



Analysis of Political & Military Situation

Autumn 2023

In order to be able to accurately interpret current events, conflicts and developments in Rojava and the Middle East, but also globally, it is necessary to name the phase in which the global political system finds itself, taking into account the historical dimension. The core characteristic of this development, which Abdullah Ocalan, initiator of the Kurdish freedom movement and the revolution in Rojava, describes as a third world war, are conflicts between hegemonic and regional powers for the expansion of influence. Different alliances are forged and break up depending on the hoped-for gains. Hegemonic powers support local proxy armies to enforce their interests and war is progressively legitimized as a means to enforce the interests of state actors. The third world war is as well, a war between these forces of power accumulation and the forces of the people and societies, struggling for a life on their land. These conflicts have different expressions and their difference in form as well as the attempt of the hegemonic regimes to defame them often make them hard to identify.

In this analysis we want to highlight events and processes that emerge around this frame. Starting with an overview on power-dynamics in the global scale, we are going to look closer at the war of culture as a means of the hegemonic powers to bring societies under their control, especially focusing on the Middle East. On this basis, we will more broadly analyse the different aspects of the war being waged in Kurdistan.

Shifting power-balance in a multipolar world

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, we have observed a steady change from the sole domination of the USA to the so-called multipolar world order. This domination was the significant one in the last half of the century passed. It is significant in the emergence of a lot of global dynamics still being formed until today. That is why changes in this power-balance have to be followed closely, opening space for new dynamics.

In this process, one of the main actors challenging the role of the US as a global power is China. The economic changes and growth of wealth in China have caused growing economic difficulties in the Western countries. Products have become more expensive and companies have tried to regulate their profits by lowering their expenses, resulting in lower wages for workers in the capitalist center. In this regard, it is necessary to understand the new alliance formed between Russia and China on one side, and Europe, America, Japan on the other. The BRICS group, comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, as well as future members such as Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, is the result of these new developments. The BRICS Group, as of late, have made significant economic decisions in terms of their trading with one another, which is to be put in place in 2024. The possibility of BRICS moving away from using the Dollar for trading among each other will further challenge economical hegemony of the US. For Asia and the Middle East, these developments are of great consequence, as China now increases its influence in the region; Saudi Arabia and Iran are scheduled to join BRICS in January 2024. These developments are clear indicators for a shift in the global power-balance.

The African continent likewise deserves attention as recent developments indicate an intensification in resistance against neo-colonial rule and exploitation by the former colonizers. Following anti-colonial struggles in the last century, France was forced to grant a certain degree of independence to many of the nations it exploited for centuries whilst continuing the exploitation of their wealth and resources via French companies and puppet regimes. It is here important to note that not all anti-

colonial struggles are necessarily socialist ones – this should be analysed carefully. Looking at the situation that unfolded in Niger in August, we see that the people clearly expressed the will to fully get rid of the French hold on the land and its riches (90% of the multinational company responsible for the extraction of Uranium is owned by the French state). France's neo-colonial network spans across sub-Saharan Africa and involves various aspects such as economics, politics, security, and cultural associations, all centered around the French language and French interests. Even though it is yet to be seen what the forces behind the coup aim for, the development of a clear stance against the decade long exploitation in the general public and the mid-term effect of a rising popular movement which may be evolving from the protests against French interference and military presence should not be underestimated.

As the ecological crisis will have harsh effects on many African countries people's uprisings against neo-colonial exploitation of mineral resources and the destructive consequences of i.e. Uranium extraction for local ecosystems could emerge. As the resources of the African continent are essential for the industries of the former colonizers, more violent interventions at the hands of imperialist forces can be expected. The support of neocolonial nation-states for ECOWAS¹, whose member states are threatening Niger with military intervention can also be analyzed on this basis.

Again here the danger of instrumentation is imminent. With the still fresh memory of the so called Arab-Spring in mind, we can assume that similar approaches will be seen with global and local forces trying to instrumentalise every form of resistance against the current rule according to their own interests. Revolutionary Forces organizing the legitimate will of the people for self-determination have to at all times be aware of the games played by imperialist powers. In Europe and America, nationalism, racism and fascism are on the rise. Germany and Italy are particularly affected. The nation-states are responding to economic, social and ecological crises with a return to protectionism, nationalist rhetoric and racist stereotypes to scapegoat migrants. This doesn't prevent the European states from forming closer ties and being more supportive to dictatorships and war-lord-like governments around the world. Massacres and war crimes which unmask these Neo-colonial politics are no longer a reason for the self-declared democracies to hide their relationships with such regimes and forces. When we are looking at the state of anti-systemic and democratic forces in Europe we see in many places weak levels of mobilization potential and a lack of unity and organizational strength. Compared to fascist currents, the European left is struggling to adapt to the new realities in the frame of the Third World War. Even though the mobilizations against the war in Palestine are strong, this potential could, until now, not be transformed into lasting organizational strength. This makes the anti-systemic forces extremely vulnerable for every kind of ideological, political or military counter-attack by the states.

The War on Culture

The manifestation of the global war for influence in a evolving multi-polar world order is flanked by the attempt of hegemonic forces to create a general shift of societal values and moral concepts of the societies and broad-scale attacks on Democratic forces.

What Abdullah Ocalan describes as a phase of Chaos between two world systems is today clearly unfolding in front of our eyes. Nation-states, as in the case of the US strategy of the "Greater Middle East" or recently referred to as "New Middle East", are using armed conflicts as a tool to reshape the world according to their interests, while blatantly proclaiming this to be mandatory in order to preserve democracy and order. The old lie of "bringing peace by war" will not become true by repeating it a thousand times. But today's wars and attacks are not just launched on a military level, but attacks on cultures, the way of living and especially on women are further methods used

¹ ECOWAS: *The Economic Community of West African States is a regional political and economic union of fifteen countries located in West Africa.*

to fragment societies in order to integrate them into the global system of commodification. Mass Migration is one very visible effect of these attacks.

Those that reach the European Metropolis are facing massive repression and assimilation. When earlier this year a young teenager was shot dead by french police, massive protests erupted setting France on fire. Uprisings like the one of descendants of migrants from the former French colonies are an answer to decades of attacks, oppression and humiliation. Furthermore, they are the emotional outrage of the people against the systemic forces.

Local uprisings can be expected to manifest spontaneously in shorter intervals everywhere as the crisis of capitalism deepens and no solutions other than militarization, fascism and oppression are presented by the nation-states. These developments, the change of world-systems, the cultural, social and economical war and the fight for hegemonic control is in its base, a war which is fought by the nation-states against societies.

The ongoing atrocities, including genocide, ecocide, sociocide, femicide, and the targeting of the youth, are all manifestations of the global capitalist systems attempt to fragment societies, commodify every sphere of life and prevent any form of resistance.

It is crucial for us to find ways to resist and counteract each of these forms of attacks. One analytical approach, addressed by Abdullah Ocalan, is the concept of sociocide/cultural genocide² (the annihilation of societies by destroying their cultural identity, history, language, and heritage). When we apply this idea to (not only) the Western world, we can observe the creation of individuals without a distinct identity, who are instead shaped by capitalism and liberalism. This erosion of culture and identity has led to a lack of meaning, creating fertile ground for the emergence of fascist regimes. If sociocide, the destruction of society, had not taken place, fascist regimes would not have been able to rise so easily. The society's natural ability to defend itself would have remained intact.

War in the Middle East: NATO's War in Kurdistan

In the developments described above we can see Kurdistan in the very center of what Abdullah Ocalan is defining as the third world war. After the kidnapping of Abdullah Ocalan in 1998 at the hands of Turkey, the USA, Israel and Great Britain, this International Conspiracy* continued to unfold with ever changing attempts to destroy the manifestation of Ocalan's paradigm of Radical Democracy, Ecology and Women's Freedom, for example in Rojava & North-Eastern Syria. The Turkish state guided by NATO and other hegemonic powers are relentlessly targeting the revolution in the Middle East in order to prevent the alternative to the trinity of Nation-State, Industrialism and Capitalism, from developing and spreading. NATO's Turkish army is, since 2021, systematically deploying chemical weapons against the guerrillas in the mountains of Southern Kurdistan. NATO's involvement in these crimes of war is the very reason for the international silence. But in some cases international solidarity and pressure created situations in which international bodies like the UN or the EU have had to admit the crimes committed by Turkey, as in the case of the occupation in Rojava or the drone killings in Shengal. We know very well what is happening on the ground in Kurdistan and so do the UN and the EU. But for the first time they were pressured to acknowledge it. The war fought in the frame of the 3rd world war is also a war of information. Propaganda, and manipulation of the public are key for preserving the nation-states grip on societies. The war in Rojava cannot be seen in isolation from the global war for influence and the destruction of any form of self-determination of the peoples. Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, the Sahara zone, Armenia, Palestine and many other regions are today the

² Abdullah Ocalan: *"Once a society is institutionally dismantled, you can no longer talk about its meaning and its narrow culture. In this case, the institution is like a bowl full of water. Once the bowl is broken, obviously, the existence of water cannot be mentioned. Even if mentioned, it is no longer water for the bowl's owner but an element of life that has flowed to the owners of other lands or vessels. The consequences of losing social meaning, mentality and aesthetics are even worse"*

scenes of the Third World War, which brings with it a steady normalization of war as a tool to enforce control and exploitation. A further feature of this phase is the deep-rooted attacks on societies and more repressive forms of oppression against any form of self-determination and resistance. After October 7th, the world will never be the same. The legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people and the people of Gaza are faced with annihilation as Israel has started a brutal bombing campaign followed by a ground invasion into the occupied Gaza strip. While the ideology and methods of Hamas also don't contribute to a solution for the Palestinian question, the killing of thousands of civilians by Israeli airstrikes can in no way be justified and thus, are rightfully protested by millions all around the world. Without giving an in-depth analysis of the war in Palestine it is still safe to say that the Middle East in total will be affected by it, and hegemonic powers will certainly try to use the situation for advancing their position in the Middle East.

In the midst of these wars, a symptom of the deep crisis of capitalist modernity, the defense of the revolution in Rojava is becoming increasingly important. If the revolution in Rojava withstands all attacks, it would be proven that with the strategy of the Kurdish Freedom Movement, the "Revolutionary People's War"³, a successful resistance can be carried out. With a successful defense of Rojava against NATO-backed Turkey and regional powers such as Iran, a shining example of revolutionary resistance will go around the world and provide anti-systemic, democratic forces not only with a winning strategy but above all hope. The defense of the Rojava revolution thus has global implications that will be decisive for conflicts in other regions. This means that international solidarity, support and participation in the defense of the revolution in Rojava also have a role in global developments that should not be underestimated. Turkey's latest wave of attacks on Rojava/North- & Eastern Syria, beginning with massive airstrikes on October 5, has caused devastating damage to critical infrastructure and destroyed the livelihoods of nearly 5 million people. But a new clarity has emerged among the population, especially in the hardest-hit regions. The population is prepared and will not give up their homeland without a fight and is encouraged to resist the enormous economic difficulties and the war. The organization of the population and the establishment of structures of civil self-defence within the framework of the concept of the "Revolutionary People's War" is progressing. Alongside the professional armed forces, and the Civilian Self-Defense Forces, we as International Solidarity Networks are part of the third pillar of this concept; the insurgency movement. In order to successfully contribute to the defense of the revolution in the battles ahead, we need an accurate assessment of the situation in Rojava and Kurdistan as a whole, an understanding of Turkish fascism and an analysis of targets (collaborators and supporters of Turkey in our home regions) and tactics. At the beginning of this month, on World Kobanê Day, we celebrated the city's historic resistance against the lightning attack by ISIS. What we must not overlook with regard to Kobanê's victory against ISIS is what followed: The moment Turkey's strategy of crushing the revolution and subjugating the self-determined Kurdish autonomous areas by supporting ISIS failed, Turkey carried out direct invasions into areas in North- and Eastern Syria (2016 Jarabulus, 2018 Afrin, 2019 Serekaniyê). Turkish fascism is constantly developing new methods in the fight against the Kurdish people and the peoples of the region who refuse to submit to Turkish rule. The direct destruction of vital infrastructure must be seen in this context. It is imperative that we counter Turkey's adaptations with methods adapted to the changing situation on the ground.

If we turn our attention towards the free mountains of Kurdistan, we see another reason for Turkey's intensified attacks on Rojava. Turkey's occupation attempts in the Medya Defense Areas (the Gerilla areas in Southern Kurdistan), which have been continued without a break for almost 3 years now, using thousands of soldiers, chemical and other internationally banned weapons, are

3 *The concept of revolutionary people's war involves the mobilization of society as a whole, both in the military and political sense. The historical background of this strategic concept is analyzed in the Internationale Debatte issue "Urban Warfare and Urban Guerrilla in the Strategy of Revolutionary People's War" and its application is considered from the urban uprisings in Northern Kurdistan in 2015 to the concept of guerrilla in the 21st century.*

increasingly becoming a disaster for the rulers in Ankara. A modern guerrilla and its diverse tactics, the development of war tunnels⁴ and an effective defense against the Turkish Bayraktar drones are forcing the 2nd largest NATO army into a situation that can be compared to being stuck in a swamp: There is no turning back and no moving forward. Turkish propaganda obscures this reality when it talks about the capture of strategic points. The establishment of bases and positions (only possible, by using Kurdish collaborators of the KDP as shields) cannot be equated with a conquest. The Guerrilla is still present and able to deal effective blows to the occupying forces in all regions. Turkey is logistically barely able to maintain and defend these bases. Recently it became known that Ankara has replaced the commander responsible for the war in South Kurdistan; a further indication of the desperate situation in which Turkey finds itself there.

The YJA Star guerrilla command recently reported that Turkish forces in the most heavily contested resistance stronghold of Zap are likely not withdrawing in winter. Previously, this was common practice as the rainy (and therefore cloudy) season gives the guerrillas massive advantages in the field. Reconnaissance flights and attacks by Turkish drones are hardly possible under these conditions. Furthermore, Turkish troops are now conducting maneuvers exclusively in the dark of the night in order to evade attacks by mobile guerrilla teams deployed in the vast landscapes of the mountainous massifs of southern Kurdistan. None of this will be a way out of the deadlock the fascist occupiers are stuck in. The goal of eliminating the Guerrilla and thus breaking the spirit of resistance of the revolution and the Kurdish people has become unattainable due to the heroic resistance of the Guerrilla.

Turkey's response was to attack Rojava and expand the war to the mountainous regions of Northern Kurdistan. Even if reports from Serhed, Botan, Garzan & Amed are only reaching the outside world with a delay, it is now known that the Turkish armed forces are also encountering fierce resistance there and are suffering heavy losses. Developments in the war in the mountains suggest that Turkey will intensify its attacks in other regions, such as Rojava, Shengal and Maxmur. These attacks are accompanied by an escalation of the war in the entire Middle East.

In the course of the war in Palestine, the fronts between Iran and the USA are becoming increasingly tense and attacks by Iranian-backed militias on US bases in Iraq and Syria, but also on the self-defense forces of the self-administration of North/Eastern Syria, could mean a two-front war for Rojava: In the north, Turkey is trying to destroy the self-administration and, in the southeast, Iran sees its land route to Syria/Lebanon endangered by the presence of US troops. What the historical opponents Iran and Turkey can at least mostly agree on is the rejection of self-determination for the Kurds and other ethnic groups in the Middle East.

Implications for an Internationalist practice

In this phase of chaos the anti-systemic forces need to come together and find unified ways of resisting. As they naturally oppose the plans of the nation-states, attacks on them will intensify thus calling for effective ways of societal self-defence. While the people and the revolutionary forces in Rojava prepare for various scenarios, from a wide-ranging ground offensive to large-scale bombing campaigns, it is up to us to identify Turkish fascism, its collaborators and spheres of influence in our home countries, to carry out educational and information work and to mobilize effective actions. Internationalists, organized in Networks like Riseup4Rojava or coming together in Rojava to learn from and defend the Revolution are a direct threat to the very basis of Capitalism, which is the fragmentation of societies and isolation of individuals. When Democratic Forces don't stay isolated, connecting their struggles across borders, victories in the fight against Capitalist Modernity can be achieved. The enemy, well aware of this threat, is for this very reason targeting

4 Murat Karayilan: *“Professional teams that can fight in a coordinated way, mobile and semi-mobile teams and teams based on tunnel warfare – because tunnel warfare also works with teams – and fighting with active defense is a new situation in the history of warfare.”*

our friends, those on the military frontlines and those working in society⁵. Experiences gained in Rojava and in Kurdistan will influence developments in future conflicts globally, on the side of democratic forces as well as on the side of nation-states.

We, as part of the Rojava revolution, can get active in every place with diverse tactics, defend the Rojava Revolution and thus strengthen the resistance against capitalism and fascism globally. The methods can range from information campaigns to blockades and disruptive actions. Together, we can deprive Turkish fascism of its support and space, everywhere and at all times. Knowing that our success will have a global impact, we can confidently go on the offensive!

#Riseup4Rojava

#SmashTurkishFascism

Internationalists in Rojava

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⁵ *Rojava Information Center: In 2022, in North and East Syria (NES), RIC recorded 130 drone strikes, killing 87 people and injuring 151. These strikes range from targeted assassinations of important military or political personnel, to hits on civilian infrastructure and children.*