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NEWS

Kurd handed over to Iran by Kurdistan Region executed

On Saturday morning 53-year old Mostafa Salimi, a Kurdish prisoner in Iran, was executed by hanging in Saqqez, in Kurdistan province. He had escaped from prison during protest of inmates against prison conditions during the coronavirus crisis. Salimi tried to find refuge in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq, but was reportedly sent back to Iran by PUK border guards.

A source who has been in touch with Salimi's family members, who were allowed to visit him before his execution, confirmed this sequence of events to Expert Kurdistan.

Mostafa Salimi was a former member of the KDP-I (Kurdistan Democratic Party – Iran). He was arrested in 2003 and sentenced to death. It remains unclear for what exactly he was sentenced. He had been a member of the KDP-I (Kurdistan Democratic Party – Iran) but Fetema Karimi, the director of the Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN), told Kurdistan 24 that Salimi had been involved in armed robbery after he left the party.

Salimi and other prisoners escaped prison during a protest on 27 March. He managed to reach the border with the Kurdistan Region, but reportedly border guards in the Penjwin district didn't allow him to ask for asylum but handed him over to their Iranian colleagues. The KRG initially denied the reports, but has now opened an investigation into the allegations.

The border crossing where Salimi tried to cross the border, is under control of the security police of the PUK, the party in charge in the southern part of the Kurdistan Region in Iraq (KRI). They are known to have good ties with the

Iranian regime, just like the KDP in the northern provinces of the KRI are known to have good relations with Turkey. The ties between the PUK and Iran may be less visible than those between the KDP and Turkey, but collaborations like this expose the ties once again.



NEWS

Five people killed in roadside bomb explosion in Kulp

On Wednesday morning, a roadside bomb exploded in the Kulp region of Diyarbakir province, destroying a vehicle and killing five people. Turkish authorities and media referred to the victims as ‘villagers’ of ‘forest workers’, in other words, as civilians. They blamed the PKK.

The PKK hasn't given a statement about the bombing. Expert Kurdistan contacted the organisation, but the spokesperson said he had no information about the incident. However, a Kurdish journalist working for the movement's TV station broadcasting from Belgium, tweeted that the victims were not civilians but two members of Turkey's intelligence agency MIT and three village guards (Kurds who are armed and paid by the state to help fight the PKK). The area where the attack took place, was allegedly a military zone that was not accessible for civilians.

Expert Kurdistan will keep you updated when new information about the attack emerges.

ANALYZIS

Separatism intensifies in Turkey during coronavirus crisis

That Southeast-Turkey, also known as North-Kurdistan, is not really considered part of Turkey by mainstream politics and mainstream media, once again becomes clear in the coronavirus crisis.

This week, several articles of a 'judicial package' were approved in parliament. The approved articles call for the transfer of prisoners aged over 65, women with young children and others to house arrest. For other prisoners, jail time will be reduced so they can serve a longer part of their sentences on parole. Political prisoners, often Kurds but also (alleged) members of the Gülen network, are excluded.

In one of the debates, HDP MP Meral Danis Bektas named several political prisoners and asked her fellow MPs whether they should die in prison. When she mentioned Idris Baluken, himself a doctor, from the AKP benches one MP was heard as saying 'Ölsün', meaning: 'Let him die'. Shocking, of course, but not surprising at all. This is exactly what the result of the discrimination in the new laws will lead to: the death of political prisoners.

Panic

Meanwhile, in 31 metropolitan municipalities a 48 hour curfew was declared over the weekend in an effort to slow down the coronavirus outbreak. Metropolitan municipalities affected in Kurdistan were Diyarbakir, Mardin, Urfa and Van. While in several neighbourhoods in Istanbul people rushed to the shops at 10PM, when the curfew was announced, to quickly get some groceries before the curfew would start two hours later, several sources in Kurdistan told Expert Kurdistan that 'hoarding' wasn't a big thing in their cities. A friend in Diyarbakir said: 'I didn't go out and heard nobody who did.' In Van, some hoarding was reportedly happening but in general, people didn't panic.

Of course, people in Kurdistan didn't panic. They have extensive experience with curfews, not for weekends like now but for weeks and sometimes months on end. They know they have to have enough stock at home at all times because you never know when the state takes some measure that leaves you stuck at home.

Sorrow

The sorrow and anger that curfews as recent as in 2015 and 2016, during the city wars, have caused in Kurdistan and the hundreds of civilian lives that were lost, make it even more painful that mainstream media in Turkey flat out deny these curfews even happened. Many mainstream media and Turkish journalists with a large following published stories with photos about the curfew, claiming it to be 'the first curfew in the country since the 1980 military coup'.

To give you some exact numbers: between 16 August 2015 and 1 July 2019, a total of at least 369 curfews were declared in Southeast-Turkey, [according to the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey](#).

Mainstream politics and culture have been accusing the Kurdish political movement of 'separatism' for decades. But it's not the Kurds who are opposing the unity of the country but Turkish institutions denying that the reality of a large part of the country even exists.



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

'The procedure was appropriate'

AKP MP Cahit Özkan answered questions asked by HDP MP Meral Danis Bektas about the state's most cruel act of the week: it had sent the remains of PKK-fighter Agit Ipek, who died in March 2017 in Dersim, to his mother by cargo and made her pay for the costs. The mother, Halise Aksoy, was photographed with the package on her lap. The drawing is an impression of the photo.

Also this week...

... journalists in the Kurdistan Region in Iraq were tested for the coronavirus. They are, after all, still allowed on the streets during the curfew (ongoing since 13 March) and at a higher risk of having and spreading the infection. [Getting tested goes like this.](#)

... new anti-coronavirus measures were taken by the authorities guarding Al Hol-camp, the camp in Northeast-Syria where ISIS women and their children are jailed. Anybody in need of a doctor must come to medical appointments unaccompanied by family members, and there is extra protective equipment for medical staff. Additional sanitation points have been installed, trade in non-essential goods is no longer allowed at the camp's market and extra fences have been placed to prevent areas from becoming overcrowded.

... a new court case was opened against Selçuk Mızraklı, the elected co-mayor of Diyarbakir who was recently sentenced to nine years, four months and fifteen days imprisonment. This time, he will be prosecuted for 'making propaganda for a terrorist organisation'. The first hearing will be on 12 October.



Kurdish music channel [MedMusicTV has a new channel on youtube](#), after the previous one was closed for undisclosed reasons.



A Kurdish language and literature course will start at the [University of Toronto](#) on Monday 4 May. Non-students can audit the online course, given every Monday and Wednesday between 3 and 5 PM, for free. Type 'NMC' in the department field and it will show up. For more info about the course, email professor Sheyholislami: jaffer.sheyholislami@carleton.ca. On the picture: Mem û Zîn, the most famous couple in Kurdish literature.



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