

# Opinion For Turkey, All Kurds Are Terrorists

Turkey's hatred of the Kurds means we have been shut out of international efforts to find a political resolution to the conflict in Syria.



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan speaks during the United Solidarity and Brotherhood rally in Gaziantep, Turkey, August 28, 2016. Umit Bektas, Reuters

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The Kurds of Syria have been in direct conflict with the Syrian regime since the 2004 Qamishli uprising, demanding their democratic rights. When the revolution began in the country, the Kurdish people joined it, demanding a free and democratic Syria in which their existence and legitimate rights might be recognized constitutionally.

We did not know then that the course of the revolution would change and that the Kurdish issue in Syria would be manipulated by Turkey into a major obstacle in the way of a solution to the Syrian conflict.

Turkey, which follows the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, had its own plans for Syria: It wanted power in that country to be in the hands of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. This was stated by the Turkish foreign minister when he met Bashar Assad at the beginning of the crisis.

When the Syrian president turned Ankara down, Turkey turned into a safe haven for the Syrian opposition with all its politicians, militias and even nongovernmental organizations. Turkey also opened training centers for the Syrian opposition, provided them with weapons and military equipment and supplies, and stipulated that no one should deal with the Syrian Kurds. This is what happened exactly.

At first, Turkey tried to turn all its associated factions – such as the Nusra Front, Al-Tawhid Brigade and other militant Muslim Brotherhood groups – against the Kurds, who resisted violently. Then Turkey tried to annex the Kurds to the armed and political opposition.

The Kurds demanded that the opposition recognize Kurdish existence and that the solution to the Kurdish issue should also be part of the opposition's future plan, when a democratic Syria would be established. However, the opposition, with all its factions, refused to do this – at the request of Turkey.

Then Turkey decided to annihilate the Kurds by sending the Islamic State to their regions. When the Kurds defeated ISIS in Kobani, Turkey's dirty tricks were revealed to the whole world. The international coalition against terrorism decided to stand by the Kurds and to fight ISIS until the ISIS occupied territories were liberated.

Turkey was forced to intervene on its own, rather than sending in its associated factions. It occupied northern Syria and then the Afrin district, by means of trade-offs that lacked the minimum standards of moral and humanitarian values and norms, in order to pass its policies, change the demography of the region and end the existence of the Kurds.



Kurdish protesters holding portraits of loved ones who died fighting ISIS, during a protest outside a U.S.-led coalition base, in Jalabiya village, southeast of Kobani, Syria. Dec. 20, 2018. Uncredited, AP

Turkey has made every effort to keep the Kurds out of all international efforts to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis, fearing that the Kurds would gain some of their legitimate rights.

We and our allies were excluded from the Geneva, Astana and Sochi talks. We

have found every door in international forums locked because of Turkey's blackmail of all parties with interests in the Syrian issue. In addition, Turkey has been trying to put Syrian Kurds on the terrorism list by linking the Kurdish defense forces in Syria to the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), in order to leave the Kurds without protection.

The question arises: Why is there hostility toward the Kurds, or "Kurdophobia"?

The answer to this question lies in the history of the Turkish state, which was founded on the ruins of the peoples it exterminated, such as the Armenians, Syriacs (Assyrians), Romans, [inhabitants of] Pontus and the Kurds. Despite the dozens of massacres committed by the Turks against the Kurds up until the ongoing PKK rebellion since 1984, they have failed to annihilate the Kurds.

Turkish fascism believes that any Kurd who gains his/her rights is the enemy of the Turkish state and will seek revenge from Turkey for its crimes, not only against the Kurds, but also against the people who have been exterminated by them.

The Turkish state was able to eliminate Red Kurdistan in 1929 through Ataturk's friendship with Stalin, and then the Republic of Mahabad in 1945, through its relations with the Allies. The 1975 Algiers Agreement between the shah of Iran and Saddam Hussein eliminated the Kurdish insurgency in northern Iraq.



Kurdish forces fighting Islamic State fighters in the Syrian city of Hasaka, in July 2015. Rodi Said/Reuters

Now, the Turks say, in northern Syria, we will not make the same mistake we made in northern Iraq in 1992. In other words, they will correct their "mistake" if they can find a way to do so. Since 1984, Turkey has practiced all kinds of repression and dirty tricks to eliminate the Kurdish revolution inside the country. However, it has not succeeded, despite the killings, arrests, abuse, displacement and unjust sentences against democratically elected representatives, imprisoned without trial.

Turkey suffers from Kurdophobia and it views every Kurd as a member of the PKK, who must be eliminated. In other words, all Kurds are terrorists -except the Kurds who fight the PKK alongside Turkey. Every country that does not designate

the PKK as a terrorist organization cannot establish normal relationships with the Turkish state.

Complications involving the Kurds within the Turkish state stem from its failure to end the Kurdish rebellion inside Turkey. Therefore, it asks everyone to fight the PKK on its behalf or alongside it – including the Kurds outside Turkey. Anyone who does not do so is regarded as a terrorist, or linked to the PKK.

Based on this fact, whoever wants or seeks a political solution in Syria must address this complicated issue with the Turkish state first. That can only happen if the Turkish state reconciles with its Kurds.

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