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Kurdish villages under round-the-clock military curfew

Military blockades continue in three villages in the town of Nusaybin (Mardin province). In addition to Koruköy, which has been under siege since 11 February 2017, Doğanlı and Kuyular villages have also been under round-the-clock-curfew since 22 February 2017. Entry and exit is prohibited in these three villages. HDP deputies and human rights activists have been trying to reach Koruköy, but to no avail. They have been waiting on the road to Koruköy, obstructed by military barricades built fifteen kilometers away from the village.

Last week, we informed the national and international publics about serious human rights violations, which were documented by images, video shootings, and phone calls from residents of Koruköy. 23 of 39 detained residents of Korukoy were released 14 days later. These 23 people said that they were tortured under detention. One of the detainees, Abdi Aykut, whose photo clearly showed him being tortured, was hospitalized upon release. The Minister of Interior accused Mr. Aykut of “hosting terrorists.” With this statement, the Minister did not even deny torture allegations, but justified them.

There are also reports that houses in Doğanlı (Talatê) are being shelled and demolished. The round-the-clock curfew and blockades are not limited to these three villages. In the last two weeks, nine villages in different districts of Mardin and ten villages in Diyarbakir, were put under military blockade and similar curfews. Since 2015, such round-the-clock curfews led to irreversible destruction in many Kurdish towns and cities.

In an opinion on the legal framework governing curfews, the Venice Commission drew attention to the death of civilians during past round-the-clock-curfews and also to their anti-Constitutional nature. More specifically, the Commission noted that the curfews imposed since August 2015 had not been “based on the constitutional and legislative framework which specifically governs the use of exceptional measures in Turkey, including curfew.”

Considering the scale of destruction and civilian deaths during previous curfews, we urge the democratic international community not to remain silent in the face of re-emerging curfews and/or military sieges of complete human settlements. We suspect that such inhumane practices, which amount to collective punishment, will rapidly spread to the Kurdish countryside in the run-up to the referendum.

Hişyar Özsoy

**Deputy Co-chair of HDP Responsible for Foreign Affairs
Member of Parliament**

Contact: international@hdp.org.tr **Web:** www.hdp.org.tr

Address: Barbaros Mah. Tahrân Cad. Büklüm Sok. No: 117 06680 Çankaya, Ankara - Turkey

Phone: +90 312 427 17 80 **Fax:** +90 312 4288957