense, the PKK/ KCK are endeavoring to impede the proper functioning of the liberal economic system and the equal distribution of economic welfare across all regions of Turkey.

The PKK/ KCK are endeavoring to impede the proper functioning of the liberal economic system and the equal distribution of economic welfare across all regions of Turkey.

### The Obstruction of Regional Investments

Based on individualism, the purpose of the liberal state is to protect political, judicial and economic order that will enable individuals to act in line with their wishes and secure justice. In a pluralist democracy based on a liberal economy, state is responsible for providing fundamental infrastructural services that will facilitate investment, production and consumption activities aside from maintaining security required to guarantee free economic activities of both citizens and non-citizens.

With an aim to end the economic gaps between regions, the Republic of Turkey's governments have so far set various infrastructural investment goals in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey. Such projects include giant and high-cost services such as large-scale dam construction

Sabotaging the infrastructure investments funded by the national economy constitutes a part of the PKK's strategy.

projects, dual highways and energy investments. The PKK/KCK, however, have always attempted to sabotage such infrastructural works, which have been conducted to encourage private investments in these regions.

As part of its propaganda, the terror group without any legitimate basis claims that the eastern and southeastern regions do not have an adequate share of the country's economy. Nevertheless, the infrastructural investments funded by the national economy have so far been sabotaged whereas the workers, technicians and engineers working on the projects have been killed in the terror group's attacks. This sabotage constitutes a part of the terror group's strategy. They aim to hamper the region's development and prosperity so as to maintain their propaganda tools.

Disturbed by the state investments that would enhance the prosperity and quality of life in the southeastern and eastern regions, the PKK/KCK also engage in efforts to hinder transportation investments aside from sabotaging large-scale projects in the regions. For instance, as the attacks organized by the PKK/KCK are examined, it can be seen that the following damages are among the examples the inflicted on transportation investments:

- » In an attack on May 17, 2012, eight construction vehicles were damaged.
- » One tractor was damaged as a result of the detonation of improvised explosives placed by the group on June 17, 2012.
- » In an attack on November 18, 2013, some construction equipment, three trucks and one tanker were damaged.
- » On August 20, 2015, 10 construction vehicles, 11 trucks, one tanker and two cars were set on fire.
- » In July, 2017, the terror group killed three workers assigned to a road maintenance project in Şırnak province. Another worker was killed in an attack organized at a construction site where the workers working on the Şırnak-Van highway construction were staying, while two other workers were killed in another attack in Uludere.<sup>36</sup>

Aside from them, the PKK claimed responsibility for a number of other attacks through the pro-PKK website ANFNews.

- » At around 9 p.m. on May 29, 2012, a group of PKK militants set fire to three excavators owned by a private firm responsible for the construction of the Van-Çatak-Şırnak highway located in the Belenoluk village of Pervari, Siirt.

PKK claimed responsibility for this attack in a news report titled “Construction Site Raided in Pervari”, which was published on May 29, 2012.<sup>37</sup>

The attack was confirmed by ANFNews as follows:



- » On August 1, 2012, two loaders, two excavators, one truck, 20 truck tires and 200 liters of mineral oil were set on fire in the coalmine pit in Görümlü village of Şırnak's Silopi district.

Responsibility for the attack was claimed through a news report published on August 1, 2012 with the title “Guerilla Raids Coalmine in Silopi, Sets Vehicles on Fire”.<sup>38</sup> ANFNews confirmed the attack as follows:



» On October 30, 2017 at around 11.30 a.m., PKK militants armed with bazookas and long barreled weapons attacked three construction vehicles owned by a construction company working on the construction of a highway in the Göllerbaşı neighborhood of Yüksekova, Hakkari.

Responsibility for this incident was claimed in a news report published on October 31, 2017 and titled “Action Against the Troops Maintaining Roadwork on Gever’s Baye Hill”<sup>39</sup>:

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KÜRDİSTAN
GÜNCEL
ROJAVA-SURİYE
KADIN
AVRUPA
DÜNYA
TOPLUM-EKOLOJİ

## Gever’in Baye Tepesi’nde yol çalışması yürüten askerlere eylem

Gever’in Baye Tepesi’nde yürütülen yol çalışmasına yönelik HPG gerillaları eylem düzenledi. Eylemde bir iş makinası imha olurken, bir makina ile bir askeri araç da tahrip edildi. Türk ordusu Skorsky tipi helikopterlerle ölü ve yaralıları aldı.



ANF
BEHDİNAN
Salı, 31 Eki 2017, 11:19

## Obstruction of Private Enterprises

Another characteristic of the liberal economic system is the protection and encouragement of private property and free enterprise. Production means belong to private persons as opposed to the state in this system, while free enterprise stands for the free movement of persons involved in production without any restrictions. While planning their investments, private entrepreneurs consider the security of the location they plan to invest in and calculate whether their investments would be rewarding.

Aside from their actions to disrupt social and political stability in eastern and southeastern Turkey, the PKK/KCK also strive to obstruct investments in the region by organizing attacks and intimidating private entrepreneurs who plan to invest in the region. In this respect, it has been reported by many sources that entrepreneurs and contractors working in the region have been threatened by the terror group and therefore their work has been disrupted or slowed down as a result.<sup>40</sup>

Since 1980s, when the PKK/KCK started their armed conflict, the terrorist organization has been hampering private sector investments and activities in the eastern and southeastern regions by resorting to blackmail and extortion. One of the most commonly known examples of this is the mass killing referred to as “Nine Engineering Employees Massacre”. On March 21, 1990, PKK members blocked a road in Kovancı, Elazığ and killed 9 engineers and a worker from Ferrochrome and Alarko companies. PKK claimed responsibility for the mass murder through its press organ Serxwebûn.<sup>41</sup>

Another publicly known PKK/KCK attack against private sector investments and activities in the region occurred during the October 6-7 incidents in 2014. As the PKK/KCK attempted an insurrection in city centers of the southeastern and eastern provinces of Turkey for the first time after many years, the plans to build hotels, holiday resorts and private hospitals in the regions were suspended as a result of the attacks. During the incidents that were incited and organized by the PKK/KCK, stores and workplaces in city centers were attacked and plundered. Also, due to the

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The right of free economic enterprise, which is among the key principles of liberal economy, has been violated numerous times by PKK/KCK with their impositions on shopkeepers.

atmosphere of insecurity caused by the incidents, both domestic and international tourism suffered great losses.<sup>42</sup> This situation has also been stressed by the entrepreneurs who have investments in the region. For instance, Şanlıurfa Regional Tourist Guides Chamber Chairman Mehmet Kamil Türkmen claims that around 2.000 tours were cancelled and the entire region incurred losses corresponding to around 180 billion TL due to the October 6-7 incidents.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, it was also reported that a total of 523 workplaces suffered extensive damage in the Van province during the same period.<sup>44</sup>

### **Forcing Shopkeepers to Take Down the Shutters**

Each year, the PKK/KCK force shopkeepers to close their shops on the days considered special by the terror group and those refusing to comply are blacklisted and threatened to be punished. The right of free economic enterprise, which is among the key principles of liberal economy, has been violated numerous times by PKK/KCK with their impositions on shopkeepers. The terror group has been forcing shopkeepers to take down their shutters in various cities and towns by threatening them either verbally or at gunpoint. In the cases included in court records after the complaints of the shopkeepers in the region, injured parties stated that the terror group threatened to set fire to their shops unless they shut down their businesses.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, the PKK has called upon shopkeepers to close their businesses through its news portal ANFNews.

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KÜRDİSTAN GÜNCEL ROJAVA-SURİYE KADIN AVRUPA DÜNYA TOPLUM-EKOLOJİ

## Halk İnisyatifi: Yarın Amed'de yaşam durmalıdır

Amed Halk İnisyatifi, Sur'a yönelik devlet terörü ve katliam girişimlerine karşı direniş çağrısında bulundu. Amed halkına çağrı yapan İnisyatif, kentte yarın esnafın kepenk ve kontak kapatacağını ve yürüyüşe herkesin katılması gerektiğini duyurdu.

ANF AMED Salı, 23 Şub 2016, 14:25

**ANF NEWS** English | Kurdî | العربية | فارسی

KÜRDİSTAN GÜNCEL ROJAVA-SURİYE KADIN AVRUPA DÜNYA TOPLUM-EKOLOJİ

## Amed Halk İnisyatifi'nden 'yaşamı durdurma' çağrısı

Amed Halk İnisyatifi, AKP faşizmine karşı Kürt halkını kepenk kapatma ve yaşamı durdurmaya çağırdı.

ANF AMED Pazartesi, 31 Eki 2016, 13:49

The PKK/KCK has been collecting money from the businessmen in the region and citizens engaging in livestock raising and trading. The group takes various products from citizens such as livestock for example when they cannot pay cash.

### **Racketeering Activities**

PKK/KCK militants engage in racketeering both in Turkey and abroad to raise funds for their terrorist activities. They maintain racketeering activities under the name of collecting so-called taxes and employ the money they raise to organize terror attacks and provide human resources, weapons, ammunitions, provisions and other supplies to the terrorist organization.

The operations launched so far have revealed that the PKK/KCK has been collecting money from the businessmen in the region and citizens engaging in livestock raising and trading. The group takes various products from citizens such as livestock for example when they cannot pay cash. Also, it is known that workplaces and machinery belonging to those refusing to pay the PKK are subsequently vandalized and rendered unusable.

## Conclusion

**T**errorism has become one of the biggest threats to humanity in the 21st century. With rising communication and means of transportation, terror threats have become a security problem that exceed borders. Various terror groups have been active in different regions of the world in order to realize their disruptive goals. Turkey is one of the leading countries in the world fighting a war on terror. The country's counter-terrorism fight, especially its fight against the PKK/KCK, dates back to late 1970s. Aiming to disrupt the territorial integrity of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria by uniting their self-proclaimed autonomous regions under the umbrella of the KCK; the PKK/KCK pose a serious threat to all of humanity not just Turkey and the region.

Originally emerged as a Marxist-Leninist group but then evolved into an ethnicity-based terrorist organization, the PKK has followed a strategy that significantly disrupts other groups' rights and quality of life in both ideological and practical terms. Within this scope, the group has adopted a totalitarian structure that leaves no room for any other formation which might offer an alternative to the group's leadership. To maintain this rigid order, they systematically employ various methods including the suppression of dissident voices and intra-organizational executions. In line with their totalitarian structure, the PKK/KCK has not allowed the formation of pluralist policies that would present self-expression opportunities to Kurdish groups on a democratic ground. As the history of the terrorist organization demonstrates, it can be seen that the PKK/KCK has systematically suppressed various Kurdish political groups by either intimidating or even assassinating their leaders.

Although they claim to be fighting for the rights of an ethnic group and adopt a discourse as such, the terror attacks organized by the PKK/KCK undoubtedly pose an immediate threat to pluralist values. With its pluralist and liberal characteristics, democracy is the ideal political system to protect the rule of law and fundamental human rights. In Turkey, the smooth functioning of pluralist democracy depends on the protection and impro-

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vement of political, social and liberal economic values. That being the case, it is obvious that the PKK/KCK constitutes to be a great danger to humanity and democracy by frequently resorting to attacks that target particularly civilians. In view of this, many independent international human rights organizations have reported civilian tortures and murders perpetrated by the PKK/KCK particularly in Syria over the past years. Also, the terror group is known to have organized numerous suicide attacks, which is one of the most atrocious methods a terror group can employ to achieve its goals. In addition, a number of international observation missions have reported that the terror group has recruited children and used them in terror attacks in Turkey and Syria. Lastly, during the Syrian civil war, the PKK/KCK and its other operatives have been involved in ethnic cleansing and forced displacement by taking advantage of the authority gap in the region. The terrorist organization's Syrian offshoots the PYD/YPG have destroyed many Arab and Turkmen villages and killed or displaced their locals.

In today's world, liberal economy, in which free enterprise based on a free market economy is supported, is one of the main pillars for the ideal implementation of pluralist democracy. Freedom necessary for the smooth functioning of a liberal economy, which is based on free competition, means that an employee can work at any workplace they want, whereas an entrepreneur can start an enterprise and a consumer can shop wherever they want. In general, terror groups constitute one of the greatest impediments to economic freedom along with their humanitarian, social and political damages to society. In this sense, the PKK/KCK is seeking to impede the proper practice of the liberal economic system and the equal distribution of economic welfare across all regions in Turkey with their terror attacks. For this purpose, the terror group has been targeting the state's infrastructural investments and services in eastern and southeastern regions. In addition to this, the terrorist group has been impeding private entrepreneurs who plan to invest in the region by organizing attacks on the investments or intimidating the entrepreneurs.

In conclusion, considering oppressive and violent organizational structure and activity profile of the PKK, it is obvious that there is no difference between this organization and other terror groups like Daesh and Al Qaeda. Just like Daesh and Al Qaeda, the PKK does not abstain from disrupting the values of free society in order to achieve its political goals. Consequently, the genuine contribution of all international actors to the fight against the PKK is of vital importance to protect universal humanitarian and democratic values and guarantee international peace and security.

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