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## **Updates**

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## **Kurds in Turkey**

Total **Area** of Turkey: 779,452 sq. km.

**Capital:** Ankara

**Country Population:** 54,567,000 (1998 estimate, US Census Bureau)

**Group Population:** 12,913,000 (20%)

**Religion:** Sunni Muslim with a minority of Shi'i Muslims.

The Republic of Turkey was established in 1923.

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## **Overview**

The **Kurds** in Turkey are mostly Sunni Muslims but they belong to a different school of jurisprudence than the Sunni Turkish majority. There is also a minority of Shi'i Muslims among Turkey's **Kurds**. They speak the Kurmanji and Zaza dialects of Kurdish, which are mutually unintelligible, and are divided into tribes which tend to receive more loyalty than does Kurdish nationalism.

They live in the southeast provinces of Turkey which border upon or are located near Syria, Iraq and Iran (all of which also have significant Kurdish minorities) and constitute a majority of the following provinces: Mardin, Siirt, Hakkari, Diyarbakir, Bitlis, Mus, Van and Agri. In addition, significant numbers also live in the provinces of Urfa, Adiyaman, Malatya, Elazig, Tunceli, Erzincan, Bingol, and Kars. Because of deportations and voluntary migrations, some live in other parts of Turkey including Istanbul. Much of this region is mountainous.

The majority of **Kurds** in the southeast live in small villages and towns and depend upon agriculture for their livelihoods, however, some are still semi-nomadic. They have a feudal economic structure which results in the investment of much of the region's surplus capital elsewhere in Turkey, thus making the Kurdish region among the poorest in Turkey. The region also has a shortage of doctors and other health care facilities. The illiteracy rate of Turkey's **Kurds** is considerably higher than that of the rest of the population with many villages not having access even to primary schools. Those primary schools that do exist in the region tend to be inadequate and are run by the Turkish government which mandates that the language of instruction must be Turkish and uses the schools to forcibly assimilate the **Kurds**. The result is that many Kurdish families who have access to schools not sending their children to them.

It is hard to measure their exact numbers due to undercounting in Turkey's census and assimilation as well as Turkey's long standing policy of denying their existence as anything other than "mountain Turks." For this reason estimates have ranged from 10% to 24% of Turkey's population. The figure of 20% used here is based upon the Phase II codings of this project.

The **Kurds** in Turkey can be traced back as far as 2000 B.C. and take great pride in claiming descent from the Medes who overthrew Ninveh in 612 B.C. They received the name **Kurds** from the conquering Arabs in the 7th century, at which time the **Kurds** began their conversion to Islam. Prior to World War I they were under Ottoman rule. After the war, despite promises of an independent state, the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923 recognized the Republic of Turkey without making any provisions for the **Kurds**. From 1925 to 1943 there were four major rebellions by the **Kurds**, all put down by Turkey's superior military. Finally, on August 15, 1984, another rebellion began which continues until today.

The relationship between the **Kurds** in Turkey and their brethren in Turkey, Syria and Iran has been inconsistent. At times they have been allied and at times they have had their differences and occasionally even fought each other. Kurdish rebel forces have launched attacks from all three countries and have training camps in Syria's Beka'a valley and in Iraq. Also, due to the Iran-Iraq war, tens of thousands of Iraqi Kurdish refugees fled to Turkey and as of 1989 about 36,000 remained there in refugee camps.

From nearly the time of the inception of the state, Turkish policy toward the **Kurds** has been a nationalist policy of Turkification. Until 1991, the Turkish government has denied that the **Kurds** even exist calling them "Mountain Turks." This policy includes the overt suppression of all aspects of Kurdish culture. The Kurdish language is banned in schools, publications, all dealings with the government and even speaking. Kurdish names of towns and villages have been changed and **Kurds** cannot give their children Kurdish names. Teaching and research on the history and society of the **Kurds** is forbidden. There have been forced population transfers and there are repeated and widespread allegations of the arrest, torture and even assassination of anyone remotely associated with Kurdish pan-nationalism. The Turkish government also censors the press of anything it considers to advocate Kurdish nationalism and often arrests and prosecutes journalists for engaging in such actions. It is even legal to slander the **Kurds** in Turkey up to and including the point of calling for the physical extermination of the **Kurds**. All forms of association among **Kurds** are effectively illegal. This is in addition to the economic exploitation and armed suppression of the **Kurds** by the Turkish government as well as mass arrests and torture.

### Major Kurdish Parties and Associations

There are many Kurdish organizations in Turkey, most of them illegal. The following three are those that have been active since 1990.

**The Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK):** The PKK was formed in 1974 by Abdullah Ocalan, who still leads the Party, and was officially established as a party in 1978. It is guided by a Marxist/Leninist ideology and calls for the independence of Turkish Kurdistan (as well as other parts of Kurdistan). Until 15 August 1984, it engaged in mostly political and organizing activities but since then has been leading a violent rebellion against Turkey. From 1990 to 1994, it has maintained a troop strength of about 10,000. In addition to military actions, the PKK has also attempted to help Turkey's **Kurds** whenever possible, for instance bringing doctors to villages in need of them.

**Hizbollah (Party of God):** Little is known about this Kurdish Islamic fundamentalist party. It is not the same

Hizbollah that is well known for its terrorist activities in Lebanon and throughout the world. It is believed to have been formed in 1991. It calls for an Islamic government in Turkey which includes both Turks and **Kurds**. Since its inception it has engaged in numerous clashes with the PKK. The Turkish government claims that it is responsible for many assassinations and disappearances of Kurdish nationalist for which the PKK blames the Turkish government. The PKK claims that it is supported by the Turkish government.

**The People's Labor Party (HEP) / The Democratic Party (DEP) / The People's Democratic Party (HADEP):** This party was founded in 1990 when 10 pro-Kurdish members of parliament broke off from the Social Democrats, Turkey's main opposition party, and formed the HEP. In 1993 the HEP was outlawed for being pro-Kurdish and its members founded the DEP which was outlawed in 1994 when its members formed the HADEP. This party is not officially pro-Kurdish but in practice it is. Its members attend pro-Kurdish rallies and have been known to yell out pro-Kurdish slogans in Parliament. It is believed to have ties to the PKK but will not openly acknowledge this to be the case in order to maintain its legal status which, as noted above, has often been revoked for much less. This party primarily engages in electoral politics and publicly condemns violence by both **Kurds** and Turks. In January 1999, the government formally accused HADEP of being a cover for the PKK and arrested the party's leaders.

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### Chronology

**January 1990:** A West German sociologist was arrested for writing pro-Kurdish remarks in a history book.

**February 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces, nine Kurdish rebels were reported killed. One Kurd was reported arrested or captured and seven were taken hostage by Kurdish rebels.

**5 February 1990:** About 5000 Iraqi **Kurds** protesting against Iraq in the Turkish town of Diyarbakir clashed with Turkish Security Forces. Ninety-five were arrested.

**March 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 22 Kurdish rebels, three members of Turkish security forces and 14 civilians were reported killed.

**March 1990:** Widespread protests, strikes and boycotts of schools were reported throughout Kurdistan in connection with New Roz (the Kurdish new Year). About 5000 protestors at a funeral of a Kurdish rebel in the city of Nusaybin on March 14 were fired upon by Turkish troops who wounded many and arrested about 700. On March 15, about 15,000 demonstrators in Cizre (which constitutes about half of the town's population) underwent a similar experience with 80 injured, at least five killed and 155 arrested. It is clear that these two incidents are just examples of many other similar incidents which were not reported.

**15 March 1990:** An editor of a Turkish weekly magazine was arrested for saying that **Kurds** should be allowed an independent state.

**28 March 1990:** Nine Turkish **Kurds** occupied the Turkish Airlines office in Copenhagen in protest of the month's events.

**April 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces, a total of 75 people were reported killed including 48 Kurdish rebels, two members of the Turkish security forces and 12 civilians.

Sixteen **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. The Turkish government imposed marshal law in Turkey's Kurdish region. Newspapers and printing houses were closed. Also entire towns were leveled and their inhabitants deported.

**20 April 1990:** Twenty relatives of Kurdish political prisoners were beaten by Turkish police.

**May 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces a total of 64 people were reported killed including 40 Kurdish rebels, six members of Turkish security forces and 12 civilians.

**8 May 1990:** Turkey banned factory sit-ins, go-slows, work boycotts and "unauthorized" strikes and lockouts in 11 Kurdish provinces.

**27 May 1990:** About 100 Kurdish prisoners and human rights activists went on a hunger strike in protest of rules allowing for deportations and press curbs.

**June 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 20 Kurdish rebels, 12 members of Turkish security forces and 32 civilians were reported killed. Many Iraqi Kurdish refugees in Turkey were forced back into Iraq.

**2 June 1990:** Five Iraqi **Kurds** and a Turkish policeman were injured during a march by 2000 Iraqi **Kurds**.

**8 June 1990:** Ten pro-Kurdish members of Parliament broke away from Turkey's main opposition party, the Social Democrats, and formed a new political party called the People's Labor Party (HEP).

**July 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 47 Kurdish rebels and 12 members of Turkish security forces were reported killed.

**August 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 16 Kurdish rebels and five civilians were reported killed.

**August-September 1990:** The 60,000 troops stationed in southeast Turkey, where most of Turkey's **Kurds** live, were reenforced by another 35,000 due to the Gulf Crisis.

**28 August 1990:** A Kurdish representative to the U.N. Human Rights Commission accused Turkey of using the Gulf Crisis to forcibly move thousands of **Kurds** out of their mountain homeland and of executing those who refused to go. Turkey denied the accusation.

**September 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 29 Kurdish rebels and three members of Turkish security forces are reported killed. Twenty-six **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**15 October 1990:** Two hundred Kurdish prisoners in a prison in southeast Turkey went on a one week hunger strike to protest the transfer of 27 fellow inmates to other prisons.

**November 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces two Kurdish rebels and seven members of Turkish security forces were reported killed. Ten **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**12 November 1990:** Four were arrested during a small march in support of pro-Kurdish hunger strikers.

**December 1990:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 12 Kurdish rebels were reported killed. In the numerous clashes between Kurdish rebels in 1990 and Turkish forces 315 Kurdish rebels, 153 members of Turkish security forces and 174 civilians were reported killed and 181 **Kurds** were reported captured.

**9 January 1991:** Two dozen Turkish **Kurds** peacefully occupied the office of Norway's ruling party to protest the government's plans to send missiles to Turkey.

**February 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces nine Kurdish rebels and one civilians were reported killed. Thirty-two **Kurds** were reported arrested or capture. Turkish troop strength along the Iraqi border reached 180,000.

**1 February 1991:** The Turkish cabinet decided to ease the ban on the Kurdish language. The bans on speaking Kurdish and Kurdish language music were lifted. However the Kurdish language still could not be used in printed material, public gatherings and demonstrations or the schools. Since the bans upon speaking in Kurdish and Kurdish language music had been historically ineffective, critics argued that this was no real change in policy.

**March 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces three Kurdish rebels and four civilians were reported killed. Two hostages were taken by Kurdish rebels.

**2 March 1991:** Two local people and one soldier were killed when nearly 1000 **Kurds** fought troops with sticks and stones in Diyarbakir during a protest against killings in a previous riot.

**6 March 1991:** Thirty **Kurds** briefly occupied the Turkish Airlines office in Oslo in protest against killings of **Kurds** by Turkish security forces.

**7 March 1991:** Nearly 2000 Kurdish villagers marching in Dargecit were fired upon by government troops. Rioting ensued with many injured and at least 100 arrested.

**9 March 1991:** A crowd of 1000 including 3 HEP members of Parliament protested over the killing of a woman in a riot in southeast Turkey. The crowd also chanted pro-Kurdish slogans.

**15 March 1991:** Police fired upon about 1000 protestors in southeast Turkey injuring many and arresting about 200.

**20 March 1991:** New Roz (the Kurdish new year) was openly celebrated across Turkish Kurdistan. Despite orders to keep a low profile, police fired upon demonstrators in many villages causing riots. This was the first time the open celebration of New Roz was allowed in Turkey.

**April 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces nine civilians were reported killed. Thirty-five **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**May 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 17 Kurdish rebels and eight members of Turkish security forces were reported killed. Turkey decided to bring more armed vehicles into

Kurdistan and established 53 new military posts there.

**June 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces, a total of 60 people were reported killed including four Kurdish rebels and six members of Turkish security forces. Five **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**July 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 29 Kurdish rebels, three members of Turkish security forces and 16 civilians were reported killed. Four **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. A series of demonstrations took place in the city of Diyarbakir beginning with a protest of the arrests of mourners on the way to the funerals of separatist guerrillas. The demonstrators numbered 25,000 on at least one occasion and there were several clashes with police. Hundreds were wounded and hundreds arrested. An occupation of the Turkish embassy in London and an attack upon the Turkish embassy in Bern by Turkish **Kurds** occurred in protest of these events.

**9 July 1991:** The body of HEP chairman Vahdet Aydin was found. He had apparently been tortured before his death. Security forces were blamed for the death but the government denied responsibility for the incident.

**10 July 1991:** Twelve were killed and 122 wounded in a clash between police and 25,000 mourners shouting pro-PKK slogans at the funeral of HEP chairman Vahdet Aydin. Several other smaller protests occurred in the days after the funeral.

**August 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 61 Kurdish rebels, 23 members of Turkish security forces and two civilians were reported killed. Three hundred twenty-six **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. Kurdish rebels also captured seven soldiers. These clashes included Turkish attacks upon northern Iraq with both ground and air forces.

**3 August 1991:** Two armed PKK soldiers abducted 10 German tourists from a camp site in eastern Turkey. They were released about a week later.

**8-9 August 1991:** Turkish **Kurds** in Europe attacked and/or occupied Turkish interests in Berlin, Norway, the Hague and Brussels.

**31 August 1991:** Five western tourists were abducted by Kurdish rebels in eastern Turkey.

**September 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 50 people were reported killed including 19 Kurdish rebels, six members of Turkish security forces and five civilians. Five **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured and four members of Turkish security forces were reported kidnapped by Kurdish rebels but were released after about 3 hours. About 3000 Iraqi Kurdish refugees returned to Iraq.

**October 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 10 Kurdish rebels, 51 members of Turkish security forces and 12 civilians were reported killed. Twelve **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. Also, seven soldiers previously kidnapped by Kurdish rebels were released. These clashes included several Turkish air and ground attacks upon northern Iraq.

The PKK endorsed the pro-Kurdish People's Labor Party (HEP) which was running with the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP), Turkey's main opposition party, because the HEP has been banned from

the October 20 elections due to its pro-Kurdish stance. It won 22 seats (out of 450). The HEP denied that it had any links with the PKK. The PKK also claimed responsibility for a series of shootings and bombings prior to the elections.

**November 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 15 Kurdish rebels, six members of Turkish security forces and five civilians were reported killed. One hundred three **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured and one Turk was reported kidnapped by Kurdish rebels.

**4 November 1991:** An Iraqi Kurdish leader claimed that Iraq was arming Turkish **Kurds** in order to stop food and supplies from reaching northern Iraq through Turkey.

**6 November 1991:** Newly elected Kurdish delegates chanted Kurdish nationalist slogans in Parliament.

**8 November 1991:** Kurdish protestors attacked the Turkish embassy in Oslo.

**27 November 1991:** More than 1500 shops were closed in the southeast Turkish towns of Bismil and Idil to mark the 13th anniversary of the founding of the PKK.

**December 1991:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 15 Kurdish rebels, 10 members of Turkish security forces, 11 civilians and one Kurdish informer were reported killed. Twenty-three **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured and 17 Turks were kidnapped by Kurdish rebels.

**10 December 1991:** Five thousand university students in Diyarbakir boycotted classes in protest of the alleged killing of a fellow student by Turkish security forces.

**27 December 1991:** The chairman of the pro-Kurdish HEP condemned both Turks and **Kurds** for the violence of their conflict. **Kurds** attacked the Turkish consulates in Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Rotterdam and Brussels in protest of the Turkish treatment of its **Kurds**.

**January 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces nine Kurdish rebels, two members of Turkish security forces and eight civilians were reported killed. These clashes included the bombing of Kurdish mountain strongholds by the Turks.

**February 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces six Kurdish rebels, one member of Turkish security forces and 32 civilians were reported killed. These clashes included the bombing of Kurdish mountain strongholds by the Turks.

**18 February 1992:** A reporter working for a pro-Kurdish newspaper was shot dead by gunmen believed to be working for Turkish security forces.

**20 February 1992:** The PKK killed two men it accused of being collaborators. They were said to be members of Hizbollah.

**21 February 1992:** Seventy protestors in the province of Mardin clashed with police. One protestor was killed and two were wounded.

**March 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces six Kurdish rebels, four members of Turkish security forces and 32 civilians were reported killed. Fourteen **Kurds** were reported

arrested or captured. These clashes included the bombing of northern Iraq by Turkish forces.

**March 1992:** Kurdish protestors attacked Kurdish missions in several German cities, Copenhagen, London and Paris.

**21 March 1992:** Tens of thousands of **Kurds** protested throughout the country on New Roz (the Kurdish new year). Violence and clashes with government forces occurred at some of the demonstrations and at least 55 were killed and about 2000 arrested. Reports indicated that Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel told the army to stop killing civilians but the army refused to obey.

**31 March 1992:** Fourteen out of 20 Kurdish nationalist members of Parliament who originally come from the HEP departed Turkey's ruling coalition and resigned from the Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP) in protest over government violence toward **Kurds**.

**April 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 67 Kurdish rebels, 29 members of Turkish security forces and 11 civilians were reported killed. One hundred seventy-two **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. Also Kurdish rebels released six previously captured hostages.

**6 April 1992:** Fifty Kurdish demonstrators were arrested for taking part in an "illegal" demonstration in the Mediterranean Turkish town of Mersin.

**8 April 1992:** Iraqi Kurdish rebel leaders agreed to stop the PKK's cross border raids from Iraqi territory. Iraqi Kurdish leaders had been trying to maintain good relations with Turkey in order to maintain their "lifeline to the West."

**17 April 1992:** Turkey and Syria signed an agreement to work together to close PKK bases in Lebanon's Syrian controlled Bek'a valley. (As of the writing of this report, these bases have not been closed.)

**May 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 133 Kurdish rebels, 68 members of Turkish security forces and 14 civilians were reported killed. Twenty-eight **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. These clashes included the bombing of northern Iraq by Turkish forces.

**June 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 64 Kurdish rebels, 12 members of Turkish security forces and 44 civilians were reported killed. Forty-nine **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**July 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 104 people were reported killed including 41 Kurdish rebels, 21 members of Turkish security forces and 16 civilians. Forty-six **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**31 July 1992:** In retaliation for an Iraqi Kurd pledge to halt PKK attacks from Iraqi territory, the PKK cut off a supply rout to Iraqi Kurdish controlled northern Iraq.

**August 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 85 Kurdish rebels, 40 members of Turkish security forces and 22 civilians were reported killed. Two hundred fifty-three **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. These clashes included a major battle in the town of Sirnak where 20,000 out of 25,000 residents fled the town.



**August-September 1992:** Three thousand of about 20,000 remaining Iraqi Kurdish refugees in Turkey returned to Iraq.

**15-16 August 1992:** Thousands of **Kurds** in southeast Turkey closed their shops to mark the 8th anniversary of the PKK's campaign for an independent state. Demonstrations were held in many towns, some of which resulted in clashes with police. One hundred-thirty demonstrators were detained and five were killed.

**25 August 1992:** Several hundred **Kurds** demonstrated in Paris over the treatment of **Kurds** in Turkey.

**September 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 197 Kurdish rebels, 86 members of Turkish security forces and 39 civilians were reported killed. Two Turks were kidnapped by Kurdish rebels. These clashes included the Bombing of northern Iraq by Turkish forces.

**13 September 1992:** Iran and Turkey agreed to boost border security and clamp down on each other's Kurdish opposition. Each state's opposition used the other state as a base for its operations.

**14 September 1992:** Iran's Interior Minister promised to help Turkey fight against its secessionist **Kurds**.

**21 September 1992:** Turkish troops attacked and burned down houses in the Kurdish village of Caglayan.

**28 September 1992:** Eight HEP members were arrested on charges of separatism based upon pro-PKK slogans and speeches that they made at a party function. Five were released a week later.

**October 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 263 Kurdish rebels, 15 members of Turkish security forces and 61 civilians were reported killed. Four hundred twenty **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. Police detained 19 Turks who were planning attacks on **Kurds** in Southeast Turkey.

**4 October 1992:** Iraqi **Kurds** began to try to forcibly drive Turkish **Kurds** from northern Iraq. Turkish **Kurds** retaliated by halting all Turkish traffic to northern Iraq.

**6 October 1992:** Turkish planes attacked targets in northern Iraq in apparent support of the Iraqi Kurdish drive against Turkish Kurdish guerrillas. Following this, Turkey sent 20,000 troops across the border after the 8000 PKK soldiers suspected of being there. Turkish troops were supported by tanks, helicopters and airplanes.

**14 October 1992:** Turkey accused Iraq of arming Turkish **Kurds** with sophisticated weaponry.

**23 October 1992:** Armed **Kurds** occupied the Turkish consulate in Strasbourg.

**November 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 34 Kurdish rebels, 13 members of Turkish security forces and 14 civilians were reported killed. Ten **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**5 November 1992:** Turkey claimed that its offensive into northern Iraq has killed 1800 Kurdish rebels while only 23 Turkish soldiers were killed. Turkish journalists said that 1000 Turkish **Kurds** surrendered to Iraqi

Kurdish forces. They were expected to be taken to be settled near the Iranian border. Two thousand seven hundred were believed to be wounded and 2500 were still fighting.

**12 November 1992:** The number of surrendered Turkish **Kurds** reached 1400.

**Mid-November 1992:** Turkish troops left Iraq. The Turks claimed to have killed 2000 Kurdish rebels. The PKK claimed that only 150 were killed.

**17 November 1992:** Turkish **Kurds**, under an accord between the PKK and Iraqi Kurdish forces, lifted their embargo of northern Iraq. The PKK also agreed to release three Turkish soldiers it had previously captured.

**December 1992:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 25 Kurdish rebels, five members of Turkish security forces and 22 civilians were reported killed. Three **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**27 December 1992:** Turkey requested the extradition of 2000 Turkish **Kurds** being held by Iraqi **Kurds**. Other than those killed in the October-November offensive into northern Iraq, the Turkish government claims to have killed 1000 PKK soldiers. It also reports that 467 soldiers, 113 government paid guards and 552 civilians were killed.

**January 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 167 Kurdish rebels, seven members of Turkish security forces and nine civilians were reported killed. Sixty **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. These clashes included a bombing attack upon a Kurdish mountain stronghold where 150 of 300 were believed to have been killed.

**26 January 1993:** Fifteen Kurdish politicians and 700 **Kurds** began a hunger strike in Brussels to pressure Western governments to prevent what they claimed is a Turkish plan for genocide in Kurdistan.

**February 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces seven Kurdish rebels and two civilians were reported killed. Eighty-six **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. Kurdish rebels threatened to attack Turkish tourist resorts.

**10 February 1993:** Most of the 1000 Kurdish prisoners of a prison in Diyarbakir went on a hunger strike and clashed with guards to protest conditions there including beatings and restrictions on visits by relatives.

**27 February 1993:** A member of the Hizbollah party was shot dead by rival Kurdish rebels.

**March 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 87 Kurdish rebels, seven members of Turkish security forces and three civilians were reported killed. Ninety-six **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. These clashes included the bombing of Kurdish mountain strongholds.

**1 March 1993:** Reuters reported that Kurdish guerrilla attacks upon oil installations in southeastern Turkey have hampered oil exploration and production. These attacks often go unreported in the press.

**5 March 1993:** Reuters reported that 140 people had died in the past year in street shootouts believed to be part of a struggle between the PKK and Hizbollah. Also, there were reports that Islamic fundamentalists were spreading propaganda in southeast Turkish schools.

**9 March 1993:** Members of the HEP appealed for restraint from both **Kurds** and Turks for the upcoming New Roz (the Kurdish new year) celebrations.

**17 March 1993:** Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK's leader, called for a cease-fire for the New Roz celebrations from March 20 to April 15 on the condition that Turkish forces did not attack.

**21 March 1993:** Tens of thousands of Turkish **Kurds** marked New Roz with only minor outbreaks of violence. A few "unauthorized demonstrations" were broken up.

**23 March 1993:** Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel ruled out negotiating with the PKK but acknowledged that past attempts to assimilate **Kurds** against their will were mistaken.

**24 March 1993:** Kurdish militants seized hostages at Turkish consulates in Marseille and Munich. Other Kurdish attacks upon Turkish interests in Europe occurred in Bern, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Lyon, Hamburg, Hanover and Bonn. All of these attacks appeared to have been coordinated and occurred within minutes of each other.

**26 March 1993:** The Turkish government broke the cease-fire with military operations in seven Kurdish provinces.

**April 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 17 Kurdish rebels and two members of Turkish security forces were reported killed. Twenty-seven **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**16 April 1993:** Despite Turkish provocations, PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan extended the cease fire until further notice on condition that the Turks ceased their "search operations." Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel rejected these conditions.

**May 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 107 Kurdish rebels, 36 members of Turkish security forces and seven civilians were reported killed. Sixty-eight **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. Kurdish rebels also captured twenty-two soldiers who were shortly thereafter rescued by Turkish forces.

**23 May 1993:** The Turkish government offered amnesty to Kurdish rebels who have committed no crimes if they surrendered voluntarily. Kurdish rebels replied with an ambush in which 33 soldiers were killed and 22 briefly captured. PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan said that this was a warning and that the cease-fire was still on.

**27 May 1993:** The PKK abducted 16 roadworkers in Diyarbakir.

**June 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 96 Kurdish rebels, 56 members of Turkish security forces and 22 civilians were reported killed. Fifty-two **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured and Kurdish rebels kidnapped three civilians.

**7 June 1993:** Iran, Syria and Turkey met to discuss the Kurdish problem in northern Iraq which they all feel is a threat to their security.

**8 June 1993:** PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan announced that the PKK was resuming the its military struggle because Turkey had ignored the PKK's unilateral cease-fire.

**10-11 June 1993:** Kurdish rebels warned tourists to stay away from Turkey and kidnapped a Tourism Ministry official.

**24 June 1993:** Kurdish militants attacked Turkish interests across Europe over European support for Turkey including attacks in Munich, London, Stockholm, Marseille, and Bern. One protestor was killed in Switzerland.

**July 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 145 Kurdish rebels, 86 members of Turkish security forces and 94 civilians were reported killed. Forty-nine **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. Also, Kurdish rebels kidnapped and released seven workers.

**July 1993:** Rebel **Kurds** kidnapped six European tourists. The PKK said it would release them if Turkey called off its military operations. The PKK also threatened to continue to attack Turkish tourist sites and bombed a seaside resort. The hostages would be freed in August.

**4 July 1993:** Several hundred **Kurds** protested outside the Swiss parliament demanding the prosecution of the Turkish ambassador over the death of a Kurd in an earlier incident.

**14 July 1993:** The pro-Kurdish HEP was banned from Parliament on charges of "defending the national existence, identity and rights of the Kurdish people" and four deputies were expelled from Parliament. Shortly after this the Democratic Party (DEP) was formed to replace the HEP.

**15 July 1993:** The editor of Turkey's only pro-Kurdish newspaper was arrested for publishing separatist propaganda.

**22 July 1993:** The Turkish government decided to launch a 220 million dollar investment program in the separatist southeast in order to appease Kurdish rebels.

**August 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 179 Kurdish rebels, 94 members of Turkish security forces and 103 civilians were reported killed. Two hundred thirty-five **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. Also, Kurdish rebels kidnapped 91 Turks, many of which were later released.

**14 August 1993:** Ten people were killed and 51 wounded when police opened fire during a pro-Kurdish protest at Digor.

**17 August 1993:** Two German tourists and a New Zealander were Kidnapped by Kurdish rebel forces.

**20 August 1993:** Twenty-five thousand **Kurds** fled the town of Yuksekova in eastern Turkey after it came under mortar, rocket and machinegun fire. Fewer than 500 residents remained. **Kurds** and Turks blamed each other for the attack.

**21 August 1993:** Three Swiss and an Italian tourist were kidnapped by Kurdish rebels.

**26 August 1993:** Six German tourists were injured in a bombing by Kurdish rebels.

**September 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 160 Kurdish rebels, 33 members of Turkish security forces and 34 civilians were reported killed. Seventy-nine **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured and 6 kidnapped by Kurdish rebels.

**4 September 1993:** A pro-Kurdish member of Parliament was killed when gunmen opened fire on 6 pro-Kurdish Democratic Party (DEP) deputies touring a constituency in Batman. The PKK and the DEP claimed that security forces were responsible and the Government blamed Hizbollah. Later in the month gunmen attacked the home of the murdered deputy.

**5 September 1993:** The number of DEP/HEP members murdered since July 1991 reached 54. The PKK blamed the government for most of these deaths and the government blamed Hizbollah.

**15 September 1993:** Yasar Kaya, leader of the pro-Kurdish DEP was detained by police on the orders of a state security court prosecutor. Kaya was not a member of Parliament.

**16 September 1993:** About 50 Kurdish protestors outside of the office of a German newspaper in Bonn demanded that the world press pay attention to the human rights abuses in Turkish Kurdistan.

**24 September 1993:** Kurdish civilians complained that Turkish security forces used battles with the PKK as an excuse to fire upon civilians and wreck Kurdish towns.

**October 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 235 Kurdish rebels, 43 members of Turkish security forces and 266 civilians were reported killed. Two hundred eight **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. These clashes included a Turkish attack into northern Iraq. The PKK claimed that it killed 1300 Turkish soldiers and captured 186. It also claimed that only 112 of its members were killed and three captured.

**7 October 1993:** **Kurds** said that Turkish security forces were forcing the evacuation of many Kurdish villages near PKK strongholds in the Cudi mountains. They also accused the Turks of attacking many of these villages. Human rights activists said that 729 southeastern villages had been emptied since October 1991. The Turkish government claimed that the PKK was responsible for this.

**15 October 1993:** The U.S. oil firm Mobile Corp. suspended its operations in southeastern Turkey in response to a series of attacks and extortion attempts by the PKK.

**18 October 1993:** The PKK accused foreign journalists of biased reporting and told them to leave southeast Turkey or risk becoming targets. It also ordered all foreign and domestic newspaper offices in southeastern Turkey to close down. Turkish newspapers complied.

**20 October 1993:** Yasar Kaya, leader of the pro-Kurdish DEP, and two other party members were each sentenced to two years in prison for making separatist speeches.

**21 October 1993:** The PKK banned all political parties from Kurdistan accusing them of collusion with Turkish authorities. It also kidnapped a local leader of the Social Democrat Populist Party, which was a member of Turkey's governing coalition, in Diyarbakir.

**November 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 129 Kurdish rebels, eight members of Turkish security forces and nine civilians were reported killed. One hundred seventy-seven **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**4 November 1993:** About thirty **Kurds** protested in support of the PKK outside of the Turkish embassy in Oslo. Also several attacks on Turkish targets occurred in Germany and Britain.

**5 November 1993:** A Turkish official met with Syrian president Assad to discuss how to curb Kurdish violence in southeast Turkey.

**December 1993:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 73 Kurdish rebels, 22 members of Turkish security forces and 19 civilians were reported killed. Fifty-three **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. These clashes included attacks into northern Iraq by Turkish air and ground forces. Iran and Turkey reached an agreement to coordinate their efforts against each other's Kurdish opposition.

**11 December 1993:** Turkish police raided the pro-Kurdish newspaper Ozgur Gundem and claimed evidence seized in the raid links the newspaper to the PKK.

**14 December 1993:** Turkish police arrested the Secretary General of the Pro-Kurdish DEP.

**23 December 1993:** A Turkish parliamentary commission called upon Parliament to lift the parliamentary immunity of four Kurdish DEP deputies who could face charges of sedition carrying the death penalty.

**January 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 254 Kurdish rebels, 16 members of Turkish security forces and 32 civilians were reported killed. Four hundred twenty-two **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured and seven Turks were reported kidnapped by Kurdish rebels.

**2 January 1994:** Turks trying to prevent a meeting of 150-200 **Kurds** in Brussels caused a violent clash in which several were injured.

**12 January 1994:** The managing editor of the pro-Kurdish newspaper Ozgar Gundem was arrested on charges of sedition.

**February 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 48 Kurdish rebels, seven members of Turkish security forces and two civilians were reported killed. These clashes included the bombing of northern Iraq by Turkish forces.

**6 February 1994:** Unidentified gunmen shot a leading Kurdish politician in the Turkish capital of Ankara.

**25 February 1994:** The pro-Kurdish DEP decided to boycott the polls for the upcoming March 17 local elections.

**March 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 84 Kurdish rebels, 11 members of Turkish security forces and one civilian were reported killed. One hundred forty-seven **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. The Parliamentary immunity of six pro-Kurdish deputies was lifted exposing them to charges of sedition that can carry the death penalty. They were arrested shortly thereafter.

**21 March 1994:** The massive New Roz (Kurdish new year) celebrations were mostly quiet and peaceful.

**April 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 387 Kurdish rebels, 14 members of Turkish security forces and five civilians were reported killed. Two hundred twenty-eight **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured. These clashes included attacks on northern Iraq by Turkish air and ground forces.

**May 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 335 Kurdish rebels, 27 members of Turkish security forces and 14 civilians were reported killed. Three hundred sixty-two **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured.

**May-June 1994:** The People's Democratic Party (HADEP) was set up to replace the newly banned DEP. The DEP lost its seats in Parliament when it was banned.

**May-July 1994:** Six thousand Turkish **Kurds** fled to Iraq due to fighting. Turkey claimed that this was a PKK ploy.

**14 June 1994:** Iran's interior minister promised to deny Turkish separatist **Kurds** sanctuary in Iran.

**16 June 1994:** The DEP was outlawed by Turkey's Constitutional Court.

**23 June 1994:** 6 Kurdish nationalist members of Parliament, including five from the pro-Kurdish DEP, were indicted on charges of treason.

**24 June 1994:** The Kurdish town of Idil was attacked. Residents blamed Turkish security forces and the Turks blamed the PKK.

**July 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 349 Kurdish rebels, 24 members of Turkish security forces and 24 civilians were reported killed. Ten **Kurds** were reported arrested or captured and 10 Turks were captured by Kurdish rebels. These clashes included the bombing of northern Iraq by Turkish forces.

**1 July 1994:** Turkish police detained two more members of Parliament from the newly banned DEP on charges of supporting the PKK.

**18 July 1994:** Reuters reported that hundreds of Kurdish nationalists had been murdered or "disappeared" in the last three years.

### **Update 9/19/95**

**Note:** Throughout the period covered by this update human rights organizations, both inside and outside of Turkey, as well as many foreign governments reported numerous human rights violations by the Turks against the **Kurds**. Also throughout this period, Turkish Kurd groups in Europe engaged in protests, including bombings, against the Turkish treatment of the **Kurds**.

**August 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 939 Kurdish rebels, 32 members of Turkish security forces and 28 civilians were reported killed. These clashes included the bombing of northern Iraq by Turkish forces. Iraq claimed that civilians were killed in these bombings.

**1 August 1994:** Turkey denied claims that Kurdish civilians had been herded into concentration camps despite allegations by the now illegal DEP. The DEP had also alleged the torture of **Kurds** in the camps. Turkey's Human Rights Association said that 1,500 Kurdish civilians were being held in a camp in the Hakkari province after they had been forced out of five villages.

**3 August 1994:** The trial of six Kurdish nationalist parliament members, five of them members of the DEP, for treason began. A small crowd of **Kurds** protested outside. Many more **Kurds** from southeastern Turkey were prevented from protesting when their buses are turned back. The situation of these parliament members remains unclear at the time of the writing of this update. They were repeatedly put on trial on various charges and denied the right to reclaim their positions in parliament. Also, their vacant seats, which are from Kurdish districts, have yet to be filled.

**7 August 1994:** Two Finnish tourists were captured by Kurdish rebels.

**20 August 1994:** A pro-Kurdish newspaper cited a government report that summarized the death tolls and economic cost of Turkey's war with the **Kurds**. According to the report, 11,750 members of the Turkish security forces, 6,443 PKK fighters and 3,330 other civilian sympathizers had been killed. This is about double the officially reported figures. In addition, 960 villages had been wholly or partially emptied and 39 had been the target of army attacks or "operations." Including the costs of lost economic activity, the cost of the war has been \$179 billion.

**September 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 131 Kurdish rebels including two important leaders, 72 members of Turkish security forces and 42 civilians were reported killed.

**5 September 1994:** Turkey and Iran signed a protocol agreeing to cooperate against terror.

**13 September 1994:** Turkey announced an investment drive for the Kurdish southeastern region.

**19 September 1994:** A Turkish court added 3 years to the jail term of a professor convicted of advocating Kurdish separatism after the man refused to pay the first part of a hefty fine. Turkey imprisons many intellectuals, journalists, authors and human rights activists on charges of treason and/or advocating separatism throughout the period covered by this update.

**22 September 1994:** It was announced that jailed Kurdish lawmakers and the new pro-Kurdish HADEP (successor to the DEP) would be allowed to participate in the upcoming by-elections.

**25 September 1994:** Turkey and Iran agreed to stop opposition groups from operating in each other's territory.

**28 September 1994:** A Kurdish village was destroyed by Turkish troops. At least eight civilians were killed.

**October 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 184 Kurdish rebels, 25 members of Turkish security forces and three civilians were reported killed.



**3 October 1994:** Unidentified gunmen killed two local HADEP officials.

**5 October 1994:** Turkish security forces were accused of torching 17 Kurdish villages during a two-week-long offensive against rebel **Kurds** in the remote eastern province of Tuncoli. An investigation was ordered by the Turkish government. The Turks were periodically accused of destroying Kurdish villages throughout the period covered by this update.

**6 October 1994:** Inmates at a prison holding Kurdish separatists rioted.

**11 October 1994:** Turkey's Human Rights Minister accused his government of state terrorism in its war against the **Kurds**.

**12 October 1994:** About 5,000 Kurdish villagers were reported to have become refugees due to a three-week-long security sweep.

**November 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 110 Kurdish rebels, 16 members of Turkish security forces and 14 civilians were reported killed. This fighting was the result of an unusual winter campaign by the government that included 40,000 troops. The government's strategy was to cut the rebels off from their winter supplies.

**2 November 1994:** The PKK threatened to kill Kurdish candidates for upcoming by-elections calling them collaborators.

**3 November 1994:** The HADEP, Turkey's only Kurdish-based political party, said that it would boycott the upcoming by-elections because it would be impossible for the elections to be fair.

**7 November 1994:** About 12,000 Turkish **Kurds** had fled to Iraq since April saying that Turkish troops had been attacking their villages.

**16 November 1994:** Turkey's Constitutional Court said that hundreds of thousands of displaced **Kurds** should be allowed to vote where they had taken refuge. This results in the suspension of the upcoming by-elections until the electoral roles could be rewritten.

**25 November 1994:** Local human rights officials in southeastern Turkey claimed that 1,900 of the 12,000 settlements in the region had been partly or fully emptied, often under military pressure.

**December 1994:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces, including the continued winter campaign by the Turkish army against the **Kurds**, 148 Kurdish rebels, six members of Turkish security forces and three civilians were reported killed.

**8 December 1994:** Eight Kurdish MPs were sentenced to jail terms of up to 15 years.

**22 December 1994:** The New Democratic Movement was officially formed as a party in Turkey. Although this is not a Kurdish party, the party supports an end to the human rights abuses against the **Kurds**.

**29 December 1994:** Turkey closed the only office of the Turkish Human Rights Association in Kurdish southeastern Turkey. Turkey claimed to have killed 3,905 Kurdish rebels and arrested 3,000 of them in

1994. At least 900 soldiers and 900 civilians have been killed this year.

**January 1995:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 107 Kurdish rebels, no members of Turkish security forces and 14 civilians were reported killed.

**8 January 1995:** Turkish police seized two editions of the pro-Kurdish Ozgur Ulke newspaper for publishing separatist propaganda. Throughout the period covered by this update the Turks confiscate and shut down pro-Kurdish periodicals and even periodicals that occasionally criticized the government's human rights record or advocated better treatment of Turkey's **Kurds**.

**12 January 1995:** A Turkish court acquitted six human rights activists on charges of separatism.

**18 January 1995:** Turkey alleged that a recently-arrested Kurdish bomber was trained in Greece. Greece denied the allegation.

**February 1995:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 128 Kurdish rebels, 34 members of Turkish security forces and seven civilians were reported killed.

**1 February 1995:** About 90 Kurdish prisoners were reported to be near death after a six-week-long hunger strike.

**27 February 1995:** In a protest against Turkey's censorship, a book of articles written by writers who had been punished for their ideas was published.

**March 1995:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 394 Kurdish rebels, 51 members of Turkish security forces and no civilians were reported killed. This included the death toll from the March 20 invasion into northern Iraq in which the Turks claimed to have killed 306 Kurdish rebels and lost 26 soldiers. The PKK claimed to have killed 261 soldiers and lost 18 of their own men in the invasion.

**14 March 1995:** Parliament voted to extend emergency rule in the 10 eastern and southeastern provinces in which the army was fighting Kurdish separatist rebels.

**20 March 1995:** Thirty-five thousand Turkish troops invaded northern Iraq to attack Kurdish military bases there. The attack was relatively unsuccessful because the PKK had ample warning due to the slow military buildup along the border that preceded the attack. Many Iraqi Kurdish civilians were bombed in the attack and about 15,000 Iraqi **Kurds** became refugees.

**27 March 1995:** Turkey barred foreign journalists from northern Iraq.

**30 March 1995:** Fifteen thousand troops launched an offensive in eastern Turkey above and beyond the offensive in northern Iraq.

**April 1995:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 465 Kurdish rebels, 34 members of Turkish security forces and 15 civilians were reported killed. This included the reported deaths from Turkey's continuing invasion into northern Iraq.

**5 April 1995:** Turkish authorities confiscated the passports and videotapes of two Finnish reporters covering the campaign against the **Kurds**. Three Turkish aid workers were killed in a clash with an angry crowd of

**Kurds** going to collect the bodies of seven shepherds allegedly killed by Turkish soldiers in northern Iraq.

**8 April 1995:** The Turkish mayor of a Kurd town was shot dead by PKK gunmen for collaboration.

**11 April 1995:** A Turkish court acquitted three human rights activists of separatism charges for speeches that they had made in 1992.

**13 April 1995:** Turkey denounced a newly created Kurdish parliament in exile in The Hague. The elected 65-seat assembly draws its members from all exiled **Kurds** including members of the PKK and DEP.

**25 April 1995:** Turkey pulled 20,000 of its troops out of northern Iraq. About 15,000 remained.

**May 1995:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 72 Kurdish rebels, seven members of Turkish security forces and 19 civilians were reported killed.

**3 May 1995:** A delegation from the Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) agreed to prevent Iraq from being used as a base for Kurdish rebel attacks into Turkey.

**4 May 1995:** It was announced that Turkey had pulled all of its troops out of northern Iraq. The six-week-long invasion had strained Turkey's relations with Europe and the United States. It was unclear whether Turkey had gained much from the operation because it was clear that most of the PKK troops had left the region before the invasion began. However, the action seemed to have stalled a planned spring offensive by the PKK. Turkey claimed to have killed 555 rebels and lost 61 soldiers in the operation. The PKK claimed to have killed 800 soldiers and lost only 60 of its own men.

**8 May 1995:** Turkey detained 3 Kurdish militants who it claimed were planning attacks on tourism facilities. Throughout the period covered by this update sporadic terrorist attacks such as bombings are perpetrated by **Kurds**. These incidents tended to be overshadowed in the press by the full-scale civil war going on in southeastern Turkey and it is probable that the press did not report many of these incidents. Any deaths caused by these attacks have been and will be included in the monthly death totals.

**19 May 1995:** One thousand attend the funeral of a Kurd believed to have been killed by death squads linked to Turkey's security forces. The Human Rights Association reported that 327 people had been reported missing in custody in 1994 and 77 more by April 1995.

**June 1995:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 308 Kurdish rebels, 61 members of Turkish security forces and 10 civilians were reported killed.

**20 June 1995:** Iran backed a Turkish plan for joint military action against Kurdish rebels on their common border but stopped short of allowing Turkish troops to enter its territory.

**26 June 1995:** Turkish police shut down a Kurdish cultural center in southern Turkey. Turkey announced that 19,560 people had died in the 11-year-long Kurdish separatist insurgency. This included more than 11,000 PKK members, 3,825 members of Turkish security services and 4,727, civilians. Two thousand one hundred-six Kurdish rebels had been reported killed thus far this year.

**July 1995:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 393 Kurdish rebels, 70 members of Turkish security forces and 20 civilians were reported killed. This included the brief Turkish invasion of

northern Iraq.

**4-11 July 1995:** Turkey invaded northern Iraq with about 3,000 troops. Turkey claimed to have killed 167 Kurdish rebels and to have lost 26 soldiers.

**14 July 1995:** Kurdish rebels kidnapped a Japanese tourist whom they eventually free. Throughout the period covered by this update, Kurdish rebels capture foreigners and Turkish citizens, most of whom were eventually released.

**14 July 21 August 1995:** Eight to ten thousand Kurdish prisoners engaged in a hunger strike in several Turkish prisons. Thousands of their relatives participated in a sympathy hunger strike. The strikers were demanding that the government end its war on the **Kurds**.

**August 1995:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces 155 Kurdish rebels, 12 members of Turkish security forces and 11 civilians were reported killed.

**30 August 1995:** The PKK (Turkish Kurdish rebels) fought with Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP--Iraqi Kurdish rebels) forces in northern Iraq from August until the end of the year.

**1-18 September 1995:** In several clashes between Kurdish rebels and Turkish forces, 223 Kurdish rebels, 26 members of Turkish security forces and 20 civilians were reported killed.

**31 October 1995:** HADEP announces that it will contest upcoming elections, marking the first participation of a nationalist Kurdish party in elections since the decision to boycott unfair elections in 1994. (Reuters)

**December 1995:** PKK announces a ceasefire, which Turkish officials dismiss.

**24 December 1995:** Militant Islamic Welfare (Refah) Party, led by Necmettin Erbakan, gains control of Turkey's parliament, winning 22% of the vote. HADEP failed to get the 10 percent of the national vote required to gain representation in parliament. (NYTimes, Dec. 27, 1995)

## 1996

**5 January 1996:** Kurdish political prisoners, along with leftist radicals, in two Turkish prisons took 27 guards hostage as part of a campaign to improve prison conditions. (Reuters)

**16 January 1996:** PKK rebels killed 11 people, mostly village guards, in the village of Taskonek, breaking the PKK's ceasefire. PKK officials denied the attack, accusing the Turkish government of staging the event to blame the PKK. (Reuters)

**7 March 1996:** Turkey's best-known writer, Yashar Kemal, was sentenced to 20-months in jail for 'inciting racial hatred' for writing an article in which he criticized the government's oppression of **Kurds** in Turkey. (The Independent, March 8, 1996)

**9 March 1996:** Five PKK members and seven members of the Turkish security forces were killed in fighting in eastern Turkey. There had been a concerted effort by Turkish officials to rid this region of the PKK (Reuters)

**9 April 1996:** Twenty-seven Turkish soldiers and 99 PKK guerillas were killed in a one-day battle after army soldiers attacked a PKK training base. (Christian Science Monitor, April 12, 1996)

**8 May 1996:** Turkish forces killed 15 Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq, while 9 rebels and 5 soldiers were killed in fighting in eastern provinces of Turkey. (Reuters)

**12 May 1996:** Abdullah Ocalan confirmed reports of an attempted assassination plot against him, stating that he believed the Turkish government was responsible for attacks against him. (Reuters)

**June 1996:** At a conference of the People's Democracy Party (HADEP), an unidentified individual cut down the Turkish flag and raised a PKK flag. The incident was broadcast repeatedly on Turkish television and, although party officials apologized for the incident, the government detained 49 party officials, holding 28 officials for over a month. (New York Times, August 3, 1996)

**15 July 1996:** About 30 PKK members ambushed Turkish troops, killing 3 and wounding 3 in Tunceli, while security forces killed 28 PKK rebels in other parts of the country. (Reuters)

**16 August 1996:** Abdullah Ocalan called upon the PKK to intensify its campaign after the prime minister dismissed the chance of a negotiated settlement between the state and the PKK. (Reuters)

**20 August 1996:** The PKK killed 3 civilians while Turkish forces killed 16 PKK rebels in clashes all along the Turkey-Iraq border.

**September 1996:** Police in London and in Belgium raided the offices of Med-TV, an international TV station geared to a Kurdish audience. Documents were seized and employees were detained without explanation. (The Independent, March 8, 1998)

**1 October 1996:** Amnesty International launches a campaign to highlight human-rights abuses in Turkey, noting that the most common victims of these abuses were **Kurds**. (Reuters)

**1 October 1996:** Kurdish rebels kill four Turkish elementary school teachers. The PKK signals out school teachers to demonstrate Kurdish objections to Turkish policy of not allowing any Kurdish history or culture within the country's schools. (Reuters)

**3 October 1996:** Thirty-two PKK members and 3 Turkish soldiers died in clashes throughout southeast Turkey. (Reuters)

**6 October 1996:** Erbakan meets with Muamar Kadhafi in an effort to improve economic ties between Turkey and Libya. During the meeting, Kadhafi blasts Turkey for its repression of its Kurdish population and called for an independent Kurdish state. Erbakan denied that Turkey has any 'Kurdish problem' but faced severely criticism for allowing Kadhafi to embarrass Turkey. (Agence France Presse)

**8 October 1996:** Turkish officials reported that 118 Kurdish rebels, and 11 Turkish soldiers, died during clashes between the PKK and state security forces. (Reuters)

**29 October 1996:** A PKK suicide bomber attacked a Republic Day parade, killing 3 police officers and 1 civilian. This was the third such suicide bombing by the PKK since July. (Reuters)

**8 November 1996:** The PKK killed 17 of its opponents, as Turkish security forces killed 22 PKK rebels in separate clashes in Turkey. (Reuters)

**23 December 1996:** PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan renewed calls for a political settlement between Turkey and its Kurdish residents. Ocalan also warned that Turkey's cities would be subject to suicide bombings if the repression of **Kurds** didn't stop. (Reuters)

## 1997

**14 January 1997:** Eleven suspected members of Dev Sol, a Turkish guerilla movement, went on trial in France. The defendants were accused of attacking Turkish property in France throughout the 1980s and 1990s to help fund their terrorist group. (Reuters)

**January-March 1997:** During 2 months of clashes throughout Turkey, Turkish security forces killed 219 Kurdish rebels (Reuters, March 3, 1997)

**6 February 1997:** A French court convicted 11 suspected members of Dev Sol for charges ranging from membership in an illegal organization to participation in terrorist activity. (Reuters)

**March 1997:** Reports indicate that the level of guerilla activity in Turkey has reduced significantly in 1997, with only an estimated about 3000 rebel guerillas remaining in Turkey. (The New York Times, March 8, 1997)

**13 March 1997:** Turkish officials announce that the state will allow celebration of the Newroz festival, a traditional Kurdish day of protest, on March 21. (Reuters)

**16 March 1997:** During two days of fighting, Turkish forces killed 23 rebels'16 from PKK and 7 from the far-left TIKKO. (Reuters)

**May 1997:** The Turkish government reaches an agreement with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in northern Iraq to cooperate to remove PKK influences from northern Iraq. (Periscope Daily Defense News Capsules March 31, 1998)

**12 May 1997:** Turkish security forces claim responsibility for the deaths of 30 Kurdish rebels in southeastern provinces of Turkey. (Reuters)

**14 May 1997:** 30,000 Turkish troops supported by tanks, artillery and air power poured into northern Iraq in search of PKK fighters and leaders. Turkey reported to capturing 1800 PKK rebels and seizing the groups regional headquarters, but evidence to support this claim was difficult to find and suspicion arose that the PKK had evacuated this region before Turkish troops arrived. (Jane's Intelligence Review, August 1, 1997; Agence France Presse)

**19 May 1997:** PKK officials accuse KDP troops of massacring PKK members in Arbil, a town in northern Iraq, after the KDP ordered a PKK evacuation of the city. The PKK allegedly retaliated, killing 40 KDP

members in the same region. (Agence France Presse)

**3 June 1997:** Kurdish rebels killed 5 Kurd civilians in Dikgobaz, Turkey, in retaliation for Turkish offensive against the PKK. (Agence France Presse)

**4 June 1997:** A Turkish court sentenced 31 leaders of HADEP to up to six years in prison for aiding PKK and for supporting the removal of a Turkish flag from a HADEP conference. The youth who removed the Turkish flag and replaced it with PKK banners received a sentence of 22 years in prison. (Reuters)

**15 June 1997:** PKK forces launched rockets at a freight train and killed two Turkish soldiers, which led to a retaliatory attack by Turkish security forces, which killed 52 Kurdish rebels. (Agence France Presse)

**18 June 1997:** The Turkish army forced Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan to resign, and more fundamentalist parties are expected to capture a greater proportion of seats within parliament.

**20 September 1997:** Turkey launches Operation Dawn, sending, 15,000 Turkish soldiers into northern Iraq in order to set up a buffer zone to prevent further PKK incursions into Turkey. During the 3-week exercise (through October 14), Turkey reportedly killed 855 Kurdish rebels. (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, October 15, 1997)

**13 October 1997:** Turkish officials formally demanded a death sentence for Abdullah Ocalan for treasonous offences during an in absentia hearing of the PKK leader. (Agence France Presse)

**22 October 1997:** A car bomb exploded near the Iran-Iraq-Turkey border, killing one and injuring 19. Officials blamed the PKK for the bomb, a belief bolstered by the arrest of a PKK member as he planted a similar bomb nearby. (Agence France Presse).

**December 1997:** The EU denies Turkey membership, citing the ongoing Kurdish problem as one of the reasons for its rejection.

**25-27 December 1997:** Turkish forces kill 18 PKK members near the Iraqi border. (Agence France Presse)

## 1998

**1-8 January 1998:** Kurds from Turkey and Iraq flood into Italy and Greece as clashes between the Turkish army and guerrillas resurge along the Turkish-Iraq border. (Washington Post, January 9, 1998)

**6 January 1998:** UNHCR officials applauded Italy's decision to treat Kurds wishing to leave Turkey as political asylum seekers, qualifying them for refugee status, rather than as economic migrants, as other countries still classify them. Turkish and German officials objected to this move by Italy. (InterPress Service)

**11 January 1998:** Following an agreement between Turkey and EU states (including Italy) to try to curb Kurd emigration, Turkish officials detain over 1300 potential emigrants. (Christian Science Monitor, January 12, 1998)

**26 January 1998:** An investigation of Turkish governments from 1993 to 1996 reveals that among other things--leaders spent millions of dollars in efforts to assassinate Kurdish leaders and financial backers of

Kurdish groups ([New York Times](#))

**30 January 1998:** The US State Department officially criticized the Turkish government for human rights abuses, including the poor treatment of **Kurds** in Turkey. (Reuters)

**February 1998:** During a parliamentary human rights commission hearing, one official noted that methods which would likely be considered unacceptable were often used to convince villagers not to support the PKK in southeastern Turkey. Witnesses described such tactics such as forcing villagers to walk on mine fields or torturing family members and neighbors. ([Human Rights Watch World Report 1999](#))

**16 March 1998:** The commander of PKK military activities, Semdin Sakik, along with six of his personal guards, surrendered to the Turkish-supported KDP in northern Iraq. (Periscope Daily Defense News Capsules March 31, 1998) Other sources allege that the army captured Sakik. ([Christian Science Monitor](#))

**17 March 1998:** Turkey and Iran reach an agreement to work together against the PKK. (Periscope Daily Defense News Capsules March 31, 1998)

**27 March 1998:** Cemil Bayik, a top military leader within the PKK, surrendered to Turkish-backed KDP following a dispute with Abdullah Ocalan. (Agence France Presse; Periscope Daily Defense News Capsules March 31, 1998)

**17 April 1998:** Abdullah Ocalan announces that the goal of the PKK is not to establish an independent Kurdish state and encourages a political resolution as was pursued in Northern Ireland. ([Christian Science Monitor](#), April 22, 1998)

**28 April 1998:** Former PKK official Sakik states that the PKK was behind the killing of Swedish prime minister Olaf Palme because Sweden had banned PKK members from its country. (Agence France Presse)

**12 May 1998:** Akin Birdal, head of the Human Rights Association in Turkey, was shot six times through his lungs and leg; he did, however, survive the shooting ([Human Rights Watch World Report 1999](#))

**3 June 1998:** PKK rebels ambushed and killed 11 civilians, including a local religious leader, in Tunceli. (Agence France Presse)

**14 June 1998:** Twenty-five people were killed'18 PKK members and 7 Turkish soldiers'in clashes throughout southeast Turkey. (Agence France Presse)

**July 1998:** Human Rights Watch reported that PKK members killed a 4-year-old and a 14-year-old girl because the girls couldn't find for them their father, who was the brother of a village leader. ([Human Rights Watch World Report 1999](#))

**15 August 1998:** On the anniversary of the beginning of the Kurdish secessionist movement, the PKK blew up three Turkish oil wells. In response, Turkish officials killed 6 PKK members in two odifferent clashes. (Agence France Presse)

**22 October 1998:** Turkey and Syria reach an agreement stating that Syria will cease any and all support of the PKK. ([The Guardian](#))



**30 October 1998:** A PKK rebel hijacked a plane, forcing it to land in Ankara. Elite Turkish forces stormed the jet and killed the hijacker before he had hurt any of the passengers. (Agence France Presse)

**10 November 1998:** PKK launched an attack against Turkish security forces, killing 21 and injuring 18. (Deutsche Presse-Agentur)

**12 November 1998:** Italian officials arrest Abdullah Ocalan in Rome. Ocalan's supporters argue that he should be treated as a political refugee rather than a terrorist and should not be extradited to Turkey. (Christian Science Monitor, November 19, 1998)

**23 November 1998:** Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema encouraged a peaceful political resolution to the Kurdish problem in Turkey and supported PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan's announcement that the PKK would reject violent means to a solution. (Agence France Presse)

## 1999

**29 January 1999:** Turkish's chief prosecutor accused the HADEP of being a front for Kurdish guerilla fighters and demanded closure for the party. Following the announcement, party headquarters were raided, and 139 party officials were arrested. (Los Angeles Times, January 30, 1999)

**15 February 1999:** Turkish officials capture Abdullah Ocalan in Kenya, where he had been granted temporary asylum by Greece's ambassador to Kenya.

**15-22 February 1999:** Turkish soldiers launched an incursion against PKK guerillas in northern Iraq, killing 10 rebels and seizing PKK equipment. (Washington Post, February 22, 1999)

**11 March 1999:** Twenty Kurdish rebels and two Turkish soldiers

were killed in clashes in two southeastern Turkish provinces (Batman and Sirnak). (Agence France Presse)

**March thru May 1999:** The PKK warns tourists to stay away from Turkey, threatening country-wide bombings in retaliation for Abdullah Ocalan's arrest. (Christian Science Monitor, May 28, 1999)

**April 1999:** In 7 provincial capitals within the Kurdish region of Turkey, a majority of voters selected Kurdish nationalist, HADEP candidates for mayor, despite pressure and activities by security forces against these candidates. (New York Times, May 16, 1999)

**5 May 1999:** 30 PKK members ambushed and killed nine soldiers and wounded four in eastern Turkey, army officials said today, at the same time that 10,000 Turkish troops were carrying out an operation against rebels in eastern mountains. (Reuters)

**20 May 1999:** The Turkish interior ministry imposed a ban on public offices and media, essentially eliminating the word Kurd from public statements. For instance, the phrase Kurdish leaders cannot be used; rather, Northern Iraqi clan leaders should be used. (AFP)

**20 May 1999:** Semdin Sakik, former right-hand-man to Ocalan is sentenced to death following his trial in Turkey. (AFP)

**29 May 1999:** A PKK spokesman warned that the worst reaction should be expected if Ocalan is sentenced to death during his upcoming trial. (AFP)

**31 May 1999:** As Abdullah Ocalan's trial began at the fortified prison on the isolated island of Imrali, Ocalan called upon the PKK to lay down its arms. He apologized to the Turkish soldiers who had been killed in struggles with the **Kurds** and stated that he wanted to work for peace throughout Turkey. The beginning of the trial was marked by a series of demonstrations by **Kurds** and Kurdish-supporters throughout Europe. (AFP)

**1 June 1999:** During his trial for treason, Ocalan denied direct responsibility for any criminal activities or atrocities committed by the PKK since he founded the group in 1978. Ocalan noted that Syria, Iran, and Greece had supported the work of the PKK through the years. (AFP)

**8 June 1999:** As Turkish prosecutors renewed their demand that Ocalan be sentenced to death, the court adjourned for 2 weeks to allow Ocalan's lawyers time to prepare his defense. (AFP)

**24 June 1999:** Speaking in his defense, Abdullah Ocalan stated that he was driven to pursue an armed struggle against the Turkish government because of the repressive restrictions which it maintains on **Kurds** and Kurdish culture in Turkey. (New York Times)

**29 June 1999:** A Turkish security court found Abdullah Ocalan guilty of treason and sentenced him to death. The verdict will be immediately appealed, as all death-sentence cases in Turkey are. If the ruling is upheld, Turkey's Parliament and Prime Minister must also approve the court's finding. Given the current make-up of the government, it is expected that elected officials would support the sentence, but the appeals process could take months or even years. No immediate violence or fighting followed the announcement of the verdict. (New York Times, June 30; July 1. Reports indicate that the capture and trial of Ocalan has forged a division among Turkish **Kurds**. Some are receptive to Ocalan's recent call for a peaceful, political achievement of an agreement on the treatment of **Kurds** in Turkey. Others, including some 4,500 guerilla fighters, want to maintain the armed struggle and see Ocalan's sentence as a way to both mobilize **Kurds** and to breathe new life into the PKK. (AP, July 5)

**2 July through 6 July 1999:** As feared, violent attacks occur within Turkey following the announcement of a death sentence for Abdullah Ocalan. Two PKK fighters killed four people in a gunfire attack on a coffeehouse in the southeastern city of Elazig. Two days later, a bomb exploded in a crowded park in Istanbul, killing one person and wounding 25 others. On Monday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, a PKK-suicide bomber blew herself up outside of a police station in Adana. The attack wounded 14 police officers and three others. (AP, July 6)

### **Risk Assessment**

It is clear that the situation of the **Kurds** in Turkey has not improved significantly since 1989. They are still denied autonomy and the fighting continues between the PKK, along with other Kurdish rebels, and government forces. Turkey's **Kurds** still suffer from massive repression that includes a near total ban on their language and any expression of Kurdish nationalism. This ban is enforced by mass arrests and restrictions

upon free speech as well as assassination and terror tactics including assassinations by the Kurdish government. It is clear that this repression is focused upon Kurdish nationalism as is evident from the fact that Kurdish nationalist leaders who advocate non-violence are among the targets for arrest, torture and assassination. In the unlikely event that all of Turkey's **Kurds** decide to assimilate the repression would probably end. Yet, it is unlikely that the conflict between the **Kurds** and the Turkish government will end until the **Kurds** are given, at the very least, regional autonomy.

Since the beginning of the Kurdish secessionist movement in 1984 through the end of 1998, an estimated 23,638 guerillas, 5,555 soldiers, and 5,302 civilians have been killed, according to Turkish President Suleyman Demirel. The US State Department estimates that 560,000 **Kurds** have been displaced during this period (New York Times, May 16, 1999). Turkey's war with the **Kurds** has caused it considerable difficulty in the international arena. Many of Turkey's NATO allies are critical of its policy. Also, Turkey's treatment of the **Kurds** has been a barrier to Turkey's economic integration into Europe. However, Turkey seems to be willing to pay this price in order to counter what it sees as the threat posed by the **Kurds** to its national security. Some evidence had emerged that the violent phase of this conflict was coming to a close, as the PKK became more willing to work towards a political solution for the **Kurds** in Turkey.

The arrest and trial of Ocalan, however, may have re-ignited the fading support for a confrontational conclusion for this protracted dispute. The verdict in Ocalan's trial, and its aftermath, will likely be a crucial indicator of the future plans of the Kurdish rebels and may well reveal whether a peaceful, political resolution will be possible. Turkish officials will have to decide whether to accept Ocalan's offer to work toward peace in Turkey or whether to punish Ocalan for his role as a terrorist leader--a move which will likely further ostracize the country from its European neighbors. A Washington Post editorial refers to this moment in history as a "once-in-a-generation opening [for Turkey] to treat its national cancer, the problem of aggrieved Kurdish minority" (June 7, 1999). It seems unlikely at this point, however, that Turkey will take advantage of this opportunity. A violent reaction is likely among the Turkish Kurdish community and hopes for both an end to fighting and some kind of cooperative resolution may fade fast.

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