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***‘The Discursive Construction of Terrorism: The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and other Kurdish political movements in Turkish official discourse, and the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question’.***

By

Azad Abdullah Mohammed Deewanee

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## Abstract

This research critically challenges the conventional understanding of terrorism, which is influenced by the views of states that label certain non-state actors as terrorists and their action as terrorism. The research demonstrates that there is a need to critically study the characteristics of every armed conflict constructed as terrorism. This is the case of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, which is constructed in the Turkish official discourse as a phenomenon of terrorism perpetrated by the PKK. In addition, the Turkish narrative of terrorism is not limited to the PKK, but it transcends to the Syrian Kurdish PYD and YPG, and other Kurdish movements and individuals. The findings of this research reveal that the Turkish official narrative of terrorism functions to achieve two main goals. The first goal is to delegitimize the PKK and the other Kurdish movements. The second goal is to legitimize the repressive policies of the Turkish authorities regarding these movements in particular and the Kurds in general. This is interconnected with the denial of the existence of the Kurdish question and framing it in the context of the narrative of terrorism.

The research also reveals that the language and policy of peace and war could change according to the interests of states' elites. This is the case of the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question, which changed under the influence of the elections and voting agendas of Erdogan and AKP. The research found that during the peace process and before the June 2015 elections, the approach of Turkish authorities was pro-peace negotiations and non-military action. However, as the AKP was not able to secure the majority that it sought in the June elections, the AKP authorities abandoned the peace process and adopted a military campaign and repressive policies. The latter matched the appeal of the AKP leadership to the votes of nationalist Turks in the November 2015 elections and the April 2017 referendum.

## **Keywords**

Terrorism, Turkish official discourse, Turkish authorities, PKK, PYD, YPG, HDP, Kurdish question, the peace process, AKP, Erdogan.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis has been accomplished solely by myself for obtaining my PhD degree, and therefore, I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted, in part or in whole, for any other purposes. Except where I state otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented in this dissertation is entirely my own.

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## List of acronyms

AKP	<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> : in Turkish,	Justice and Development Party
BDP	<i>Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi</i> : in Turkish,	Peace and Democracy party
CHP	<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i> ; in Turkish,	Republican People's Party
DHKP-C	<i>Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi</i> : in Turkish	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front
FETO	(used by the AKP)	Hizmet movement of Fethullah Gulen
FM		Turkish foreign minister
HDP	<i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</i> : in Turkish,	Peoples' Democratic Party
ISIL	(ISIS is also used in quotations),	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JİTEM	<i>Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele</i> , in Turkish	Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terror Unit
KCK	<i>Koma Civakên Kurdistan</i> : in Kurdish,	Kurdistan Communities Union
KNK	<i>Kongreya Neteweyî ya Kurdistanê</i> ; in Kurdish,	Kurdistan National Congress
MIT	<i>Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı</i> : in Turkish,	Turkish Intelligence Service
MHP	<i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i> : in Turkish,	Nationalist Action Party
MGK	<i>Millî Güvenlik Kurulu</i> ; Turkish,	Turkish National Security Council
PKK	<i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan</i> : in Kurdish,	Kurdistan Workers Party
PYD	<i>Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat</i> : in Kurdish,	Democratic Union Party
SDF	<i>Hêzên Sûriya Demokratîk</i> , HSD: in Kurdish <i>قوات سوريا الديمقراطية، قسد</i> : in Arabic	Syrian Democratic Forces
TMFA		Turkish ministry of foreign affairs
PM		Turkish prime-minister
YPG	<i>Yekîneyên Parastina Gel</i> : in Kurdish,	People's Protection Units

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## **Chapter 1: *Introduction***

Nietzsche posed the question that “what signposts does linguistics, especially the study of etymology, give to the history of the evolution of moral concepts?” (quoted in Ansell-Pearson, 2007: 34). Nietzsche pioneered questioning the way that etymology or genealogy of words influences the change of concepts which represent the good vs. bad dichotomy (Ansell-Pearson, 2007: xiii-xxix; Nietzsche, 2009: 14-41). In other words, Nietzsche’s perspective was one of the early explorations in the genealogy of concepts. An example on the genealogy of concepts is the term ‘comrade’. The original meaning of the word comrade is ‘roommate’ (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). However, the word gained a political characteristic when the leftist movements began to use it at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to denote their partisans. Similar historical change of connotation is applied to the word ‘terror’ and its associated terms of ‘terrorist, and terrorism’. Many scholars argue that ‘terror’ as a political term was first used during the French revolution to describe the violent acts of French revolutionary government against the public during the years of 1793-1794, and this period was named by some historians as ‘the Reign of Terror’ (Kushner, 2003: 360; Weinberg & Eubank, 2006: 26). However, the concept of terrorism is mainly used today by governments to name the violent acts of certain non-state actors. This concept has become a powerful tool used by governments that label certain groups and movements as ‘terrorists’ and their action as ‘terrorism’ regardless of their different characteristics, motivations and methods of action.

This suggests that the concept of terrorism and its associated narratives are not objective realities, but they are constructed according to certain political and historical conditions. Zulaika and Douglass (1996: x) stated that “yesterday’s terrorists are today’s Nobel Peace Prize winners” as they referred to the revolutionary leaders Nelson Mandela who was the head of African National Congress (ANC) and Yassir Arafat who was the head of Palestinian Liberation Movement (PLO). Both leaders were labelled as terrorists for long-term. However, they were honoured later with the Nobel Prize of peace. This also implies that language, and specifically discourse constructs meanings or realities about social phenomena. Therefore, language is powerful. Foucault (1972, 1976, 1977) and other scholars emphasize this powerful role of language, and accordingly, assert the relationship of discourse, knowledge and power. Likewise, scholars like Hansen (2006), Epstein (2008), and Yongtao (2010) emphasise the role of discourse in the formation of political realities, which influence state policies.

Although the dominant knowledge about the discourse of terrorism represents it as a single entity, there is more than one discourse of terrorism. This is because it is suggested that there are multiple international discourses of counter-terrorism. For example, Keohane (2005) and Jackson (2007) highlighted the dissimilarities between the discourses of terrorism adopted by the US administration and those adopted by the majority of Western European countries. The European discourses have been influenced by the European approach which prefers combating terrorism through judicial measures and they have shown fewer tendencies towards military confrontation (Keohane, 2005: 5-9).<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the American discourse is influenced by the military approach adopted by the US administrations and the rhetoric of ‘War on Terror’ which is used by politicians in both state policies and election campaigns (Keohane, 2005; Jackson, 2007). Keohane (2005) and Jackson (2007) argue that the American discourse

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<sup>1</sup> See also Hulsse & Spencer (2008).

is intertwined with the state political institutions to the extent that it is difficult to change it in order to adopt more peaceful approach. Although the Western European countries are generally inclined towards non-military approach of counter-terrorism, there are various discourses among them and there is no such a unified discourse for all Western European countries. The Turkish discourse of counter-terrorism, which this research deals with is even more complex than the American discourse. This is because the Turkish discourse is deeply intertwined with the following two main factors: 1. The powerful position of Turkish military who have been in long-term conflict with the Kurdistan Workers Party (in Kurdish: *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*, PKK). 2. The various measures of other state institutions and laws that target Kurdish nationalism under the label of ‘counter-terrorism’.<sup>2</sup>

Guided by some major perspectives on the relationship of discourse, knowledge and power, this research explores the constructions of the Turkish official discourse regarding the PKK, the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the People’s Protection Units (YPG).<sup>3</sup> The PYD and YPG are considered by the Turkish authorities as organic parts of the PKK. This is although both groups act in Syria. The PYD is a Syrian Kurdish political party, and the YPG is the armed force of the Syrian Kurdish semi-autonomous administration of *Rojava*.<sup>4</sup> *Rojava* is the short Kurdish term used instead of *Rojava* Kurdistan (in English: Western Kurdistan), which is the Syrian Kurdish region. *Rojava* is a *de-facto* semi-autonomous administration, which was formed in 2012 and afterwards by the PYD and other affiliated political parties and groups, and it consisted of the three administrative cantons of *Jizir* (in Arabic: *Jazeera*), *Kobani* and *Afrin* (see Map 4). This is although *Rojava* administration is not recognized by the

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<sup>2</sup> For more about the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, go to historical background of the conflict in chapter 4.

<sup>3</sup> In Kurdish: *Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*, *PYD*, and *Yekîneyên Parastina Gel*, *YPG*.

<sup>4</sup> *Rojava* Kurdistan is claimed by the Kurds as part of their historical homeland, Kurdistan which was divided and annexed to 4 countries following the demise of Ottoman empire (See KNK, 2014: 6). Dividing Kurdistan and annexing it to the nation-states of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria is explained in chapter 4.

Syrian regime. The researcher frequently uses PYD-YPG instead of PYD and YPG. This is because the Turkish official texts use the acronyms ‘PYD or YPG’ as reference to both organizations.

The research also explores the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure. The peace process was initiated in 2012 by both the Turkish authorities and the PKK to end the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, and to find a solution for the Kurdish question.<sup>5</sup> However, the process failed in 2015. The constructions and narratives of the Turkish authorities during the peace process and following its failure also encompass the legal Kurdish parities of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), Peace and Democratic Party (BDP) and other pro-Kurdish groups and activists who were usually constructed by the Turkish authorities as supporters of the PKK. The research uses both terms ‘construction’ and ‘narrative’. Both terms have the same semantic indication in the research. However, the research uses both terms to tackle the grammatical indication of each term. The term ‘construction’ usually indicates ‘nominal sentences’ while the term ‘narrative’ usually indicates ‘verbal sentences’.

This introductory chapter identifies the research objectives and questions, and discusses each of the research methodology, research data, and its ethical considerations. In addition, this chapter provides an outline for the chapters of research.

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<sup>5</sup> The Turkish authorities denied the term ‘Kurdish question’ and used instead other terms like ‘the problems of Kurds’. This is detailed in chapter 7.



## **Research questions and objectives**

The research has the following major questions:

- How has the Turkish official discourse constructed the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Democratic Union Party (PYD), and the People's Protection Units (YPG)?
- How did the Turkish authorities construct and deal with the Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure?
- How did such constructions function in producing particular meanings for events or legitimatising particular actors or policies?
- How did these constructions interact with the way that the Turkish authorities dealt with the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and civic Kurdish activists in Turkey?

The major objective of this research is to contribute to the literature of terrorism studies. In particular, the research is a contribution in the discursive studies of terrorism. The research also contributes to the literature on the Kurdish question and Turkish-Kurdish conflict. The research critically challenges the conventional understanding of 'terrorism' which is influenced by the official narratives of states that usually target non-state actors. For this purpose, the research highlights the need to comprehensively deal with the characteristics of each case study that has been constructed in the mainstream studies and official discourses as 'terrorism'. The research highlights that the discursive studies of terrorism mainly concentrate on the American narrative of 'War on Terror', and they lack such comprehensive studies on the characteristics of individual case studies. In the case of this research, the literature review reveals that the construction of the PKK in the Turkish official discourse is narrowly studied in the discursive field of terrorism studies. In addition, the literature lacks research on the construction of the Syrian Kurdish PYD and YPG in the Turkish official discourse. Accordingly, this research intended to be a contribution in bridging these gaps in the literature.

In addition to the label of ‘terrorist’, the research deals with other labels and constructions about the PKK, YPG, and PYD in the Turkish official discourse. The latter usually describe the PKK, PYD-YPG as separatists, criminals, and as a security threat against the international community. However, such constructions are part of the dominant narrative of terrorism. The narrative of terrorism constituted the major element of the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question in the period that the research studies. Therefore, the constructions and narratives that this research deal with are formed in the context of the Turkish official narrative of terrorism, and vice versa, they form the narrative of terrorism itself.<sup>6</sup>

### **Research methodology**

Searching for a satisfactory response to the question of ‘what is terrorism?’ is a principal motivation for this research. However, the constructionist philosophical orientation of the research and the shortage of relevant discursive studies in the literature, have encouraged the researcher to study the discourse of terrorism. Thus, the constructionist approach directed the researcher to dislocate the initial enquiry of ‘what is terrorism?’ from its positivist realm of causality to be more compatible with the constructionist key enquiry of ‘how knowledge is constructed?’ Accordingly, the main questions of the research initiate with ‘how’ instead of ‘what’. The compatibility of constructionist philosophy with the study of discourse developed the objective of research from enquiring terrorism as a phenomenon to questioning the discourse of terrorism itself. Wood and Kroger (2000: 8-10) emphasize that exploring the discursive construction of social phenomenon requires shifting the focus of study from the phenomenon to the discourse itself.

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<sup>6</sup> For more on interdiscursivity, see chapter 3 on discourse and critical discourse analysis (CDA).

This research employs critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a philosophical and analytical approach, which is compatible with both constructionism and the study of the discourse of terrorism more than other approaches. CDA agrees the constructionist philosophy that knowledge about social phenomena is not fixed reality, but it is constructed according to the interpretations of researcher and the dominant social and historical conditions (Burr, 2003; Wodak, 2001a). In addition, both CDA and constructionism highlight that there is a relationship between knowledge and power (Burr, 2003; Wodak, 2001a). Analytical approaches like conversation analysis and ethnomethodology also agree the perspectives of constructionism. However, they are not compatible with the research objective. Conversation analysis and ethnomethodology agree constructionism that knowledge is influenced by the interpretations of researcher and the social and historical conditions. Nevertheless, these approaches mainly depend on the micro analysis of text, which is not enough to deal with the various manifestations and implications of dominance and ideology in the texts that represent political discourses like the discourse of terrorism (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990). Unlike conversation analysis and ethnomethodology, CDA's analytical mechanism has two components; macro and micro, which work in tandem. This is explained later in this chapter and in chapter 3.

Post-structuralist discourse analysis also matches the study of the discourse of terrorism. However, it is less compatible with the objectives and questions of this research as it overlooks the role of agency. Post-structuralist approach agrees with both the constructionist philosophy and this research that text has no single and durable meaning and that the analysis of text requires exploring the social and historical conditions which influence its production and dissemination (Burr, 2003; Laclau & Mouffe, 2001; Young, 1981). In addition, they agree that discourse study requires understanding the discourse-power relationship. However, post-

structuralist approach overlooks the role of agency in the construction and maintenance of the representations of discourse (Burr, 2003; Hall, 2001). Accordingly, overlooking the role of agency in the study of discourse of terrorism diverts the research from its objectives and questions, which focus on the role of agency in the discursive constructions and practices.

CDA, on the other hand, emphasizes the principal role of agency in the production and maintenance of discourses (Van Dijk, 1993, 2003; Wodak, 1996, 2001a, 2001b). In other words, CDA aims at revealing the relationship between powerful groups (or agency) and discourse to be discourse-power relationship. Establishing the relationship between agency, discourse and power facilitates drawing an analytical framework, which concentrates on the aspects of ideology, dominance and power relations. The CDA mechanism of establishing the relationship of discourse-power-agency also assists in exploring the consequences of this relationship. As CDA highlights the role of agency, it connects the structural elements of text to the discursive practices and the wider social and political milieu. However, this research has its own position regarding the role of agency, which is not in conformity with the perspective of CDA. While CDA maintains that agency manipulates discourse, this research emphasizes that it is only possible that agency manipulates the discursive constructions and practices, but not the entire discourse because the context of discourse is beyond the capacity of agency to manipulate. This is also explained in chapter 3.

In the light of CDA insights, this research adopted an analytical framework which deals with text on two levels: Micro and macro. The micro analysis of text focuses on semantic and grammatical structures of text, while the macro level of analysis deals with the socio-political and historical contexts which govern the production and dissemination of text (O'Halloran, 2005; Titscher *et al.*, 2000). However, the two levels work in tandem as they form the overall

analytical outcome. The micro-macro analytical framework facilitates deciphering the features of text which serve ideology, dominance and power relations (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2003, 2006a, 2006b). This is explained in the section of the framework of data analysis in chapter 3.

### **Research data**

This research is discourse-centred, and therefore, its data and the field of generating them are different from the actor-centred researches. The actor-centred approach usually depends on data generated directly from actors through interviews, groups discussion, questioners and other similar methods (Dubios & Ford, 2015).<sup>7</sup> However, the data of this research are texts which represent the Turkish official discourse and policy. These texts were generated from their usual fields of dissemination including the means of broadcast media, the press, and internal communication. Devine (2003) argues that the main characteristic of secondary data is that they have been already published. Therefore, reliance on such data undermines the validity of research. Likewise, Gunning (2007: 365-366) argues that depending on the secondary data is a major deficiency of the conventional studies of terrorism. However, the texts that this research depends on form the interpretation of the research for particular discursive constructions on terrorism. Therefore, such texts are primary data for this discursive research. Hülse and Spencer (2008: 576) stated that “the primary source of terrorism research must be the discourse in which the social construction of terrorism takes place, that is, the discourse that constitutes a particular group of people as ‘terrorists’”.

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<sup>7</sup> Actor-centered research on terrorism usually generates its data from actors involved in the armed conflict, or it uses secondary sources of data generated originally from them (Jackson *et al.*, 2011).

Text for CDA is represented in written, spoken and visual languages in many forms such as reports disseminated through newspapers, television, and the internet, or transcripts of conversations and interviews (Fairclough, 2003: 3). However, the data of this research mainly consists of written texts in addition to several spoken texts. The visual texts are excluded from this research because they require special techniques to generate and analyse, which are beyond the skills of researcher and the capacity of the research (Ball & Smith, 1992; Underhill, 1987). The research mainly depends on written texts because the written texts that tell the view of the Turkish officials are more available in English than the spoken texts. However, the generated written texts are sufficient in representing the view and policy of the Turkish authorities, which is the core of this research.

The generated texts are mainly in English. This is because the researcher does not read Turkish. In order to overcome any potential inaccuracy in the English texts that include the statements of the Turkish officials, the research gave the priority to texts generated from the official websites of the Turkish authorities, and the English versions of the main Turkish newspapers. In addition, the researcher compared various texts to choose the texts that have more content matches in other texts. This in case more than one text were available about the same event or statement.

This research deals with two sets of texts. The first set consists of official texts, reports and other documents that reflect the view and policy of the Turkish authorities. The research concentrates on extracting certain statements by the Turkish officials, which are relevant to the research's subject (see the list of main Turkish officials whose statements are dealt with in Appendix Table 6). The research uses the term 'statement' to denote relevant part of statements, speeches, interviews, and other texts by the Turkish officials. These are usually

published in the websites of the Turkish authorities like the websites of the Turkish presidency, the Turkish prime-ministry, and the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs. This in addition to the texts of the Turkish and international news agencies, and research centres that quote the Turkish officials. The second set of texts that the research deals with reflect certain views, which are usually dissimilar to the Turkish official view and challenge it. These mainly consist of the views of international human rights institutions and organizations, journalists, research centres, other non-governmental organizations, and the statements of Kurdish parties and activists who are the subject of this research. The texts of these views are mainly extracted from reports, articles, and other texts of the press, which are disseminated through the internet. For example, the reports about Turkey and Kurds by the Office of UN High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group, and Freedom House.

The research generated texts from various English language newspapers, magazines and TV stations. The research widely uses the English texts of the main Turkish news agencies and newspapers including *Anadolu Agency*, *Hurriyet Daily News*, *Daily Sabah*, and *Today's Zaman*. This in addition to the reports and texts of major international news agencies such as BBC, CNN, Deutsche Welle, France 24, EuroNews, Al-Jazeera, and widespread newspapers and magazines such as *the New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *the Guardian*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *the Daily Star*, *the Economist*, *the Financial Times*, *the Independent*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Spiegel International*. The databases of many TV stations, newspapers and magazines are available on their internet websites. However, it was difficult to access the archives of particular Turkish sources. Therefore, the researcher resorted to accessible online databases such as ProQuest, and the Library of Congress.

The generated data are related to two main criteria connected to the approaches of the AKP authorities regarding the PKK, YPG, and PYD in particular, and the Kurdish question in general. The AKP is the acronym of the Turkish ruling Justice and Development Party (in Turkish: *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*). The first criterion is related to the construction of the PKK, PYD and YPG in the contemporary Turkish official discourse, which reflects the language and policy of AKP authorities regarding these movements. The second criterion is related to the approach of the AKP authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure. The research considers the speech of Erdogan in the 4th congress of AKP on 30 September 2012 as the beginning of the initiative of peace process, which was also called for by the PKK imprisoned leader, Abdullah Ocalan in March, 2013 (in English: Ocalan).<sup>8</sup> The peace process had major influence on the language and policy of the AKP authorities regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question. In addition, the process was influenced by certain election and voting agendas of the Turkish AK ruling party. Following the failure of the process in 2015 the Turkish authorities adopted different language and policy regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question. The latter approach has been adopted by the Turkish authorities until the moment of writing this research. Accordingly, the generated texts were produced between the date of initiating the peace process in September 2012 and the date of accomplishing the data analysis in early 2018.

Generating texts according to certain historical events helps in exploring the influence of historical and political conditions on the changes of discourse. This is the case of the changes in the language and policy of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the

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<sup>8</sup> The last name of PKK leader Ocalan is pronounced 'Ojalan' in English. The international (English) sources transliterate 'Ocalan' copying the Turkish sources. The latter is the transliteration of the name as it is pronounced in Turkish. The Turkish and the Kurdish letter 'C' is the English 'J'.



peace process and following its failure. Comparing texts produced following certain events to relevant texts produced before them helps in such exploration. Foucault (1972, 1984) argues that discourse is contingent and is not subject to gradual evolvments, and that this contingency depends on certain historical events which are influenced by certain social conditions. Wodak (1996, 2001b) agrees the Foucauldian perspective that discourses are neither fixed nor developing entities, but they are contingent and change according to certain historical conditions. However, there are certain rules govern such historical changes (Foucault, 1972, 1984; Wodak, 2001b). These rules are embodied in social structures and power relations, which are in the case of the discourse of terrorism influenced by the wider political and historical contexts. Thus, exploring the linguistic manifestations of the discourse of terrorism should be in the light of understanding the political and historical contexts that influence the construction of this discourse.

The strategy of data sampling of this research is purposive and selective. This sort of sampling strategy is compatible with CDA. Generating data according to random sampling is less suitable for the purposes of CDA, and accordingly, the goals of this research. CDA is more compatible with texts that are rich in linguistic details. Usually, texts with linguistic details inform the attributes of ideology, dominance and power relations which are the target of CDA (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2009). Such linguistic details consist of many grammatical and semantic structures such as nominalization and assumptions which are usually used either to hide or highlight certain information, or as metaphors and hyperboles which are usually used to make the recipient of text impressed by its message. Accordingly, generating sufficient number of such texts requires a proper process of selection. On the contrary, random sampling might result in many short texts which lack such linguistic details. However, the research needs to acquire a considerable level of credibility. Therefore, the adopted sampling strategy targeted

various sources and views. The targeted texts were generated from various official and non-official sources as explained earlier.

The number of texts that the research generated matched the purposes of the research and were sufficient in answering its question. This is although the analysis exceeded the initially dedicated timeframe of 16 months. This period was allocated for the tasks of data analysis and writing the chapters of analysis. The research proposal estimated the targeted number of texts according to this timeframe, and according to the estimated average time that the analysis of each text would take. However, as the research progressed, the researcher discovered that the generated texts were not similar in the length and richness of their linguistic structures. The generated texts that the research dealt with are different in size and linguistic structures. The longer texts usually needed more time to analyse. Certain texts are long and rich in their linguistic structures such as the texts of the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs, which are dealt with in chapter 5 and 6. Such texts required months to analyse and to connect their argumentative points to the points of other texts. Other short texts required much shorter time to analyse. Therefore, it was not possible to estimate the average time that the analysis of each single text required. However, the analysis dealt with more than 120 text, which reflect the view of the Turkish authorities. These texts were challenged by other texts from various sources. The latter mainly supported the arguments that critically challenged the view of the Turkish authorities. The generated texts sufficiently achieved the goals of the research as they constituted the representation of the Turkish official discourse and policy, and they supported the formation of the critical arguments of the research.

## **Ethical considerations**

There is no doubt that the researches that generate data through contacting human subjects who involved or subjected to violence are quite sensitive. In particular, contacting individuals involved in armed conflict who are described either as ‘terrorists or counter-terrorists’ is a sensitive issue, which requires a considerable level of caution (Smyth, 2009). Research which involves individuals who have taken part of violent activities could also involve complex moral and ethical dilemmas. In particular, infringing the confidentiality of such respondents might compromise other people and vitiate the credibility of researcher. This was the case of data generated from interviews with former members of the Irish Republic Army (IRA) which were stored by the American University of Boston (BBC, May, 2014; Boland, May, 2014). Upon the order of a US federal court, many tapes of these interviews were handed to the police of Northern Ireland, who consequently arrested and questioned Gerry Adams the leader of Sinn Féin (Boland, May, 2014). Adams’ arrest was based on claims that he was involved in killing a woman in 1972 during the conflict, and these claims were supported by information taken from the taped interviews of Boston University with former Sinn Féin members (BBC, May, 2014; Boland, May, 2014). However, this research is not challenging similar moral and ethical dilemmas because it does not deal with actors, but it is limited to available texts that constitute discursive constructions and policies. In other words, the research does not interview or contact the Turkish authorities or the members of the PKK and the other Kurdish movements.

## **Research outline**

In addition to the introductory and concluding chapters, this research has 7 chapters. 4 of these chapters are dedicated to the analysis of data, and accordingly, the latter chapters form the response to the research questions. Each research chapter has an introduction and a conclusion. The major areas that each chapter deals with are summarized below.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

Literature review chapter has five sections. The first section provides a critique for the mainstream studies of terrorism supported by the work of scholars of critical studies of terrorism (CST). This section critiques the mainstream studies of terrorism, which considers terrorism as a reality although it is subjectively constructed and liable to change as any constructed concept. In addition, the section critiques the way that the mainstream studies overlook the violence or repression of state apparatus including military, security forces and other governmental institutions and limit terrorism as a description to the armed violence of certain non-state actors regardless of the dissimilarity in their methods of action and motivations.

The second section of chapter deals with the discursive studies of terrorism. These studies consider terrorism as a linguistic construction, and they critically deal with the inconsistencies of the conventional knowledge about terrorism. The third section compares the view of critical discursive studies on terrorism to the view of mainstream studies regarding the relationship between media and terrorism. The section highlighted that while the mainstream scholars consider media as a tool which serves the propaganda of terrorists, the critical scholars demonstrate that corporate broadcasting media usually serve the governmental narrative regarding terrorism, and consequently, critical scholars explain the ways according to which terrorism is constructed and terrorist events are framed by the corporate media.

The fourth section of this chapter deals with the literature on the PKK and the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Supported by critical studies, the section reveals the inconsistencies of the mainstream studies on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, which usually overlook the political and historical origins of the conflict and favour the Turkish narrative that frames the Turkish-Kurdish conflict as terrorism. The last section of this chapter deals with the studies on the PYD-YPG and the Syrian Kurdish semi-autonomous administration of *Rojava*. This section deals with two types of studies. One type favours the Turkish official view and considers the PYD-YPG as a security threat against Turkey because they are organic parts of the PKK. The other type deals with the political and historical origins of the Kurdish question and highlight the antagonism of the Turkish authorities towards the Kurdish autonomy in Syria. However, the literature review reveals that the studies on the PKK and PYD-YPG are insufficient in exploring the construction of these movements in the Turkish official discourse.

### **Chapter 3: Discourse and the methodological implications of critical discourse analysis.**

This chapter provides a background for the meaning of discourse and the philosophical and analytical implications of CDA, which is the approach employed in this research. The chapter also draws a theoretical framework for the research. The chapter has two main sections. The first section discusses discourse theory. This section deals with the definition of discourse in the light of the perspectives of critical discourse analysts and other scholars. In addition, it deals with the inter-textuality and inter-discursivity of text, discourse and genre.<sup>9</sup> The section also debates the role of agency in discourse and the manipulation of discursive practices and constructions by powerful groups. Furthermore, the section explains ideology and its relation to dominance and power relations. The second section of the chapter discusses CDA as an

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<sup>9</sup> Genre is the way of producing a discursive text such as a press conference (Fairclough, 2003: 65-68). This is explained in chapter 3.

analytical approach. This section discusses the CDA theoretical insights regarding the analysis of language, which facilitate understanding the relationship between the discursive practices and constructions and the wider social and historical context. In the light of these theoretical insights the chapter draws a framework for the data analysis of this research.

#### **Chapter 4: Historical background: The Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the opening approach of the AKP.**

The chapter provides a historical background for the conflict between the Turkish government and the PKK. The first section of this chapter discusses the historical roots of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. The section highlights the main characteristics of the repressive policies of the Turkish governments against the Kurds and Kurdish identity before the emergence of the PKK. Then it discusses the policies adopted by the Turkish governments to repress the PKK rebellion, and it highlights the impacts of the armed action on human rights in the Kurdish region of Turkey. The section reveals the special measures that were adopted by the Turkish governments against the Kurds during the conflict. However, the discussion of impacts of the conflict in this chapter was limited to the era before launching the peace process in 2012.<sup>10</sup> The latter is the focus of the analysis chapters. The last part of this section is about the abduction of the leader of the PKK, Ocalan by the Turkish authorities in 1999, and the ensuing stance of the EU regarding the PKK and Turkish treatment of Kurds (Gunter, 2008: Marcus, 2007).

The second section of this chapter provides a background for the AKP, and its opening approach regarding the Kurds. The section discusses the ideological background of the AKP, and it highlights the agendas of AKP regarding each of the role of the Turkish military and

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<sup>10</sup> The research considers the Erdogan speech in the September 2012 Congress in which he called for a peace approach to the conflict as the beginning of the peace process (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). See chapter 7.

elections, and its ambition to change the Turkish ruling system from parliamentary to presidential by amending the Turkish constitution. The section concentrates on the relationship between these agenda of the AKP and its Kurdish opening approach.

### **Chapter 5-8: Data analysis**

Data analysis is allocated four chapters including chapters 5-8. The analysis aims at responding the research questions, which are mainly about both the discursive constructions and policies of the Turkish authorities. The first two chapters deal with the construction of the PKK and PYD-YPG in the Turkish official texts, and the last two chapters deal with the changes in the constructions and policies of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure.

### **Chapter 5: Analysis of the discursive constructions of PKK in the Turkish official texts.**

This is the first chapter of analysis and it deals with the constructions of the PKK in the Turkish official texts. In particular, the analysis deals with the relevant texts of the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs, Turkish anti-terrorism law and relevant legislations, and the statements of Turkish officials. The chapter begins with exploring the definition of terrorism according to the Turkish anti-terrorism law. Then the chapter highlights the way that the Turkish official discourse constructs the Kurdish nationalism as separatism and separatism as terrorism. Next, the analysis concentrates on the construction of the PKK in the Turkish official texts and statements. In the context of the dominant narrative of terrorism, the Turkish official discourse constructs the PKK as separatist, Marxist-Leninist, racist and criminal organization that is involved in both killing civilians and international drug trafficking. The analysis compares the way according to which the Turkish official texts define and designate the PKK as terrorist with the ways according to which they define and designate other groups. In addition, the

analysis reveals that the Turkish official texts omit the full name of the Kurdistan Workers Party. The chapter also critically challenged the arguments of the Turkish texts depending on various texts from different sources, and it reveals how these constructions serve certain ideological considerations and agendas of the Turkish authorities.

### **Chapter 6: Analysis of the discursive constructions of PYD and YPG in the Turkish official texts.**

This chapter deals with the construction of the PYD and YPG in the Turkish official texts. The major construction of the PYD-YPG in the Turkish official texts is that they are organic parts of the PKK, and accordingly, they constitute a threat to the national security of Turkey. The chapter refers to the statements of the Turkish officials, which accuse the PYD and YPG of conducting ‘terrorist’ attacks in Turkey. The analysis also highlighted the way that the Turkish official discourse constructs the PYD and YPG as both proxies used by other countries against Turkey and as threat to the same countries. The analysis deals with the construction of the PYD and YPG as a threat to the international community and as a separatist organization who threaten the territorial integrity of Syria. In addition, the analysis deals with the way the Turkish official discourse constructs the PYD and YPG as criminal organization that are involved in the ethnic cleansing of Syrians. The analysis critically uses various sources that challenge the constructions and narratives of Turkish official discourse about the PYD and YPG. The last section of the chapter reveals the relationship between these constructions and narratives and the agenda and policy of the Turkish authorities and their ideology.



## **Chapter 7: The approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process.**

The research uses the term ‘approach’ to denote both the constructions and policies that were adopted by the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question. This chapter begins with the calls for the peace process by both the leader of the PKK, Ocalan and the Turkish officials. The analysis highlights the pro-peace constructions of the Turkish authorities, which disfavoured the military option against the PKK. The analysis deals with the narratives and constructions of ‘brothering discourse’, which were repeated in the statements of the Turkish officials as they addressed the Kurds during the peace process. The brothering discourse is also defined in chapter 4.

The analysis critically reveals the ways according to which the Turkish authorities denied the existence of the Kurdish question and constructed it instead as problems of both terrorism and underdevelopment. The analysis also reveals the outcomes, which the Turkish authorities expected from the peace process. In particular, it discusses the way the Turkish officials constructed the disarmament of the PKK as the prerequisite and major goal of the peace process. The analysis also reveals the ways that the Turkish officials constructed their rejection for the Kurdish demand of autonomy in the Kurdish region of Turkey. In addition, the analysis deals with the democratic reforms, which the Turkish officials constructed as a response to the Kurdish demands.

**Chapter 8: The impacts of the events and agendas of October, 2014-April, 2017 on the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the peace process and the Kurdish question.**

This chapter begins with a section about the Kobani crisis, which left impacts on the peace process. This crisis followed the invasion of Kobani by the Jihadist organization of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2014. As stated earlier in this chapter, Kobani is one of the cantons of Syrian Kurdish semi-autonomous administration of *Rojava*. This section discusses the attitude of the Turkish authorities regarding the pro-Kobani Kurdish protests in Turkey and highlights the security measures and special laws, which were adopted by the Turkish authorities.

The analysis highlights the relationship between the elections and voting agendas of the AKP and its Kurdish policy. The analysis highlights two relevant stages. The first stage was during the peace process and before the June 2015 elections. During this stage the Turkish authorities and the representatives of Kurds announced the Dolmabahce agreement of peace. The second stage followed the June 2015 elections. The analysis reveals the change of the language and policy of the Turkish authorities following the June elections as the Turkish authorities ended the peace process and launched a military campaign against the PKK. The chapter also explores the impacts of the campaign on human rights. The analysis focuses on the approach of the Turkish authorities against the pro-Kurdish Peoples Democratic Party (HDP), and it reveals the relationship between the elections' agenda of AKP and its anti-HDP approach.

The chapter then discusses the repressive response of the Turkish authorities regarding the deceleration of autonomy for the Kurdish region in Turkey in December, 2015 by the representative of Kurds. The analysis discloses the relationship between the repressive policy

of the Turkish authorities and the AKP agenda of conducting the referendum to change the Turkish constitution in April, 2017. In addition, the analysis highlights the impacts of the Turkish military and security measures against autonomy on human rights. Finally, the chapter discusses the relationship between the Syrian Kurdish autonomy and the Kurdish declaration of autonomy in Turkey. The analysis highlights the way the Turkish authorities constructed both the Kurdish autonomy in Turkey and Syria as both ‘action of terrorism by the PKK’ and ‘source of PKK terrorism’, which required counter-terrorism measures by the Turkish authorities.

### **Chapter 9: Conclusion.**

This chapter is the last chapter of research. The chapter consists of four main sections. The first section discusses the location of the research in the academic literature. This section highlights the relevant gaps in the literature and the contribution of the research in the bridging these gaps. The second section, which takes more space in the chapter, forms the major arguments that constitute the response to the research questions. This is done by summarising the major findings of the analysis and linking them together. The third section highlights the main features of analysed texts in the light of CDA perspectives. The last section provides recommendations by the researcher for the future research on terrorism.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

### Introduction

Following the attacks of 9/11/2001 in the US by Al-Qaeda the concept of terrorism and its associated narratives have become widespread and the literature on terrorism has rapidly grown. The mainstream literature on terrorism has been influenced by the realist perspectives which have dominated the field of politics and international relations studies. These perspectives usually consider social phenomena as objective realities. Therefore, they usually deal with such phenomena through the lens of causality similarly to the scientific methods of measurement (Manicas, 2006: 15-25). That is, the mainstream studies usually deal with the causes and effects of terrorism in order to understand it. However, the mainstream studies have been contested by critical studies on terrorism (CST) which highlights that terrorism is not an objective phenomenon and that the study of terrorism is influenced by the subjectivity of researcher. Some scholars of CST like Jackson *et al.*, (2011) are influenced by the constructionist philosophy which reveals the role of language in constructing realities.<sup>11</sup> Jackson *et al.*, (2011) do not deal with terrorism as a reality but as a linguistic construction which is changeable according to the historical and political conditions. This is further elaborated in this chapter which reveals the major inconsistencies of mainstream studies on terrorism. In addition, the chapter exposes the deficiencies in the other areas of literature related to the subject of this research.

The major areas of literature related to the subject of this research are the studies of terrorism and discourse of terrorism. However, the literature review also deals with the Kurdish studies and Turkish official position regarding the Kurdish question. This is as this research

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<sup>11</sup> For more about constructionism, see Burr (2003).

concentrates on the Turkish official discourse regarding the PKK and other related Kurdish movements and the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question. This chapter illustrates the location of the research in the literature and its contribution in bridging certain gaps of the literature. The chapter has five sections. Firstly, terrorism studies. This section critically deals with the perspectives of mainstream scholars from the point of view of scholars of critical studies on terrorism (CST). Secondly, discursive studies of terrorism. This section deals with literature on the political discourse of terrorism. Thirdly, broadcasting media and the discourse of terrorism. This section is also part of the discursive studies, but it concentrates on the ways the discourse of terrorism is framed and disseminated in the broadcast media and press. Fourthly, studies on the PKK and Turkish-Kurdish conflict. This section deals with both the mainstream and critical studies and it highlights the historical and political origins of the conflict and Kurdish question. Finally, studies on the PYD-YPG and Syrian Kurdish autonomy of Rojava. Like the previous section, this section highlights the importance of dealing with origins of the Kurdish question, and it also underlines the importance of discussing the position of the Turkish authorities regarding the PYD-YPG and Rojava. Accordingly, the literature of this research has three interconnected characteristics. First, it is related to politics and international relations as it deals with terrorism studies in relation to foreign and domestic state policies. Second, it is associated with language philosophy as it deals with discourse. While this chapter is limited to the discursive studies on terrorism, chapter 3 deals with discourse theory. Thirdly, it is related to history as it deals with the historical origins of the Kurdish question and the evolvement of PKK and other Kurdish movements.

### **Terrorism studies**

This section deals critically with the work of scholars of mainstream field like Alexander (1979, 2010), Hoffman (2006), Richardson (2006, 2007, 2009), Wilkinson (2007, 2011), and others.

The critical view of this section is supported by the work of CST scholars Blakeley (2009, 2010), Jackson, Jarvis, Gunning, and Smyth (2011) and others. Although this research locates itself in the field of CST, it does not adhere to particular theoretical framework adopted by scholars of CST. In particular, this research is a contribution in the discursive study of terrorism which is a growing segment of CST. The discursive studies are discussed in the next section. This section consists of three points of critique for the mainstream studies.

The first point of critique is that although the concept of terrorism is subjectively constructed and historically changeable, the mainstream scholars usually deal with terrorism as a reality taken for granted. Such an objective understanding of terrorism by the mainstream scholars has theoretical implications explained below.

Although it is conventionally agreed that terrorism denotes the usage of exemplary violence for the purpose of intimidating the wider audience, there is no universal consensus over the definition of terrorism. The majority of mainstream studies argue that terrorists use armed violence against certain targets in order to intimidate the wider community of ‘audience’ individuals who become informed about the terrorist event. However, the mainstream studies phrase this argument in various ways. In addition, scholars of the mainstream studies usually admit the lack of consensus about the definition of terrorism (Alexander, 2010: 2-4; Hoffman, 2006: 201-21). Schmid (2011: 42) quoted sociologist, Philip Schlesinger that ‘no commonly agreed definition can in principle be reached, because the very process of definition is in itself part of a wider contestation over ideologies or political objectives’.

This demonstrates that there are two conflicting arguments regarding the definition of terrorism. One argument is supported by many developing countries and organizations, which

distinguishes armed action of national liberation movements from terrorism. This also has some supportive grounds in international law. The confusion of terrorism with the armed action of national liberation movements is discussed later in this section. The other argument is supported by the US and its NATO allies who consider the attacks of non-state actors on the forces of certain governments as terrorism regardless of the motivations of such non-state actors.<sup>12</sup> This has also been reflected in the mainstream literature. The mainstream scholars Alexander (2010: 7) and Hoffman (2006: 30-35) have considered targeting governmental forces as terrorism, while Wilkinson (2011: 62 & 139) accepted this argument implicitly. Conversely, Richardson (2007: 6-10) limited terrorism to the acts of targeting civilians. However, she disregards this perspective when she implies that the guerrilla movements, which peruse national goals, are terrorists although such movements usually target militants.

On the other hand, scholars of CST like Jackson *et al.*, (2011) have questioned the concept of terrorism arguing that it is a socio-linguistic construction. Jackson *et al.*, (2011: 3) stated that “terrorism is not a self-evident, exceptional category of political violence. Rather, it is a social construction - a linguistic term or label that is applied to certain acts through a range of specific political, legal and academic processes”. Accordingly, the definition of terrorism is subjective and there is no objective definition for terrorism. Jackson *et al.*, (2011: 113) argue that there is no inevitable interpretation or meaning for particular social phenomenon. Instead, language constructs certain meaning for certain phenomenon by excluding other meanings or interpretations. This is the case when politicians describe certain incident of political violence as terrorism avoiding other interpretations such as ‘criminal act’ or ‘military act’. Thus, ‘terrorism’ is not an ontologically fixed label for certain type of violence. Instead, the label is

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<sup>12</sup> Held (2008: 17-19) argues that the argument which considers targeting of non-combatant individuals of armed forces as terrorism is challenged by two questions: 1. If targeting non-combatant governmental militants is terrorism, what is the description of targeting non-combatant terrorists? 2. What if the targeted individuals are indirectly involved in the conflict through directing or supporting combatants?

formed according to both its social and historical context and its subjective interpretation. This constructionist point of departure regarding the concept of terrorism has established the theoretical ground for CST.

Although the concept of terrorism is changeable according to related political and historical conditions, the mainstream scholars deal with it objectively. The term 'terror' was used to describe the acts of violence (or repression) by the revolutionary government that ruled France during the years 1793-1794. However, the label 'terrorist' was used later by the colonial powers and governments against anti-colonial and revolutionary movements. Many of these movements have become governmental parties like African National Congress (ANC) and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996: x). Another historical example, the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein was supported by the US during the Iraq-Iran war of 1980-1988 (Ehteshami, 2002: 279-300; Harris & Aid, August 2013). However, following the September 11 attacks by Al-Qaeda, the US accused the Saddam regime of sponsoring the terrorism of Al-Qaeda. Such accusations of Saddam-Al-Qaeda collaboration are supported by some mainstream scholars like Alexander (Alexander, 2010: 25 & 42), but they are opposed by others like Wilkinson (2011:51) and Richardson (2007: 170-199).

The objective understanding of terrorism has limited the capacity of mainstream studies to become a tool serving the governmental views of counter-terrorism. The mainstream studies usually overlook exploring the concept of terrorism because they have taken it for granted. Therefore, they usually focus on the causes and effects of terrorism. This in order to find and recommend strategies of counter-terrorism. Alexander (2010) deals with the involvement of Americans in international and domestic terrorism. In addition, he evaluates the American strategies of dealing with terrorism. Likewise, Wilkinson (2011) discusses the threats that



terrorism poses to the liberal democratic countries and assesses their strategies of counter-terrorism. Whereas, Hoffman (2006) deals with the historical evolution of terrorism and terrorist groups. He focuses on the motivations and tactics of Al-Qaeda and Jihadist groups in addition to those of secular groups. Although Richardson (2007) put a light on some contradictories related to the conventional understanding of terrorism, she gives more space to the discussion of the causes of terrorism and motives of terrorists. Like other mainstream scholars, Richardson (2007) recommends new security tactics for counter-terrorism. Accordingly, the mainstream work gives more space for the policies of counter-terrorism adopted by state which usually favors using force, and accordingly, the mainstream work tolerates state violence.

Dealing with terrorism as a stand-alone phenomenon regardless of its social and historical context made the mainstream scholars use the label of terrorism as a general brand against various actions by actors who have various motives and methods. For example, Alexander (2010: 20) considers as terrorism the sabotage acts of radical environmentalists and animal sympathizers like the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). Constructing the action of these movements as terrorism implies that their actions have impacts similar to those of armed groups like Al-Qaeda. However, scholars like Held (2008) argue that there are many forms of terrorism. Held (2008: 13) states that “it is a serious mistake to suppose that all terrorism is alike. Terrorism has different forms, as does war”.

The mainstream scholars usually demonize ‘terrorists’. Richardson (2007: 7) argues that motives cannot change the characteristic of terrorist acts because terrorism is a warfare method and the description of a terrorist act is not changed by the goals of its perpetrator. She (2007:3) states that “terrorism is something the bad guys do”, while Wilkinson (2011: 35-36), Alexander

(2010: 10-11), and Hoffman (2006: 17-18) connect terrorism and terrorist groups to organized crime.

The second point of critique is that the mainstream scholars focus on armed violence of non-state actors, which they construct as terrorism. However, they deal narrowly with the violence of the repressive state apparatus, which they usually do not consider as terrorism. The mainstream scholars also repeat a list of states who sponsor terrorism, but they overlook other states who have sponsored terrorism. This is explained below.

Mainstream scholars usually highlight terrorism of non-state actors and hardly deal with state terrorism. Richardson (2007: 5, 2009: 50) stated that “terrorism is not the act of a state but of substate terrorist groups”. Likewise, Hoffman (2006), Alexander (2010), and Horgan (2005) limit their work to the terrorism of non-state actors. Although Wilkinson (2011: 6) admits that terrorism is also practiced by states, he argues that the threat of terrorism to democratic governments is mainly posed by non-state actors. Wilkinson (2011: 10) and other mainstream scholars like Chaliand and Blin (2007: 205-207), Lutz and Lutz (2008: 166-174), Moghadam (2006a: 23, 2006b: 98), and Bloom (2006: 33) refer to state-terrorism. However, they usually limit their reference to historical examples of state violence or repression by notorious regimes like those of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin, and they overlook discussing similar acts of terrorism by Western colonialist powers and their allies during the colonial era. Furthermore, some mainstream scholars like Lutz and Lutz (2008: 104 & 286) describe the armed struggle for independence in the British and French colonies as acts of terrorism and legitimize the policies of counter-insurgency by colonialists. Others like Stohl (2006) and Hoffman (2006) argue against labeling state violations as terrorism, and they use other descriptions for such violations. Hoffman (2006: 26-28) argues that there is no need to describe state violations as

terrorism because they are already classified by international law as ‘war crime’, while Stohl (2006: 60-65) argues for using ‘repression’ as a label for state violations.

On the contrary, scholars of CST argue that states have practiced terrorism, and that state terrorism is severer and wider in scale than that of non-state actors. Jackson *et al.*, (2011: 180) disagree with the mainstream argument which detaches terrorism from the crimes classified by international law. Instead, they (2011: 180-181) argue that regardless of crime classification by international law, such violations of state are accompanied with terrorism because a major aim of perpetrating them is to intimidate the wider community of audience. That is, the exemplary violence or repression of state aims at intimidating the wider audience, which is the community of dissidents (Blakeley, 2009: 33-35; Jackson *et al.*, 2011: 177-178). Norris, Kern and Just (2003:10) and Raphael (2010: 164-165) argue that because state has more resources, it has been more able than non-state actors to perpetrate violence on a large-scale. For example, the carpet-bombing of Hamburg by the allies during the Second World War was not merely a military action but also an act of large-scale intimidation (Norris *et al.*, 2003: 10).

Blakeley (2009: 80-105), Jackson *et al.*, (2011: 183-185) and Norris *et al.*, (2003: 10) refer to examples of crimes against humanity and genocides accompanied with terrorism perpetrated by states such as those by the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia and those by the US in Vietnam in addition to the violations of imperial powers in their colonies such as the violence of French authorities in Algeria, Great Britain in Kenya, and Japan in China and Korea. These scholars argue that the main aim of state violence in these cases was silencing insurgencies and liberation movements. For example, the US adopted Operation Phoenix in South Vietnam which aimed at intimidating the sympathizers of the National Liberation Front through

arbitrary detention of large numbers of population, torture, and assassination (Blakeley, 2010: 23).<sup>13</sup>

The mainstream scholars usually limit state sponsorship of terrorism to the support of particular states for certain anti-state groups. The conventional list of state sponsoring terrorism, which is usually repeated in the work of many mainstream scholars, includes Iran, Syria, North Korea, Iraq under the Saddam regime, and Libya under the Gadhafi regime which have usually supported armed groups classified as terrorist like the Palestinian organizations and Hezbollah (Alexander, 2010: 13-15; Alexander & Hoenig, 2008: 53-55; Richardson, 2009: 40; Wilkinson, 2011: 166).

On the other hand, scholars of CST have different view regarding the sponsorship of terrorism as they argue that sponsorship of terrorism is not limited to supporting anti-state groups, but it is also perpetrated by supporting pro-state groups who practice terrorist violence such as the paramilitary groups of counter-terrorism (Jackson *et al.*, 2011: 185-186). Thus, the excessive use of force as a policy of counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency generates terrorism, itself (Blakeley, 2009: 144-145). Such view considers as sponsorship of terrorism, the support of the US and its allies for both the campaigns of counter-insurgency and pro-insurgency in other countries (Blakeley, 2009: 12-24). For example, the US supported the Counter-insurgency campaign of Operation Condor, which was adopted during the 1970s by many governments of Latin America including Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, Paraguay and Uruguay (Blakeley, 2009: 102-103; Jackson *et al.*, 2011: 191; Lazzara, 2011: 92-94). The US also supported insurgency campaigns against certain governments such as its support for

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<sup>13</sup> The National Front of the Liberation of South Vietnam fought both the Southern Vietnamese government and the US during the years 1960–1975. See Tanham, G. K. (2006).

the military coup of Guatemala in 1954, the 1979-1990 Nicaraguan Contras, and the anti-Castro groups (Blakeley, 2009: 92-100).<sup>14</sup>

The third point of critique is that the mainstream studies usually confuse terrorism with the armed struggle of national liberation movements. For example, Hoffman (2006: 16), Weinberg and Eubank (2006: 44-46), and Stepanova (2008: 35-37) consider as terrorism, the armed action of national movements who struggled against the colonial rule of Britain and France during the 1940s and 1950s like the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). Hoffman (2016: 71-74), Alexander (2010: 20) and Stepanova (2008: 36-40) also consider as terrorism, the action of national movements which emerged later like the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, the mainstream scholars disregard or overlook discussing the right to self-determination for the subjugated peoples. As discussed earlier Richardson (2007: 6-12) denies that goals and motives could render legitimate the terrorist actions because terrorism is a warfare action. Whereas, Wilkinson (2011: 195) admits that the right to self-determination is compatible with the values of liberal democracies. However, he stated that “terrorism is a method which can be used for an infinite variety of goals” (Wilkinson, 2011: 195). Accordingly, Wilkinson (2011) implies that the just values of self-determination are not enough to legitimise the armed action of national liberation movements.

This is although the armed struggle of subjugated peoples for the right to self-determination is warranted by the international law. In particular, the UN Resolution of 3103 in 1973 gives the armed struggle for the right to-self-determination a legal status distinguishing it from other

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<sup>14</sup> For more on CST description of state sponsored terrorism, see Druliolle (2011), Hamilton (2010), Lessa (2011), Lira (2011), Raphael, (2010) and Salvi (2011).

<sup>15</sup> For more about the list of nationalist groups labelled as terrorist, see Kushner (2003: xvii- xviii).

kinds of internal conflict (UN General Assembly, December, 1973). According to this resolution and the other related principles of the international law, Moltchanova (2009: 87) argues that both the Russian-Chechen and Georgian-Abkhazian conflicts are conflicts between nations. This is although the Russian and Georgian governments describe these conflicts as internal conflicts and branded the rebels as terrorists. To deal with the confusion of terrorism with the armed actions of national liberation movements, Achour (2009: 21-22) argues that the definition of terrorism needs to consider the legitimacy of armed struggle for the right to self-determination which is guaranteed by the international law. Although scholars of CST like Jackson *et al.*, (2011) and Blakeley (2009) critically deal with the subject of confusing terrorism with the action of national liberation movements, they do not provide in-depth discussion about the legitimacy of such armed action in the light of the international law.

Mainstream scholars like Hoffman (2006), Wilkinson (2011) and Richardson (2007) distinguish acts of terrorism from those of guerrilla operations, which applies to the PKK as a guerrilla movement. Still, they argue that the guerrilla warfare is somehow interconnected with terrorism. Hoffman (2006: 35) and Richardson (2007: 6) argue that the number of militants in the terrorist operations is much smaller than those of guerrilla operations. In addition, guerrilla militants usually attack military and manage to control territories, while terrorists have no such capabilities. Likewise, Wilkinson (2011: 15) defines guerrilla action as an unconventional warfare method which depends generally on the tactic of surprising the governmental forces with unanticipated attacks. However, Wilkinson (2011) and Hoffman (2006) argue that guerrilla warfare is accompanied with terrorism. Likewise, Clutterbuck (1980: 20) argues that regardless of considering it as legitimate or not, guerrilla warfare is inevitably interconnected with terrorism.

It is plausible to argue that the description of certain guerrilla movement as terrorist by the mainstream studies is influenced by the dominant Western political discourse. For example, Hoffman, (2006: 35) admits that his reference to certain guerrilla groups as terrorist depends on the classification adopted by the US department of state. This is although such classification depends on state interests regardless of the conventional definition and criteria which identify terrorism. That is, states do not adhere to certain academic measures to judge whether a group is terrorist or not, but they designate certain groups as terrorist according to their interests. On the other hand, the mainstream literature does not equally refer to the violence of certain movements supported by the Western states of NATO. For example, the guerrilla organization of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which was supported by the US and its Western allies, is hardly referred to as terrorist organization in the mainstream literature although it was involved in violence against civilians before and after the 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo (Fulton, 2010: 130-136; Raimondo, 2000).

As stated earlier in the introduction of this research, the majority of literature on terrorism studies, including mainstream and critical studies, is actor-centred (Hulsse & Spencer, 2008: 572). Therefore, there is a need to deal with the concept of terrorism itself through the discourse of terrorism. The majority of literature deals with actors ‘terrorists’, ‘anti-terrorists’, and those affected by their actions. As discussed earlier in this section, the mainstream studies usually consider terrorism as a stable concept. Therefore, these studies are generally limited to the causes and effects of terrorism. Although CST scholars like Jackson *et al.*, (2011: 9-28 & 99-121) deal with the theoretical background of the concept of terrorism and its definitional dilemma, they do not deal with the discursive constructions of terrorism. This is although the debates regarding the concept and definition of terrorism by Jackson *et al.*, (2011) and other scholars are useful in building the theoretical ground for this research.

## **Discursive studies of terrorism**

The discursive research of terrorism is a growing body of the critical studies on terrorism (CST). Discourse of terrorism was discussed by scholars like Zulaika and Douglass (1996) before Al-Qaeda attacks of 9/11. Zulaika and Douglass (1996) argue that terrorism is a linguistic construction and dealt with the contradictories around the discourse of terrorism. They argue that the exaggerative language of describing terrorism by governmental security agencies and media has constructed terrorism the way we understand (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996: 7-23). They also contend that terrorism as both concept and label is not stable but changeable according to the political and historical conditions. While the work of Zulaika and Douglass (1996) deals with pre-9/11 American discourse of terrorism, the bulk of discursive studies of terrorism deal with the post-9/11 American discourse because they have been produced following 9/11. In particular, they are connected with the ‘War on Terror’ narrative of the US president, George Bush. This is discerned in the work of Spencer (2008), Bhatia (2009), Bartolucci (2010), and Cetti (2010).

Hülse and Spencer (2008) discuss the post 9/11 metaphorical constructions of terrorism in the German press. Although Hülse and Spencer (2008) depend on press outlets in their analysis, they focus on the German discourse of terrorism in general, and their argument does not concentrate on the relationship between political and media discourses. As a sample, they analyse the texts of *Bild Zeitung* tabloid on Al-Qaeda between the years 2001-2005 (Hülse & Spencer, 2008: 580). They argue that *Bild Zeitung* metaphorically constructed Al-Qaeda as a military organization then it reconstructed it as criminal organization during the years-2001-2005. Following the event of 9/11 *Bild Zeitung* used metaphorical constructions like “death troops” and “terrorist army” (Hülse & Spencer, 2008: 581). However, following the attacks of 2004 and 2005 in Madrid and London *Bild Zeitung* mainly used criminalizing metaphors



like “murder”, “criminal assault”, and “suspect” to describe Al-Qaeda members and their actions (Hülse & Spencer, 2008: 582-283). They argue that the metaphorical changes reflected the way that the threat of Al-Qaeda was understood in Germany. Hülse and Spencer (2008: 585-287) contend that the military metaphors constituted Al-Qaeda terrorism as an external threat, which attacked the US and incited military response by the US and its allies in Afghanistan, while the criminal metaphor constituted it as an internal criminal threat, which attacked European countries, and accordingly, judicial measures were required to deal with any potential threat against Germany.

Although Hülse and Spencer (2008) provide an analytical understanding for the changeable character of the discourse of terrorism according to its metaphorical constructions, they disregard the role of agency in the construction of this discourse. Their analysis for the outlets of *Bild Zeitung* on the attacks of 9/11 overlooked the role of the US president, Bush in the construction of Al-Qaeda according to his narrative of ‘War on Terror’ which influenced the Western media including *Bild Zeitung*. It is plausible to argue that the reason Hülse and Spencer (2008: 584) overlooked the role of Bush is that they adhered to the post-structuralist approach which downplays the role of agency in the construction of discourse. That is, post-structuralist approach disagrees that political elites influence the construction of discourse. As discussed earlier in the introduction of this research, post-structuralists argue that discourse is above the capacity of subjects ‘individuals’ to be manipulated because discourse determines the position of subjects, and accordingly, their discourse practices (Foucault, 1972: 40-55; Hall, 2001: 72). Foucault (1972: 55) stated that “discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined”.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> For more on post-structuralism see Sarup (1993).

On the other hand, scholars like Bhatia (2009), Bartolucci (2010), and Cetti (2010) highlight the role of political elites in the construction of discourse. Bhatia (2009) and Bartolucci (2010) analyses for the narrative of ‘War on Terror’ imply the role of Bush in the formation of the contemporary discourses of terrorism. Likewise, Cetti (2010: 59) analysis of the narrative of ‘War on Terror’ shows the role of Western European political elites in the formation of the discourse of ‘security state’ which has given the priority to security concerns at the expense of law and human rights, and accordingly, impacted on the status of asylum seekers in the Western European countries. It is plausible to argue that the analyses of these scholars are influenced by the perspectives which emphasise the significance of social structures and power relations in the formation of discourse. In particular, Bhatia (2009), Bartolucci (2010) works are influenced by the perspective of critical discourse analysis scholar, Van Dijk (1995: 26) who emphasises the importance of considering ideology and power relations in the construction of linguistic structures which are built on the oppositional dichotomy of “a positive self-presentation of the ingroup and a negative other-presentation of the outgroup”. Chapter 3 provides further discussion for the notion of ideology according to the perspectives of CDA scholars.<sup>17</sup>

Bhatia (2009) discusses metaphor as a principal linguistic technique used in the statements of Bush administration which connected Saddam regime to Al-Qaeda. Bhatia (2009: 280) defines metaphor as a word or phrase dislocated from its context to be located in unusual context. Metaphors usually aim at excreting emotional influence over the cognition of the recipients of text to make them accept the message of text. For example, Bush used the phrase of ‘axis of evil’ as a reference to Iran, North Korea, and Iraq during Saddam regime, which portrayed

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<sup>17</sup> Chapter 3 discusses the work of major scholar of CDA, Van Dijk, Fairclough, and Wodak in addition to others.

states as human beings (Bhatia, 2009: 281). Another example, the Bush narrative of 'War on Terror' categorised Saddam regime as an imminent threat to the civilized world through the repetition of the word 'evil' and its synonymous or the usage of emotional and frightening metaphors such as "mass murderer" as a label for Saddam (Bhatia, 2009: 282). Such demonization of Saddam regime facilitated the Bush narrative that the regime was sponsoring Al-Qaeda and possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Bhatia (2009) analysis shows that the discursive constructions of terrorism usually depend on the oppositional binary between 'us; the West' and 'them; the terrorists'. This binary is accomplished by the adoption of negative metaphors, which categorise the negative understanding of 'the other' certain actors, states, and communities (Bhatia, 2009: 282).

Likewise, Bartolucci (2010) discusses the discourse of terrorism adopted by the political elites in both the US and Morocco. She analyzed parts of Bush statements and speeches of the narrative of 'War on Terror'. Bartolucci (2010: 123-124) analysis reveals that the narrative of 'War on Terror' depended on 'the othering discourse' which created a simple dichotomy between the good civilized West vs. 'the other evil' terrorists, who are usually radical Muslims. Bartolucci (2010:124-125) argues that accepting the negative character of Muslims in the US was facilitated by the prevailed negative cultural knowledge about Muslims in the West. Such a negative knowledge was formed through the media and historical and political writings like '*Clash of Civilizations*' for Samuel Huntington which portrayed Islam as a source of violence and tension between Muslims and the West.

Bartolucci (2010) argues that the discursive narrative of 'War on Terror' has influenced the discourse of Moroccan elites about terrorism, and accordingly the governmental practices against various opposition groups and individuals. The Moroccan political discourse of elites

regarding terrorism has copied the American discourse in dealing with radical Islam as sources of terrorism (Bartolucci, 2010: 127). The Moroccan discourse of terrorism has interdiscursively connected terrorism to Islamism and radicalism, and accordingly, facilitated the policies of empowering state security institutions and silencing various Islamist opposition parties (Bartolucci, 2010: 128-130). In addition, the Moroccan government employed the discursive connection of terrorism with radicalism in establishing its narrative that the Polisario Front, which is a national liberation movement of Western Sahara, has been affiliated with Jihadist terrorists in Morocco (Bartolucci, 2010: 130-131). This is in order to legitimate the implementation of anti-terrorism law against the Polisario.

Cetti (2010) deals with the discourse of terrorism and its impact on the conditions of asylum seekers in Europe. Cetti (2010: 59-63) argues that the narrative of 'War on Terror' has paved the ground for the conditions of 'security state' in the Western European countries, which legitimated more governmental security policies. Cetti (2010) argues that asylum seekers have been regarded as a security burden, and in some cases as potential terrorists. The discursive constructions of 'War on Terror' and 'security' of Europeans have intermingled with the necessities of protecting the national identity and space from the unwanted 'alien' asylum seekers (Cetti, 2010: 65-68). In addition, these discursive constructions have laid the ground for the public acceptance of the policies of Western European governments against asylum seekers although these policies violate human rights (Cetti, 2010: 68-70). Thus, Cetti (2010) implies that 'national identity' played a major role in the formation of discursive constructions about insecurity and terrorism threat, which influenced public opinion, and accordingly, facilitated the anti-asylum seekers policies in Europe.

## **Broadcast media and the discourse of terrorism**

Mainstream scholars of terrorism studies usually endorse the view that media is used by terrorists as a propaganda tribune. This is discerned in the work of mainstream scholars like Alexander (1979) and Wilkinson (2011). Alexander (1979: 161) argues that terrorists depend on the media in publicising their threat which he named as ‘war of nerves’ (Alexander, 1979: 161). That is, media assists propagandising for terrorists, unintentionally. For example, the coverage of the kidnap of the newspaper heiress, Patricia Hearst by the leftist Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) in February 1974 helped publicizing the group’s message (Alexander, 1979: 161-162). This strategy also encourages executing similar acts by other terrorist groups and individuals (Alexander, 1979: 163-164). Likewise, Wilkinson (2011) emphasizes the importance of media to terrorists. Wilkinson (2011: 150) quoted the former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher statement that media is considered by terrorists as their “oxygen of publicity”. Wilkinson (2011: 150-152) argues that in addition to TV, the contemporary terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda resort to social media and the available space on the internet to propagandize. Furthermore, the internet has given terrorists more freedom to disseminate their publications.

On the other hand, scholars like Dimaggio (2008), Graber (2003), and Norris *et al.*, (2003: 10), argue that the corporate broadcast media usually serve the governmental narrative of counter-terrorism. Their argument is based on their analyses of the bias of US corporate media for the advantage of the Bush doctrine of ‘War on Terror’ following Al-Qaeda attacks of 9/11.

Dimaggio (2008) argues that there is a relationship between reporting by the media agencies and their ownership (Dimaggio, 2008: 2). Dimaggio (2008: 21) contends that the American corporate media is monopolised by a few elites whose interests are in conformity with the

dominant narrative of 'War on Terror'. He compares the British press to the American and argues that the British media agencies are less consolidated in corporate managements, dissimilarly to the American (Dimaggio, 2008: 51-52). Therefore, the British press has given more space to views which have been critical to the doctrine of 'War on Terror'. Dimaggio (2008: 51-52) compares the press outlets of two cities, New York and London. Although both cities are similar in the number of populations, London has 4 widespread papers; *the Telegraph*, *the Time*, *the Independent*, and *the Guardian*, while New York has only *New York Times* as a widespread paper. Dimaggio (2008) compares the consumption of New York and London papers in 2005 to be 1.1 million to 2.2 million. He argues that the freedom from corporative management gives papers like *the Guardian* and *the Independent* the freedom to host views critical to the narrative of 'War on Terror' and the governmental military policies (Dimaggio, 2008: 51-52). However, the gradual monopolization of media in UK and the growth of pro-war political alliance between the US and UK might lead to the convergence of British media to become more intolerant towards the critical views similarly to the US media (Dimaggio, 2008: 53).

Dimaggio (2008) and Norris *et al.*, (2003) argue that corporate media adopt framing as a dominant conventional principle in reporting about terrorism. Framing is a process according to which report producers adhere to the dominant political discourse. That is, framing demands interpreting certain events according to the dominant understanding. This requires the report producer to select certain parts of the story and omit others in order to match the dominant frame (Dimaggio, 2008: 41-42). That is, framing prioritizes certain sides of the story, and accordingly, to construct it according to the dominant understanding. Thus, the process of conventional framing usually adheres to the dominant ideological view accepted by the public or the wide community of audience. Norris *et al.*, (2003) argue that the frame of the narrative

of 'War on Terror' has two functions. One function is cognitive which connects various events and facts such as admitting the relationship between Saddam regime and Al-Qaeda, and the other function is evaluative which labels certain elements positively and others negatively. The cognitive and evaluative functions of the frame facilitate the establishment of the messages of political leaders and conveying them to the public, smoothly. This is recognized in the way that the frame of the narrative of 'War on Terror' assisted the message of president Bush, which distinguished the nations who were friends of the US from those who were its enemies according to their willingness or unwillingness to participate in the War on Terror. This is discerned in Bush statement "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (quoted in Norris *et al.*, 2003: 15).

Dimaggio (2008) and Graber (2003) and Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007) argue that the frame of the narrative of 'War on Terror' in the US has been assisted by both corporate media dependence on official sources and its practicing of self-censorship against anti-war views. Dimaggio (2008) argues that the American corporate media has relied on official information and arguments regarding 9/11. This is because the governmental narrative about security issues is usually more reliable by the public. In addition, generating data for the media reports from official statements costs less than generating them through investigative journalism (Dimaggio, 2008: 49). Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007: 94-98) argue that CNN coverage of the 2003 war of Iraq depended heavily on the information provided by US government and military. Furthermore, the Bush administration supported reliance on its narrative of 'War on Terror' by sponsoring news programs, which served as platforms to propagandize the narrative. For example, in 2005 the US administration sponsored a large number of news programs on the 2003 war of Iraq and the Iraqi political progress, which were conducted by Lincoln Group

(Dimaggio, 2008, 47-48). Such programs overwhelmed the corporate media without adequate awareness by the public that these programs were sponsored by the government.

In addition to reliance on the official sources, the US corporate media has practiced self-censorship against anti-war views. Graber (2003: 37-38) and Dimaggio (2008: 43-46) argue that the propaganda of 'War on Terror' has connected the issues of 9/11 to national sentiments and considered anti-war views as 'unpatriotic'. Graber (2003: 35-37) argues that following the attacks of 9/11 the National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice requested from the major American media agencies to adopt certain procedures in covering the events related to 9/11. Censorship was practiced by top media authorities of editors and owners who rejected reports which contradict with the administration's narrative of 'War on Terror' and also fired reporters who insisted on including critical views, while those who adhered to the narrative had more chance of getting promotions (Dimaggio, 2008: 45; Graber, 2003: 37-38). Thus, journalists and reporters practised self-censorship in order to avoid both firing and the stigma of 'unpatriotic'. Accordingly, the media plays a principal role in conveying the messages of elites to the wider audience. However, it usually reconstructs these messages while disseminating them. Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007) and Hodge (2011) explain how the media reconstructed and disseminated the political elites' discourse of terrorism.

Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007) argue that news has created a new crisis of insecurity framed as the crisis of 'War on Terror' era, which followed the crisis of Cold War era. The new crisis is due to the way news about terror has been formed and disseminated by the TV news stations which have 'amplified' the threat of terrorism (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2007: 23-24). Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007) argue that such a crisis of insecurity has served the goal of terrorists in creating fear among the wider audience. Since terrorism depends on its message of threat to



the wider audience by perpetrating exemplary violence, exaggerating the violence of terrorist events by the media serves the message of terrorists. In addition, Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007: 15) argue that the excessive news coverage of the subject of terrorism following 9/11 has made the news "a terrorist weapon, and news was ultimately unable to contain its own hijacking in this way".

Political discourse has framed the news coverage of events and the way these events connected to 'War on Terror' (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2007: 74-98). That is, political discourse establishes frames for what is discussed in the news. As Hoskins and O'Loughlin, (2007: 77) analysed the CNN coverage for the 2003 Iraq war, they found that TV coverage reproduced the political discourse of 'democratic imperialism' which was adopted by the Bush administration. Democratic imperialism suggests spreading democracy in other countries in order to maintain the American homeland security. This discourse was connected by the administration to its doctrine of 'War on Terror' in order to smooth the path of legitimating its military policies. Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2007) argue that the CNN coverage usually delegitimized and downgraded perspectives which contradicted with the pro-war views. The pro-war views usually argued that the regime of Saddam was a threat because it had ties with Al-Qaeda and possessed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and it also argued that the US invasion would establish democracy in Iraq (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2007: 81-88).

For example, few hours before starting the 2003 war on Iraq, the CNN interviewed Hans Blix, the chief UN inspector of Iraqi WMD (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2007: 79-81). The interviewer kept adhering to the CNN pro-war inclination, and accordingly, repeated the argument that the war is the logical and inevitable response to the lack of cooperation of Saddam regime with the UN inspectors of Iraqi WMD. This is although Blix stated that Saddam regime was cooperative

to some extent and that war was not the proper option to deal with the Iraqi program of WMD. Hence, the interviewer used his position, which was more powerful than that of Blix as interviewee, in order to manipulate the production of the outlet of interview according to the view of CNN. This supports the CDA perspective that ideology and power relations influence the production of discourse constructions (Fairclough, 1995: 92-102, 2003: 55-60; Van Dijk, 2006b: 126).

Hodge (2011) argues that media re-contextualizes the discourse of political elites. Media locate the original narrative in other contexts and connect it to other texts. This process is described by Foucault as ‘discursive formation’ which is accompanied with the overlapping of more than one discourse (cited in Hodge, 2011: 85). In order to explore media re-contextualization of the political elites’ discourse of terrorism, Hodge (2011) explores the media outlets of the Bush narratives of ‘War on Terror’. He argues that the powerful position of Bush who was the deliverer of the narrative through his statements and speeches strengthened the status of the narrative to become a reflection of reality or established a ‘regime of truth’ about 9/11 and post 9/11 terrorist threats (Hodge, 2011: 5-6). However, the original statements of Bush’s narrative of ‘War on Terror’ have been re-contextualized by the media. For example, the following text was disseminated by CNN in May 6, 2004:

“We are seeing indications that Al Qaeda continues to prepare to strike U.S. interests abroad,” the State Department said in its worldwide caution. “Al Qaeda attacks could possibly involve nonconventional weapons such as chemical or biological agents as well as conventional ‘*weapons of terror*’.

We also cannot rule out that Al Qaeda will attempt a catastrophic attack within the U.S.” (quoted in Hodge, 2011: 92-93).

The text limits the statement of US department of state about the threat of Al-Qaeda to the clauses which describe the threat of Al-Qaeda weapons. However, the most important aspect of re-contextualization is highlighting the repeated phrase of ‘weapons of terror’, which was first used by Bush in 2002 to describe the WMD of Saddam regime (Hodge, 2011: 91). Highlighting and repeating this phrase and similar phrases about the threat of terrorism facilitate establishing them as realities which are parts of the narrative of ‘War on Terror’ (Hodge, 2011: 92). In addition, such repetition of this phrase implies that Saddam pursued possessing WMD to use them as a terrorist threat similarly to Al-Qaeda. Accordingly, the text connected different actors; Saddam regime and Al-Qaeda and similar type of threat; the WMD ‘weapons of terror’. This leads to the argument that Hodge’s concept of re-contextualizes is affiliated with framing which is discussed earlier by Dimaggio (2008) and Norris *et al.*, (2003). The latter emphasizes that media texts are produced according to the context of the dominant frame or discourse of ‘War on Terror’.

It is plausible to argue that the majority of works on the discursive constructions of terrorism either in the official or media discourses have two major characteristics: Firstly, the discursive studies focus on the narratives of ‘War on Terror’, and accordingly, they give more space to the American discourse. Whereas, no adequate space is given to study of non-American discourses of terrorism, which are usually studied in the context of the narrative of ‘War on Terror’, and accordingly no adequate space was given to the characteristics of each case study. This is although the works of scholars like Hülse and Spencer (2008), Bhatia (2009), Bartolucci (2010), and Cetti (2010) have critically dealt with the effects of the narrative of ‘War on Terror’ outside the US. This implies that the doctrine of ‘War on Terror’ and its discursive constructions in the US have influenced significantly on the discourses of terrorism outside the US. This is more discerned in the cases of the Moroccan discourse of terrorism

discussed by Bartolucci (2010), and the European discourse of ‘state security’ which is influenced by the European interpretations for the narrative of ‘War on Terror’ discussed by Cetti (2010).

Secondly, the discursive studies imply that identity is a principal discursive construction of the discourse of terrorism, and accordingly, it influences the internal and foreign policies of state. This is discerned in the works of Bhatia (2009), Bartolucci (2010), and Cetti (2010) who reveal the influence of identity over the discursive constructions of ‘War on Terror’. This is as they highlighted that these constructions are built on the oppositional binary between ‘American, Western, non-Western, and Muslims’ through the linguistic terms of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’. These scholars also explain how these discursive constructions, which imply different identities, influenced certain policies such as the American wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan and the European policies against asylum seekers.

### **Studies on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the PKK**

It is plausible to argue that the bulk of work on the PKK and Turkish-Kurdish conflict is flawed with bias and inconsistencies. The majority of literature usually favours the position of the Turkish state. This is because the majority of professional and academic work on the political and security issues related to Turkey is funded or supported by the Turkish state and agencies. In addition, the Turkish governments have usually restricted research on the Kurdish issues inside Turkey. Therefore, many independent researchers generated their secondary data from the Turkish sources. The majority of such work refer to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict as a matter of terrorism and criminality. Thus, the political origins of the Kurdish question either overlooked or underestimated due to the domination of the narrative of terrorism. This is

discerned in the work of Criss (1995), Radu (2001), Cornell, (2001), Dikici (2008), Heper (2007), Yilmaz (2011), and Cinar (2010).

Criss (1995), Cornell (2001), and Radu (2001) argue that the Kurdish problem is separate from the terrorism of PKK and that the PKK aims at diffusing Marxist socialism. Criss (1995: 25-28) argues that the Kurdish problem is not an ethnic separatism, but an issue of underdevelopment. This is because there is no Kurdish national identity in Turkey, but Kurdish cultural identity. Criss (1995: 34-36) recommends solving the Kurdish problem through both economic investments in the southeast of Turkey where Kurds live and to allow the Kurds to learn their language.<sup>18</sup> Criss (1995) disfavours any kind of negotiations with the PKK who does not represent Kurds because the PKK is terrorist origination who aims at spreading Marxism. Likewise, Radu (2001: 48-54) argues that the PKK as a Marxist organization does not match the Kurdish tribal society. He argues that the main aim of PKK is to spread socialism beyond Turkey and all around the world. Radu (2001: 50-51) argues that in order to recruit more Kurds who disagree with such socialist ideology, the PKK uses the propaganda of Kurdish nationalism. He added that following the capture of Ocalan, Kurds no more approve the PKK (Radu, 2001: 58-62). Cornell (2001) also rendered the infiltration of the PKK into the Kurdish society to the feudal nature of this society which has not accepted the Turkish identity. The Turkish identity according to Cornell (2001) has proven to be the backbone of the development of Turkey, and he recommends that Kurds accept the Turkish identity in order to end the conflict (Cornell, 2001: 43). However, Cornell (2001: 43-46) admits that it is productive for the Turkish state to grant Kurds some cultural rights in order to ease the Kurdish integration

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<sup>18</sup> The Turkish official texts usually use the term ‘the southeast’ a reference to the Kurdish region of Turkey, and less frequently ‘east and southeast of Turkey’.

into the Turkish community. Cornell (2001: 40) also stated that “most Kurds do not desire a separate Kurdish state”.

Criss (1995: 28-29), Cornell (2001: 41), Radu (2011: 55), Heper (2007: 160-161), Dikici (2008: 121-122), Yilmaz (2011: 144), and Cinar (2010: 58) connect the PKK to organized crimes. In particular, they connect it to drug trafficking. Such accusations have been used by the Turkish governments against the PKK although they provided no concrete evidence to prove them. On the contrary to these accusations, the 1996 Susurluk scandal revealed the relationship between some chief state agents of counter-terrorism and criminal actions including murdering and drug trafficking (Alexander *et al.*, 2008: 405-407; Gunter, 2008:117-118; Jongerden, 2007: 55-56 & 65). Susurluk scandal was the only case of political drug trafficking and organized crimes in Turkey that was discussed by the Turkish parliament and in the media.<sup>19</sup> This is also discussed in chapter 5.

Although some Turkish scholars like Heper (2007) admit the grievances of Kurds in Turkey, they use vague and euphemistic expressions to describe the Turkish role in these grievances. Heper (2007: 6-8) described the forced evacuation of Kurds from the Kurdish region of Turkey towards the west of Turkey and central Anatolia as “re-acculturation” or “voluntary or unconscious assimilation”. He also located under the title of “maintaining law and order” his description for the massacres perpetrated by the Turkish governments like the massacre of 1937-1938 in the Kurdish province of Dersim (Heper, 2007: 158). In addition, Heper (2007: 160-161) argues that the crimes, which targeted the Kurds during the Turkish-Kurdish conflict were perpetrated by the Kurds themselves either by the PKK or by the pro-state Kurdish village

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<sup>19</sup> Gunter (2008: 117-118) argues that the Susurluk scandal drew the attentions in Turkey towards the Turkish Deep State and the way it conducted counter-terrorism through organized crime.

guards whose behavior did not represent the policy of Turkish government which punished the perpetrator whenever it discovered them. This argument contradicts with that the village guards acted according to the instructions of Turkish military and security forces (Gunter, 2008: 117). It also contradicts with many reports by human rights organisations which demonstrate that a large number of violent crimes were perpetrated by the Turkish forces and paramilitary death-squads (HRW, 1994; Jongerden, 2007; Yildiz & Chomsky, 2005).

Scholars like Casier (2010, 2011), Gunter (2008), Marcus (2007), Özcan (2006), Yildiz and Breau (2010), and Yildiz and Muller (2008) deal with the historical and political origins of the Turkish- Kurdish conflict. They connect the conflict to the Kurdish question and the long-term discrimination and violence practiced by the Turkish governments against Kurds. Yildiz and Breau (2010), and Casier (2010, 2011) also provide critical perspectives regarding the designation of PKK as a terrorist organisation by the US and EU governments. They argue that such designation would lead to the protraction of the conflict.

Gunter (2008), Marcus (2007), and Ozcan (2006) depended on various sources and views to generate their data. However, they agree that the denial of Kurdish identity and the long-term repression by the Turkish state are the principal origins of the PKK and Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Ozcan (2006: 5-6) depends on both the PKK and Turkish government sources including PKK publications, interviews with Ocalan and Kurdish activists and texts by the Turkish government and media in relation to Kurds in addition to a clandestine questioner he conducted in Turkey. Gunter (2008: ix- xi) also generated his data from various sources. These include interviews with Kurdish activists and parties who have different views, international human rights activists and sources, and Turkish official sources. On the other hand, Marcus (2007: vii-x) depended on interviews with PKK deserters and some Kurdish activists who were

unfriendly with the PKK in addition to Turkish sources. While both Ozcan (2006: 54-72) and Gunter (2008: 4-11) explain the historical and political conditions, which encouraged the emergence of the PKK including the long-term denial of Kurdish identity and repression by the Turkish governments, Marcus (2007: 15-51 & 83-85) discusses such origins briefly but gives more space to discuss the biography of Ocalan as the founder of the PKK. This is although Marcus (2007) admits that the conflict is the result of the repressive policies of the Turkish governments and the denial of Kurdish national rights.

Ozcan (2006), Marcus (2007), and Gunter (2008) discuss the evolvement of PKK and the changes of its political goals. While Gunter (2008) focuses on the period following the abduction of Ocalan, both Ozcan (2006) and Marcus (2007) discuss the PKK since its establishment until the years following the abduction of Ocalan. Gunter (2008: 59-92) discusses the initiative of peace by Ocalan and his calls of solving the Kurdish question in a democratic Turkey. Ozcan (2006) and Marcus (2007) explain the process of establishing the PKK in 1978 as a national liberation armed movement with Marxist ideology and its evolvement. Although both Ozcan (2006) and Marcus (2007) focus on Ocalan as the founder and leader of PKK, they judge him from different angles. Ozcan (2006: 80-108,157-165 & 193-197) deals with the charisma of Ocalan as the principal founder of the ideology of the PKK who reconstructed this ideology according to the changing political conditions, and he critiques these changes theoretically. Whereas, Marcus (2007: 96 & 101) depending on the narrative of PKK deserters, focuses on Ocalan's organizational actions and describes him as a dictator. In addition, Marcus (2007: 52-296) details the military progress and decline of the movement in a chronological narrative.



Casier (2010, 2011), Yildiz and Breau (2010) critically discuss the impacts of designating the PKK as a terrorist organization by the EU. Casier (2010: 12-13) argues that designating of PKK as a terrorist organization by the EU reduced the trust of PKK in the EU intentions to end the conflict and solve the Kurdish question in Turkey. Therefore, PKK has become less energetic to support the idea of the membership of Turkey in the EU, and less willing to make concessions for the advantage of conflict resolution (Casier, 2010: 20-23). Casier (2011) also argues that the debates of the EU parliament regarding the Kurdish human rights are impacted negatively by the status of PKK as an organization designated terrorist by the EU. This is although the leftists and Greens in the parliament have expressed their solidarity with the Kurds (Casier, 2011). Likewise, Yildiz and Breau (2010) discussed the Turkish-Kurdish conflict from the perspective of the international law highlighting the repression practiced by the Turkish state. Yildiz and Breau (2010: 150) argue that the designation of the PKK as a terrorist organization by the US and EU is influenced by their political will of appeasing Turkey. Therefore, such designation disrupts and complicate any process of conflict resolution in Turkey. Although Casier (2010, 2011), Yildiz and Breau (2010) highlight the impacts of labelling the PKK as terrorist on protracting the conflict, they do not cover the Turkish official discursive constructions of terrorism regarding the PKK.

### **Studies on the PYD-YPG and Roajva autonomy**

The Syrian Kurdish developments during the ongoing Syrian civil war and the position of the Turkish authorities regarding such developments are growing subjects of academic studies. In particular, the Turkish policy regarding the PYD-YPG and semi-autonomous administration of Rojava has become significant since the invasion of *Rojava* canton of Kobani by ISIL in 2014. Therefore, the quantity of the literature on the contemporary Syrian Kurdish issues is

considerably small although it is steadily growing. However, the literature on the PYD-YPG and the Syrian Kurdish autonomy has two dissimilar directions.

One main direction of this literature favours the narrative of the Turkish authorities, which constructs the PYD-YPG to be organic parts of the PKK and considers the Syrian Kurdish autonomy as a threat to the national security of Turkey. This is discerned in the work of Acun and Keskin (2017), Dal (2016), and Orton (June, 2015, 2017). Acun and Keskin (2017) and Orton (2017) construct the YPG as criminal and terrorist organization, while Dal (2016) compares the YPG threat to Turkey to that of ISIL. Orton (2017) even considers the YPG to be a threat to the international security. In particular, he constructed it as a threat to the security of the Western countries.

Such kind of work overlooks both the origins of the Kurdish question and the antagonism of the Turkish authorities against the Syrian Kurdish autonomy. In addition, it omits referring to the Turkish involvement in the Syrian conflict, which has constituted a security threat against Syria, and particularly against the Syrian Kurds. This is as the Turkish authorities have played a main role in supporting the armed Jihadist groups in Syria (Graeber, 18 November, 2015; Spencer & Sanchez, 2014; Tastekin, 30 July, 2017; Tax, 2016). In addition, this kind of work downgrades the role of YPG in the international campaign against ISIL (Acun & Keskin 2017; Dal, 2016; Orton, June, 2015; 2017). Acun and Keskin (2017: 9) described the YPG-ISIL conflict as “skirmishes”, which the YPG-PYD invest to gain a political relationship with the US.

The other main direction in the literature on PYD-YPG and Syrian Kurdish autonomy highlights the political and historical background of the Syrian Kurdish question. In addition,

it discusses the antagonism of the Turkish authorities against the Syrian Kurdish autonomy. This is discerned in the work of Gunter (2013), Knapp *et al.*, (2016), and Radpey (2016). Gunter (2013) argues that the PYD played an important role in strengthening the position of Kurds in Syria. However, this position is threatened by the disunity of Syrian Kurds and the antagonistic attitude of Turkey regarding the Kurdish developments in Syria (Gunter, 2013). Gunter (2013) also argues that the Kurdish developments in Syria constituted a major factor, which pressed Turkey to conduct the peace process with the PKK. Likewise, Radpey (2016) highlights the growing role of Kurds in Syria and makes a comparison between the status of their autonomy and that of Iraqi Kurds. However, Radpey (2016) describes the autonomy of Syrian Kurds as fragile experience, which lacks international recognition, and faces the antagonism of Turkey. Radpey (2016) also highlights the role of YPG in fighting against ISIL. Likewise, Knapp *et al.*, (2016) highlight this role of the YPG, and they consider the Rojava autonomy as a unique experience of democracy in the Middle East where women and various religious and ethnic groups enjoy political representation and progressive rights. Knapp *et al.*, (2016) also constructed the Turkish policy regarding Rojava as antagonistic and intimidating. This is although they admitted that the model of autonomy adopted in Rojava is stemmed from the perspectives of Ocalan, which are also adopted by the PKK. Although these scholars deal in their work with the attitude of Turkey regarding the PYD-YPG and Rojava, their work do not deal with the discursive construction of the PYD-YPG in the Turkish official discourse.

The literature review revealed that there is a deficiency in the literature regarding the study of the construction of the PKK, PYD and YPG in the Turkish official narrative of terrorism. This is although the critical studies deal with the Turkish policy regarding the Kurdish question. This research contributes in dealing with such deficiencies as it concentrates on the constructions of the PKK and PYD-YPG in the Turkish official discourse. However, this study

is not detached from the study of the Turkish official policy regarding the Kurdish question. This is as the research explores the change in the language and policy of the Turkish authorities during the peace process and following its failure. Overall, this research is a contribution in the discursive studies of terrorism as it employs the case of the Turkish official discourse regarding the PKK and the other Kurdish movements whom the Turkish official discourse connects to 'the PKK terrorism'.

## **Conclusion**

Terrorism is not an objective phenomenon exists independently from the way it is studied, but it is a linguistic construction which is influenced by the subjective interpretations of researcher. Viewing terrorism objectively made the mainstream studies revolve around researching the causes and effects of terrorism. The absence of consensus over the definition of terrorism made the mainstream studies, which are influenced by the view of state, overlook the violence of state and construct certain non-state actors as terrorists regardless of their characteristics, motivations and methods of action. Although CST have dealt with many of these inconsistencies of the mainstream studies, they remain actor-centered studies like the mainstream studies.

The traditional actor-centered approach of terrorism allows narrow space to question the concept of terrorism itself. This deficiency paved the ground for the emergence of a new approach, which deals with the concept of terrorism through the discursive study of terrorism. In order to understand the construction of the discourse of terrorism and the way it is communicated to the wider audience, it is important to study the reconstruction and dissemination of this discourse in the broadcast media. However, the majority of discursive studies of terrorism rotate around the American narrative of 'War on Terror'. Although these

studies reveal that this narrative has influenced the discourses of terrorism around the world, there is a need for comprehensive studies of each case study. This requires concentrating on the historical and political characteristics of the targeted case study.

Critical scholars reveal the historical and political origins of the Turkish- Kurdish conflict unlike the mainstream scholars who overlook such origins influencing by the view of Turkish state. Few scholars also highlighted the impacts of the designation of the PKK as a terrorist organization by the US and EU on both conflict resolution and human rights in Turkey. However, they do not deal with the Turkish official narrative of terrorism and its constructions. In addition, although the construction of the Syrian Kurdish PYD- YPG as part of the PKK in the Turkish official discourse is a growing subject, it is not covered yet in the discursive literature on terrorism. These gaps in the literature made it productive to conduct a research to critically study the construction of the PKK, the PYD and YPG in the Turkish official discourse and the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question.

### **Chapter 3:** *Discourse and the methodological implications of critical discourse analysis*

#### Introduction

Discourse is embodied in the usage of language as a social practice which forms the way we understand the world (Locke, 2004: 13-14). Therefore, the structure of discourse and the level of accepting it depend on social and historical contexts. This is the same constructionist argument that constructing knowledge depends on the dominant social and historical conditions (Burr, 2003). The linguistic and social characters of discourse have been explored by critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA represents a dialogue between the disciplines of linguistic and social analyses (Fairclough, 2001b). More important, as a multidisciplinary approach, CDA studies the mechanisms of constructing discourse and exploring its features of dominance and power relations (Wood & Kroger, 2000: 21). Accordingly, CDA does not deal with text passively, unlike content analysis, but it aims at disclosing the implied messages of text and its hidden agenda of dominance and power relations (Fairclough, 2003; Mayr, 2008; Van Dijk, 2001). This process is conducted by connecting the language of text with the social practices and structures and the wider social and historical contexts. Accordingly, for critical discourse analysts, language is “entwined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes power, expresses power, is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power” (Wodak, 2001a: 11).

This chapter employs the perspectives of several critical discourse analysts (CDA). However, it gives more space to the perspectives of three main founders of CDA. These are Fairclough (2001a, 2001b, 2003), Van Dijk (1995, 2006a, 2006b, 2009) and Wodak (1989, 2001a, 2001b). Fairclough (2001a, 2001b, 2003) deals with the social identity of actors who influence and are influenced by discourse and the way according to which the discursive constructions produced.

Whereas, Van Dijk (1995, 2006a, 2006b, 2009) focuses on the socio-cognitive character of discourse which serve ideology and dominance. Wodak (2001a) concentrates on the historical contexts that influence the production of discursive constructions (Wodak, 2001a: 63-92). Both Fairclough (2003, 1992) and Wodak (2001a, 2001b) deal with the inter-textual and inter-discursive relations of discursive practices and constructions, which have become more complex in the era of globalization. However, the three scholars agree that the discursive practices and constructions are studied according to their social and historical conditions and that the principal task of CDA is to reveal the features of text that serve dominance and power relations.

This chapter studies discourse and the methodological implications of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in relation to the research. In order to make the theoretical explanation of this chapter consistent with the following chapters of data analysis and the purposes of this research, the discussion frequently employs examples referring to the discourses of terrorism. The chapter consists of two sections. The first section deals with discourse theory, consisting of the following subtopics:

- Definition of discourse, which theoretically elaborates the definitions of discourse in the light of the perspectives of CDA scholars and others.
- Inter-textuality and inter-discursivity, which explains the relationships of texts, genres and discourses.
- Discourse manipulation, which focuses on the role of agency in the manipulation of discursive practices and constructions.
- CDA and ideology. This subtopic discusses the mechanisms according to which ideology forms the attitudes of group members and how such attitudes serve dominance and power relations.

The second section deals with the methods of CDA, and it consists of the following subtopics:

- Critical discourse analysis of text. This subtopic discusses theoretically the analytical mechanism of text in the light of both language function and socio-historical conditions.
- The framework of analysis. This subtopic explains the framework according to which the analysis of data is conducted. The framework also highlights certain linguistic techniques that serve bias and ideology in the texts, which the analysis aims at revealing.

### ***Section I. Discourse theory***

#### **Discourse**

Oxford dictionary defines discourse as “written or spoken communication or debate” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013). That is, discourse indicates a linguistic structure representing a meaning or an interpretation for a particular phenomenon. However, this definition deals only with the linguistic character of discourse. Mayr (2008) argues that limiting discourse to its linguistic character is contested by the functional definition of discourse, which highlights the social functions of discourse (Mayr, 2008). According to the functional definition, understanding discourse transcends its linguistic structure to include its historical and cultural contexts (Mayr, 2008: 7). Foucault (1972: 40-49) argues that discourse is not merely a linguistic description for certain phenomenon, but it is systematic practice constituting the phenomenon itself. Therefore, discourse is not reducible to being merely a linguistic structure, but it consists of both language and social practice (Hall, 2001: 72). To explain it in easier way, Epstein (2008: 4) stated that “discourses are sense-making practices. We string words together into sentences to make sense of the world around us, both to ourselves and to others”. In other words, discourse constructs realities. Critical discourse analysts usually refer to the forms that



represent discourse in written, spoken and visual languages as ‘text’. Fairclough (2003: 3) states that “any actual instance of language in use is a ‘text’”.<sup>20</sup>

Discourse participates in the formation of three types of social practice (Fairclough, 2003). Firstly, discourse represents the way of understanding social life and phenomena, which are interpreted differently according to different representations (Fairclough, 2003: 206). Secondly, it determines the way that genre operates (Fairclough, 2003: 206). Genre is the way of producing certain discourses according to certain conventions (Fairclough, 2003: 65-68). For example, TV reports, press reports, press conferences, and documentaries are genres which require certain conventions or methods to organize and conduct. Finally, discourse constitutes the style of actors, or their “way of being” (Fairclough, 2003: 206).<sup>21</sup> This is discerned in the social positions of elites who influence the production of discourse, such as politicians regarding the discourse of terrorism (Bartolucci, 2010; Zulaika & Douglass, 2002). This demonstrates that discourse, genre and style influence and are influenced by the construction and function of each other. Discourse influences the way that genre functions and the way that identity is formed, and vice versa, genre and identity influence the production of discourse.

The production of discourse is influenced by its social and historical context (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2001a). Therefore, different historical and social contexts might produce different discourses or different interpretation and representations for certain phenomenon. That is, the dominant context influences both the production and reception of discourse. Hodges (2011: 6) stated that “discourse regulates the way a topic can be talked about

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<sup>20</sup> Fairclough (2001a: 122) argues that discourse is not only represented in written and spoken language, but it encompasses all forms of “semiosis”. Semiosis denotes all types of sign systems and meaning-making including written, spoken, and visual languages, in addition to bodily movements (Fairclough, 2001a). In the case of political discourse, semiosis can be represented in many forms such as the outlets of press conferences, media reports, newspaper articles, and pictures.

<sup>21</sup> Style indicates the identity of actors in relation to the discursive constructions and practices.

meaningfully in a particular culture at a particular point in history’’. Accordingly, different historical contexts influence the production of different discourses which all claim the truth regarding the same phenomenon. For example, a certain group labelled as ‘terrorists’ might be described as a movement of ‘freedom fighters’ by their local community or even by wider communities. This can be discerned in the case of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was considered as a terrorist organization by the US and other allies of Israel before the 1991 negotiations of peace between PLO and Israel (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996: 177-178).<sup>22</sup> However, since its establishment, Arab states have considered the PLO as a legitimate organization representing the struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom (Zulaika & Douglass, 1996: 177-178). A similar historical dichotomy is also discerned in the case of the African National Congress (ANC) which was labelled as a terrorist organization by some Western governments but was considered as a legitimate organization by many African states (Lapsley, June, 2004).

It is also plausible to argue that the extent to which discourse is accepted depends on its pervasiveness and publicity. In the contemporary historical and social context, the pervasiveness of the terms of terrorism, terror, and terrorist in addition to their associated narratives has warranted the label of terrorism a status of objective truth (Bartolucci, 2010). Therefore, any efforts by researchers to question the creditability of this label might be considered as an abnormal endeavour (Bartolucci, 2010; Jackson *et al.*, 2011).

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<sup>22</sup> See also: 22 USC § 5201 - Findings; determinations. *Cornell University Law School*. Available at: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/22/5201> [accessed: 10 June, 2014].

### **Inter-textuality and inter-discursivity<sup>23</sup>**

Wodak (2001a: 46) argues that discourses are not closed but are open to hybrid relations with various topics and texts (Wodak, 2001a: 46). Such hybridity is named by some scholars as inter-textuality. Mayr (2008: 21) stated “inter-textuality refers to the way in which discourses are always connected to other discourses”, while Hodges (2011: 8) argues that inter-textuality is a process by which a text or part of text is de-contextualized and re-contextualized into other settings. Accordingly, the re-contextualized text might keep the aspects of previous context and acquire aspects of new context.<sup>24</sup> Hodges (2011: 10) depends on Derrida’s approach (1977), which identifies two forms of merging text. These are iterability which denotes the repetition of text in many contexts, and citationality which refers to the quotation of text through direct or indirect reported speech. Accordingly, inter-textuality involves repetition and reshaping of text (Hodges, 2011: 10-11).

The means of communication play a principal role in the production of inter-textuality. This is discerned in news releases of broadcast media, which convey messages of various institutions to the recipients (Fairclough, 2003: 34). Usually, there is distance between the recipients and the original source of news such as the distance between TV viewers as recipients and the interviewee in the field of conflict as original sources of news. Therefore, the means of communication, particularly the broadcast media and press mediate between the original

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<sup>23</sup> Fairclough (1992) and Hansen (2006) distinguished two types of inter-textuality. Fairclough, (1992: 104) named them as “manifest inter-textuality” and “constitutive inter-textuality”, while Hansen (2006: 51) named them as “explicit intertextuality” and “implicit intertextuality”. In the manifest or explicit inter-textuality, the convergence of texts is explored directly through quotation marks or grammatical cues, while in the constitutive or implicit inter-textuality one text represents more than one discourse. In other words, manifest inter-textuality of texts is noticed through their quotation marks and grammatical structures, while the constitutive inter-textuality of texts is observed through their semantic structures and accounts. Fairclough (2003: 218) also names the latter as ‘inter-discursivity’, denoting the articulation of the discursive constructions of more than one discourse in a single text. Thus, in addition to the discourse it represents, the inter-discursive text is connected somehow to other discourses. Likewise, Hansen (2006:7) in her study of discourse and foreign policy distinguishes two kinds of intertextuality by stating that intertextual texts “build their arguments and authority through references to other texts: by making direct quotes or by adopting key concepts and catchphrases”.

<sup>24</sup> See also the literature review chapter.

sources and the recipients through the process of reporting what happened and what was said.<sup>25</sup> However, such reports usually do not convey what happened and what was said exactly as it was happened or said. They usually reshape the story or message by adding other texts for more detail or by selecting parts of the original story or message. This is the case of governmental messages regarding policies of counter-terrorism, which are usually mediated according to certain settings by the media and press agencies (Crelinsten, 1998). Accordingly, news-makers usually select certain information and exclude other information.<sup>26</sup> Fairclough (2003: 85) stated that “making news is a heavily interpretative and constructive process”.

Wodak (2001a) and Fairclough (2003) agree that inter-discursivity is embodied in the interaction between various texts, genres, and discourses. In the era of globalization, the relationship between politics and the means of communication has become more complex making various genres, texts, and discourses interconnect with each other (Fairclough, 2003: 47; Wodak, 2001a: 64). This is discerned in various texts, which label the PKK as a terrorist organization as part of the global discourse of terrorism disseminated through various genres such as press reports, TV reports, and press conferences.<sup>27</sup> On the other side, some of these texts might connect various discourses to each other. For example, the Council on Foreign Relations, which is an American think tank, published a report in 2007 describing the PKK as a terrorist, Marxist, and separatist organization (Bruno, 2007). Accordingly, this report refers to the discursive constructions of three discourses: counter-terrorism, anti-Marxism, and state sovereignty. In other words, text which represents one discourse, or more is represented

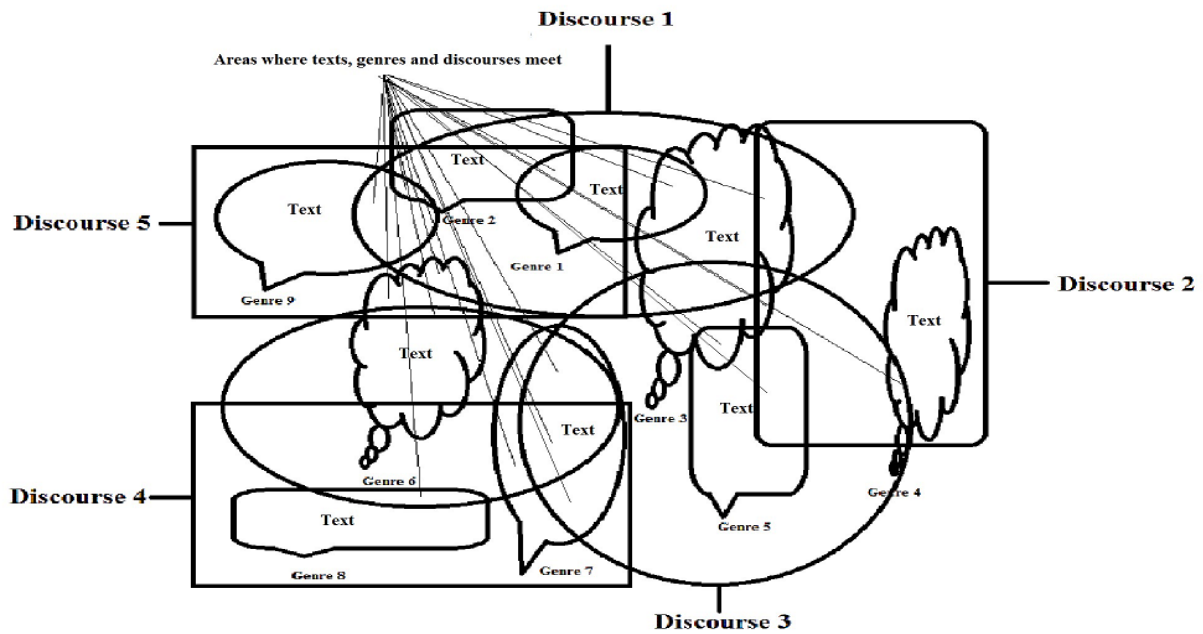
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<sup>25</sup> "The genres of governance are essentially mediated genres specialized for "action at a distance" (Fairclough, 2003: 34).

<sup>26</sup> This might reach the level of ideological manipulation which Fairclough (2003: 85) named as “focalization”. Focalization is responsible for the creation of certain concealed relations of protagonism and antagonism between different parties. This is discerned in the role of media and press in creating an antagonistic relationship between the US states and certain groups labelled as terrorist.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Bruno (October 2007), Freedman & Levitt (December, 2008), US Department of State (September, 2012), US Department of State (April, 2013), BBC (May, 2008), and CNN (December, 2007).

through one genre or more, and vice versa, discourse is represented in one or more texts and genres. Figure 1 below is an example of inter-textuality and inter-discursivity.



**Figure 1. Inter-textuality and inter-discursivity**

Inter-discursivity takes also the form of connecting discourses which prevail in different historical periods (Titscher *et al.*, 2000: 23; Wodak, 2001a: 67-70). Bankoff (2003) explains the inter-discursive relationship between the Western discourse of terrorism and other historical Western discourses, which label the developing countries of southern hemisphere as sources of threat and dangers. Bankoff (2003: 415-417) argues that the discourse of ‘*Tropicality*’ was a Western source of knowledge about the southern hemisphere during the period between the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and that this discourse described the tropical areas of southern hemisphere as origins of diseases. Following World War II, the Western knowledge was influenced by the discourse of ‘underdevelopment’ which described the southern hemisphere as a region of poverty (Bankoff, 2003). This knowledge was also influenced by the discourse of ‘natural disasters’ which prevailed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century describing the southern

hemisphere as the geographical area of natural hazards. Bankoff (2003: 417-420) argues that the narratives of Western discourse of terrorism are influenced by the narratives of such historical discourses which portrayed the southern hemisphere as origin of dangers and threats.

### **Manipulating the discursive practices and constructions**

As explained in the introduction of this research, CDA emphasizes the role of agency in the production and maintenance of discourse, while post-structuralist scholars like Foucault (1976, 1977) deny such a role (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 1993, 2003; Wodak, 2001a, 2001b). Although Foucault agrees that dominant discourse usually functions to advantage powerful groups, he denies the ability of agency to manipulate discourse (cited in Burr, 2003: 78; Hall, 2001: 79-80).<sup>28</sup> Foucault argues that whatever the subjects 'elites' are able to produce, their production is part of discursive practices which operate according to certain historical and cultural conditions, and such conditions are above the ability of 'subjects' to manipulate (cited in Hall, 2001: 79-80). On the other hand, critical discourse analysts emphasize that dominant discourse which serves the interests of powerful groups is manipulated by these groups (Van Dijk, 1993, 2003; Wodak, 2001a). Wodak (2001a: 10) stated that "for CDA, language is not powerful on its own-it gains power by the use powerful people make of it".

It is plausible to argue that powerful groups are able to influence or manipulate textual constructions and discursive practices, but they are not able to manipulate discourse as an entity. This is because discourse is "text in context" (Titscher *et al.*, 2000: 23). Thus, there is no discourse without historical and social context. Powerful groups are able to manipulate the discursive text and practices, but they cannot do so regarding the context. For example, the speeches of the president Bush about Al-Qaeda influence the production of discursive texts of

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<sup>28</sup> See also O'Farrell (2005).

‘War on Terror’, and accordingly, influence the related discursive practices. However, these speeches might not be in such a position if the political and historical contexts were different. Both constructionists and critical discourse analysts agree that the social and historical contexts influence the production of knowledge about social phenomena. Thus, the historical and socio-political contexts in the case of political discourses like the discourse of terrorism constitute a major pillar of the entity of discourse. Therefore, this research is not in conformity with the CDA perspective that agency manipulates the entire discourse, but it agrees CDA that agency is able to manipulate discursive constructions and practices.

In addition, agency is not represented in powerful individuals, but it is embodied in institutions. Mayr (2008: 3) argues that institutions are the principal sites for “reality construction”. These are usually state institutions in addition to other institutions affiliating with them (Mayr, 2008). Nevertheless, the term ‘institution’ is not embodied in physical settings, but it is embodied in various groups that execute institutional power like the groups that act as part of the institutions of the media and governments. Therefore, the power that institutional discourse yields is institutional power (Mayr, 2008: 4). This power originates from discursive practices which lead to discursive constructions legitimating certain norms, rules, laws, and policies (Van Dijk, 1993, 2003). Accordingly, politicians and journalists are elites or members of powerful groups as they play a major role in the practices and constructions of the discourse of terrorism. Bartolucci (2010: 131) stated that “the (re)creation of the discourse surrounding the events that took place on 11 September 2001 in America was undoubtedly an elite project widely reproduced by the media. In situations of ‘crisis’, political elites have the greatest rhetorical power”. Likewise, Silberstein (2002) argues that the rhetorical skills of political elites, which

were facilitated by the media influenced both of public reaction and knowledge about the attacks of September 11.<sup>29</sup>

Discursive constructions do not operate only by a single institutional body or social group. Van Dijk (2001) argues that discourse involves a network of social groups. Accordingly, various institutional and social bodies influence the production, dissemination, and function of discursive constructions. For example, the discourse of counter-terrorism is disseminated and reproduced by the media and press. However, the circulation and function of this discourse is beyond the capacity of media and press outlets. This is because counter-terrorism as discourse is originated from the political discourse of government and is legitimated by laws of counter-terrorism. The latter are usually enacted by the parliament or other legislative bodies of state. Such laws are safeguarded by other judicial and military institutions of state, which adopt certain measures of counter-terrorism. Thus, all these institutions participate in the production and maintenance of the discursive practices and constructions of the discourse of counter-terrorism.

Van Dijk (2006a) argues that manipulating discourse is accompanied by power abuse. In other words, manipulation is usually facilitated by illegitimate discursive practices (Van Dijk, 2006a: 360-361). Manipulation is different from legitimate persuasion in that the recipient of discourse in manipulation cannot understand the real purposes and aims behind the discursive practices which usually serve the manipulator (Van Dijk, 2006a: 361). The practice of manipulation has social, cognitive and discursive features (Van Dijk, 2006a: 361). Firstly, it has social feature as it indicates interaction between social actors resulting in power abuse. Secondly, it has

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<sup>29</sup> See also Zulaika & Douglass (1996) on how political elites use the media as a major tool in exaggerating the threat of terrorism, and accordingly, constructing the discourse of terrorism.



cognitive feature as it is about controlling the minds of the manipulated. Finally, it has discursive feature as it is practiced through written, spoken and visual representations of discourse. It is proper to name the last character as ‘textual’ instead of discursive because the discursive character is wider than the textual representation, and in the first place, discourse encompasses the social, cognitive and textual characters. Accordingly, the textual constructions and practices are subject to manipulation, but not the entire discourse as explained earlier. As stated earlier, this research disagrees with the perspective that discourse is manipulated as an entity, but it emphasizes that only the discursive constructions and practices are subject to manipulation.<sup>30</sup>

### **CDA and ideology**

Van Dijk (2006b: 116) describes ideologies as “belief systems”. Ideologies are fundamental beliefs which are usually built on abstracts and assumptions. However, ideologies are powerful as they organize the social cognition shared by members of particular social group, and accordingly, they influence the attitude of group members towards certain matters (Van Dijk, 2006b). That is, ideologies form the foundations for certain attitudes and social practices by the members of group (Van Dijk, 2006b: 117-118). For example, the Islamic Salafist ideology of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which considers non-Muslims as infidels (in Arabic: *Kufar*), depends on Quran texts which are considered by Salafists as the holy and

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<sup>30</sup> Van Dijk (2003) distinguishes two strategies of manipulation in the discursive practices and constructions. 1. The manipulation of the context of producing the discursive constructions (Van Dijk, 2003). This is mainly practiced by limiting access to the sources of discursive constructions to those who support certain views, while depriving those who have opposite views from such access, e.g. limiting the attendance of a forum on an internal conflict to the representative of government and ignoring the view of rebels. 2. The manipulation of the linguistic structure of discursive constructions (Van Dijk, 2003). This kind of manipulation is practiced through the construction of text for the purpose of conveying certain message. That is, structuring the text in a particular semantic or grammatical structure for the purpose of conveying certain message. For example, using the label of ‘bunch of criminal gangs’ to describe rebels. This aims at building the assumption that the rebels are merely criminals, and therefore, it necessary to adopt certain measures by the government to chase them as it does regarding any criminals.<sup>30</sup> Structure manipulation is also practiced by choosing and advancing certain topics as hegemonic topics such as ‘War on Terror’ as a topic for a forum about an internal conflict.

unquestionable truth.<sup>31</sup> Such Salafist beliefs which are built on certain assumptions influenced the attitude and behaviour of ISIL members and sympathizers towards non-Muslims.<sup>32</sup>

Ideology has a social function in constructing and maintaining the identity of social group (Van Dijk, 2006b). As ideology preserves values, attitudes and beliefs shared by members of certain group, it demarcates the borders of the group by differentiating group members from aliens, or the ‘in-group’ from the ‘out-group’. Thus, ideology identifies individuals who belong to the group and those who are not. For example, *we* are national citizens and *they* are alien immigrants. Referring to the in-group and out-group is usually accompanied by the polarization of positive self-presentation and negative presentation of the others (Van Dijk, 2006b: 126). This kind of dichotomy is described by Hansen (2006: 33-34) as creating the identity of ‘the self’ through the construction of the identity of ‘the other’ or through the discursive constructions of “otherness”. Bartolucci (2010: 123) also named this as the “othering discourse”. Bartolucci’s view on the othering discourse is also discussed in the framework of textual analysis.

Although critical discourse analysts are influenced by the Foucauldian notion of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977), their notion of ideological power is influenced by the Gramsci’s concept of hegemony (Mayr, 2008: 11-14). The Gramscian concept maintains that ideological power is exercised subtly and routinely through the acceptance of the dominated (Mayr, 2008: 11-14). Thus, ideology facilitates ‘discursive dominance’. Dominance is not merely imposed from above, but it is the result of a relationship between the dictating dominant and the passive dominated. That is, dominance is maintained by the legitimacy that the dominated gives to the

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<sup>31</sup> *Kufar* is plural of a single *Kafir* (in English: infidel).

<sup>32</sup> Another example is the racist ideology of Apartheid which was built on assumptions downgrading the black-skin human-being and praising the white.

dominant through their consent (Mayr, 2008). Fairclough (2003: 9) argues that ideologies are representations of the world which facilitate the maintenance of power relations and dominance. Ideologies serve the construction and maintenance of certain discourses which in turn serve certain social practices and structures. Accordingly, ideologies and discursive practices and constructions reciprocally influence each other.

Wodak (2001a: 10) stated that “one of the aims of CDA is to ‘demystify’ discourses by deciphering ideologies”. Features of ideology are discerned in various explicit and implicit textual forms. Assumptions usually have ideological functions as they have no place for the voices that contradict with their ideological accounts (Fairclough 2003: 55-60). In addition, certain semantic and grammatical structures and techniques of text have ideological functions. The ideological structures of text usually highlight the information that serves the in-group at the expense of the out-group, or they might downgrade these of the out-group for the advantage of the in-group. This is discerned in news reports which marginalize certain information, which is closely connected to the story of report because such information favours the out-group, while they highlight the information that serves the in-group although such information is less relevant to the story. Van Dijk (1995: 27) stated that according to this type of bias "our negative points and their positive points will remain implicit". However, the relationship between ideology and text is reciprocal. That is, a text that serves certain ideology is produced according to certain ideological considerations. Certain linguistic structures and techniques of the text, which are interconnected to ideology are elaborated in the framework of textual analysis.

## *Section II. Methods of critical discourse analysis*

### **Critical discourse analysis of text**

Wodak (2001a: 8) argues that in order to conduct CDA of text, it is necessary to be familiar with the essential principles of Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Likewise, Fairclough (2003: 5) refers to SFL as a significant source for CDA acknowledging that it has a significant role in the majority of work on CDA. SFL emphasizes the relation between the grammatical aspects of language, its purposes, and the related social relations and structures (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak, 2001a).

According to the theory of SFL, language has three meanings or "meta-functions" (Mayr, 2008: 17). These meanings are realized in various linguistic units including texts, clauses, sentences, phrases, and words. These functions are the following (Mayr, 2008):<sup>33</sup> Firstly, ideational function according to which language is a tool of understanding the world. Secondly, interpersonal function which identifies language as a tool of interaction and communication between individuals and groups, and accordingly, it reveals the social relations between the producer(s) and recipient(s). Finally, textual function. This function indicates that language is textually organized and has the properties of cohesiveness and coherence. Textual function serves the understanding of the ways that certain information is back-grounded while others are fore-grounded (Mayr, 2008: 17). Locke (2004) argues that Fairclough (1992a) employed

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<sup>33</sup> The meta-functions of SLF are also realized as three linguistic systems of clauses and sentences (Mayr, 2008). These are the following:

1. Transitivity, which is related to ideational function, refers to the inclusion of essential elements of sentence or clause. These elements are: Process + Participants (s) + Circumstance. Process refers to verb; participant refers to noun, and circumstance refers to prepositional phrase.
2. Modality, which is related to interpersonal meanings, consists of three major patterns. First, the goal of text as declarative, interrogative, or imperative. Second, the attitude of producer. Finally, the degree of certainty or uncertainty regarding particular argument or information presented in the text.
3. Theme, which is related to textual meaning, refers to the structure of text that serves certain meanings.

the meta-functions of language of the SFL theory in his approach of textual analysis. However, Fairclough (1992a) identifies two sub-functions for the interpersonal function (cited in Locke, 2004). These are identity function which refers to social identity, and relational function which indicates social relations, particularly the relations between the producer(s) of text and the recipient(s) (Locke, 2004: 45-46). However, Fairclough (2001a, 2003) has not adopted a particular framework for textual analysis, although he distinguishes the major areas of such analysis.

The critical discourse analysis of text accompanies exploring the social practices and the wider social and historical contexts of text production and dissemination (Wodak, 2001a, 2001b). CDA of text has three major angles. Firstly, analysis of the linguistic and semantic structures of text (Janks, 1997; O'Halloran, 2005). Secondly, analysis of the social practices according to which the text was produced and received or what O'Halloran (2005: 339) referred to as "processing analysis". These practices are embodied in the interactions between writer and reader, or speaker and listener. Thirdly, analysis of the wider social and historical structures and conditions according to which the text was produced, disseminated and received (Janks, 1997; O'Halloran, 2005). This is compatible with the constructionist perspective that knowledge is influenced by social and historical conditions (Burr, 2003). This is also in agreement with Titscher *et al.*, (2000: 23) description of discourse as "text in context".

CDA aims at revealing the hidden agendas and unexpressed messages of text by connecting the text to its wider social and historical contexts. The goal of this strategy is to explore the aspects of bias which usually serve dominance and power relations (Van Dijk, 2001, 2003). CDA strategy depends on that "what is 'said' in a text is always said against the background of what is 'unsaid' – what is made explicit is always grounded in what is left implicit" (Fairclough,

2003: 17). Therefore, CDA requires inspecting the text critically (Fairclough, 2001a, 2003). In other words, the critical discourse analyst should not deal with the text passively, or as if the text has straightforward implications. This is because treating text passively by the researcher mismatches the complicated task of deciphering its hidden features of dominance and power relations, which is the main commitment of CDA. Such a commitment of CDA requires connecting the micro analysis of the linguistic structures of text to the wider social and historical contexts which influence its production and dissemination.

There is no complete and definitive analysis for text (Fairclough, 2003: 14). Therefore, the researcher needs to employ reflexivity in order to obtain a certain level of credibility (Elliott, 2005; Kalof *et al.*, 2008). By adopting reflexivity, the researcher acknowledges their position regarding the subject of the research and its questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). As there is no definite reality about social phenomena, the analytical outcomes of any research do not constitute the definite reality about the phenomenon. In addition, analysis is usually selective as it is processed according to the questions that the researcher frames for their research. Thus, there is no objective analysis, but the analysis is usually influenced by the subjectivity of researcher (Fairclough, 2003: 14-16). Therefore, there is a need to acknowledge subjectivity by adopting reflexivity, which assists both the reader and researcher in understanding the influence of the position of researcher on the outcome of analysis (Elliott, 2005; Kalof *et al.*, 2008). Accordingly, reflexivity encourages the researcher in committing themselves to rigorous efforts in order to obtain a considerable level of credibility for the outcomes of analysis (Elliott, 2005; Kalof *et al.*, 2008). Such efforts are usually exerted through targeting various sources and different views for generating the data of research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

## **Framework of textual analysis**

To build the framework of analysis, this research is guided by the perspectives of the major scholars of CDA Fairclough, Van Dijk, and Wodak in addition to the perspectives of other scholars. The framework of analysis is intended to match the purpose of the research and its questions. The main enquiries of this research are about each of constructions of the Turkish official discourse, function of these constructions and impacts of the function. This is presented in the research questions, which are stated below:

- How has the Turkish official discourse constructed the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Democratic Union Party (PYD), and the People's Protection Units (YPG)?
- How did the Turkish authorities construct and deal with the Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure?
- How did such constructions function in producing particular meanings for events or legitimatising particular actors or policies?
- How did these constructions interact with the way that the Turkish authorities dealt with the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and Kurdish activists in Turkey?

To ensure that the data generation matches the objectives of research, the researcher considered the importance of style and genre in the targeted texts that reflect the official Turkish view. Style reflects the identity of the producer or disseminator of text, and in the case of the texts that reflect the Turkish official view in this research the producers are the Turkish authorities and high-ranking Turkish officials. Genre is the convention of producing the text, and in the case of the texts that reflect the Turkish official view in this research, they are directly published by the Turkish authorities, or they are statements by the Turkish officials published through the media.<sup>34</sup> The relationship between style and genre is discussed earlier under the topic of

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<sup>34</sup> For more about style and genre, go to 'inter-textuality and inter-discursivity'.

inter-textuality and inter-discursivity. Although the Turkish official texts are the main target of the analysis as they reflect the Turkish official discourse, the research is not limited to these texts, but it also deals with other texts, which reflect different views and accounts. These texts usually challenge the Turkish official view and reveal the impacts of the Turkish policy regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question, and they are usually taken from various non-Turkish sources such as the reports of human rights organizations. Such texts serve the objectives of CDA in revealing the implied messages and hidden agendas, which serve dominance and power relations in the Turkish official texts.

The analysis deals with the text on two levels; micro and macro. The micro level deals with the internal features of text embodied in grammatical and semantic structures of phrases, sentences and clauses. These are described by Titscher *et al.*, (2000: 20-24) as internal properties of text, while they consider the features that the macro level of analysis deals with as external properties. Wodak (2001a: 65) named the micro level of analysis as “immanent critique”, while she named the wider macro level as “socio-diagnostic critique”. In other words, the macro level deals critically with the relations of text with its wider socio-political and historical contexts. However, the two levels of analysis are not discrete entities, but they rely on each other in order to function in producing their analytical outcomes (Fairclough, 2003: 38). In some texts the macro aspects of analysis are more noticeable and in other texts the micro aspects are more noticeable. This also depends on the type of message of the text that the analysis targets to reveal. However, the main characteristic of analysis is that the linguistic structures of text are analysed in the light of the political and historical conditions which dominated during its production.



The analysis also deals with the interdiscursive aspects of several discursive constructions. In particular, it deals with the interconnection of several discursive constructions in the context of the dominant narrative of terrorism. For example, the Turkish PM Davutoglu accused the PKK of an attack in Ankara and stated that "there are very serious, almost certain indications that point to the separatist terror organisation" (quoted in BBC, 14 March, 2016b). Accordingly, the PKK is constructed as 'separatist and terrorist' organization in the Turkish official discourse. This demonstrate an interdiscursive relationship between the constructions of separatism and those of terrorism. However, the Kurdish separatism is considered as a form of terrorism in the Turkish official definition of terrorism (see the Turkish anti-terrorism law in Legislationline, 2016). This is explained in chapter 5. Other interdiscursive features of the constructions of the narrative of terrorism are dealt with in chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this research.

The analysis also aims at revealing the change of Turkish official language according to major events. The analysis compares the dominant language and policy of the Turkish authorities during the peace process to those following its failure. This is the main focus of chapter 7 and 8 of the research, and it is achieved by comparing various texts, which reflect the Turkish official view and policy. Thus, the analysis questions the main argument of constructionists, which highlights the role of historical and social (or political) conditions in the formation of discourse. As explained earlier in this chapter, Wodak (2001a, 2001b) Van Dijk (2001) and Fairclough (2003) highlighted this role of the historical and social context in the production of different discursive interpretations for the same phenomenon.

To reveal the implied messages and the hidden agendas that the text serves, the analysis explores the bias techniques of text. As explained earlier, CDA targets revealing the bias aspects of text that favour certain accounts, which is named by Van Dijk (2003) as 'the

manipulation of discourse'.<sup>35</sup> However, this research limits the capability of agency to the manipulation of discursive constructions and practices. Accordingly, the focus of this research is on the political messages and agendas that certain texts serve. In particular, the strategy of analysis targets such messages that reflect or serve certain ideological implication, agendas and policies, which serve dominance and power relations. For example, Erdogan labelled the PKK militants as “atheists” (quoted in Akyol, 11 June, 2016). This construction reflects the Islamist ideology of the ruling AKP. The construction also serves the agenda of inciting the antagonism of conservative Muslims in Turkey against the PKK.

There are various techniques of bias and imbalance judgement in texts, and accordingly, texts have different degrees of bias that favour certain accounts that usually serve certain ideological considerations. To cover all techniques of bias in texts is beyond the capacity of this research. Therefore, the research is limited to explore the techniques of bias that match the purposes of research and its questions.<sup>36</sup> The following are some examples of linguistic techniques that serve bias and ideological implications in the text:

a). The usage of certain lexicons, semantic structures and rhetorical figures like metaphors, hyperboles, and euphemisms (Van Dijk, 2006, 2006a, 2006b). One important lexical pattern serving the bias of text producer is metaphor. The theoretical meaning of the term metaphor is explained in the chapter of literature review as dislocating a word or phrase from its usual context and placing it in unusual context (Bhatia, 2009: 280). Metaphor leave emotional influence over the audience and it is used to make the recipient accept the

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<sup>35</sup> For more details on the Van Dijk perspective of manipulating discourse.

<sup>36</sup> These techniques are also the clues for exploring the bias.

message of the biased text. For example, Erdogan described the PKK as “blood sucking vampires” while calling the public to devalue it (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 11 June, 2014). Hyperbole is another lexical pattern, which serves the interests of producer by using exaggerative or exciting semantic structures in order to influence the cognition of recipient (The Free Dictionary, 2013). An example of hyperbole is taken from a speech by Bush in which he loathed Al-Qaeda as he stated that “these terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life” (Bartolucci, 2010: 124). Euphemism is used to alleviate the impacts of harmful or negative action by the party that the text producer is biased in their favour. This usually takes the form of excusing the negative action. An example of euphemism is the excuse used in this sentence ‘there are casualties among civilians who were hit by a rocket which targeted terrorists who hid themselves in a populated area’. This implies that the rocket hit civilians because terrorists hid themselves among them.

b). Omitting or back-grounding important or relevant information (Fairclough, 2003; Mayr, 2008). Such techniques are used by the producer of text in order to oppress views or hide information which contradicts with their argument or interests (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2006b). The main type of omitting certain information in a narrative is to describes an event in a way, which does not match its main characteristics. This is discerned in describing the conflict as an act of terrorism by one actor; the terrorist group. Thus, the violence of the governmental forces is omitted. Other types of omitting certain information in a narrative employ certain linguistic structures such as passive sentences without agents (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2006). For example, ‘the security forces killed three people’. This sentence is an active sentence as it has the three principal elements of active sentence including ‘the security forces’ as the actor, the act of killing as a process, and ‘three people’ as the affected. However, it will be

passive sentence with omitted agent if it is structured as ‘three people were killed’. By making the agent unknown in the last sentence the producer concealed who is responsible for the negative act of killing. However, this is not the case when the producer avoids repetition because the agent was made known elsewhere in the text.

The main type of back-grounding important information in the text is affiliated with foregrounding other information. This is the case when the text producer highlights the less relevant information at the expense of the more relevant information (Fairclough, 2003). For example, a report on an armed conflict between an armed movement and government might allocate large space for the view of the government and a marginal area or very little space for the view of armed movement. Another form of back-grounding important information or responsibility is through the usage of a passive sentence which refers to the agent at the end (Fairclough, 2003). An example on passive sentence is ‘some demonstrators were killed when they clashed with security forces who opened fire’. Whereas, the active form of this sentence will be ‘the security forces opened fire causing the death of some demonstrators’.

c). Patterns of the ‘othering discourse’ which is described as a major technique of serving ideology. As it is explained earlier in the section of ideology, these patterns of text usually serve the self-image and downgrade the other’s-image. They are usually affiliated with the usage of pronouns such as *us, our, we* versus *them, their, they*. An example of the othering discourse is taken from the anti-Al-Qaeda speech of president Bush who stated:

"Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms – our freedom of religion, our freedom of

speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other” (quoted in Bartolucci, 2010: 124).

In this text Bush made a dichotomy not only between the Americans and ‘terrorists’ but also between the superior American social and political life and the inferior life of the communities where the terrorists came from. He indicates that the communities of terrorists have much lower social and political life than that of the Americans, and therefore, terrorists feel unfortunate and jealous, and they hate Americans.

d). Creating assumptions, abstracting, and generalization (Fairclough, 2003). Assumption is the understanding of a phenomenon without investigation. In other words, to create an assumption, the text producer tries to make the recipient consider the information that the text provides as realities (Locke, 2004: 59-60). Accordingly, assumptions serve ideology. This is also explained in this chapter under the topic of ideology. Abstracting information has a similar function. This is because in the abstracted text, important details are missing, and this prevents the recipient of text from the proper understanding of the phenomenon that the text deals with (Fairclough, 2003). This is discerned in news reports which copy the narrative of other media agencies about certain conflict. This is even when the original source of narrative is the government who is party of the conflict. Generalization is a technique used to give a description for a certain case, which was originally used to describe other case or cases. Accordingly, the text producer avoids the details of different cases eluding reference to their dissimilarities.

## **Conclusion**

Discourse transcends linguistic structures which interpret reality to be a construction of reality, and it operates according to the dominant historical and social contexts. Since the production of discourse is governed by the social and historical context, it is not fixed and closed system

of knowledge, but it is changeable and open for hybridity. This is the case of the discourses of terrorism which have changed influencing by various socio-political and historical contexts. In addition, discourse hybridity has become even more complex in the era of globalization in which various means of communications have structured and conveyed the discursive texts and complicated the intertextual and interdiscursive relations of texts, discourses and genres.

Discourse is connected to power, and it is influenced by powerful groups. Discourse is connected to power as it produces certain kind of knowledge which leads to certain kind of action. In addition, CDA scholars argue that discourse is manipulated by powerful groups, while Post-structuralists deny such a role. Post-structuralists argue that discourse as an entity is above the capacity of agency to manipulate because the socio-historical context of discourse is beyond the capabilities of agency to control. This research admits that discourse as an entity is above the capacity of agency to manipulate. However, the research argues that agency plays a major role in the discursive practices and constructions. That is, powerful groups influence both the production of discursive texts and the discursive practices. Nevertheless, agency is usually embodied in institutions that are ruled by elites who have the privilege to access and control the sources and structure of discourse. Manipulating the discursive practices and constructions serve dominance and power relations. Dominance is not merely imposed from above, but it is facilitated by the consent of the dominated. This is best practiced through the cognitive mechanism of ideology which influences the attitude of individuals and groups, and accordingly facilitates the production of discursive constructions in certain way, which in turn serve dominance and power relations.

CDA aims at revealing the features of ideology, dominance and power relations by deciphering the implicit messages of text. CDA works on two levels including the micro analysis of

linguistic structures and the macro analysis of socio-political and historical contexts. As a political discourse which serves certain political messages and agenda of dominance and power relations, discourse of terrorism has associated with manipulation and ideology in its discursive practices and constructions. For the purpose of analysing the data of this research and reveal their implied messages and hidden agenda in the light of CDA, the chapter provided a framework which aims at revealing the implied messages and agendas of the text that serve dominance and power relations.

**Chapter 4:** *Historical background: The Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the opening approach of the AKP*



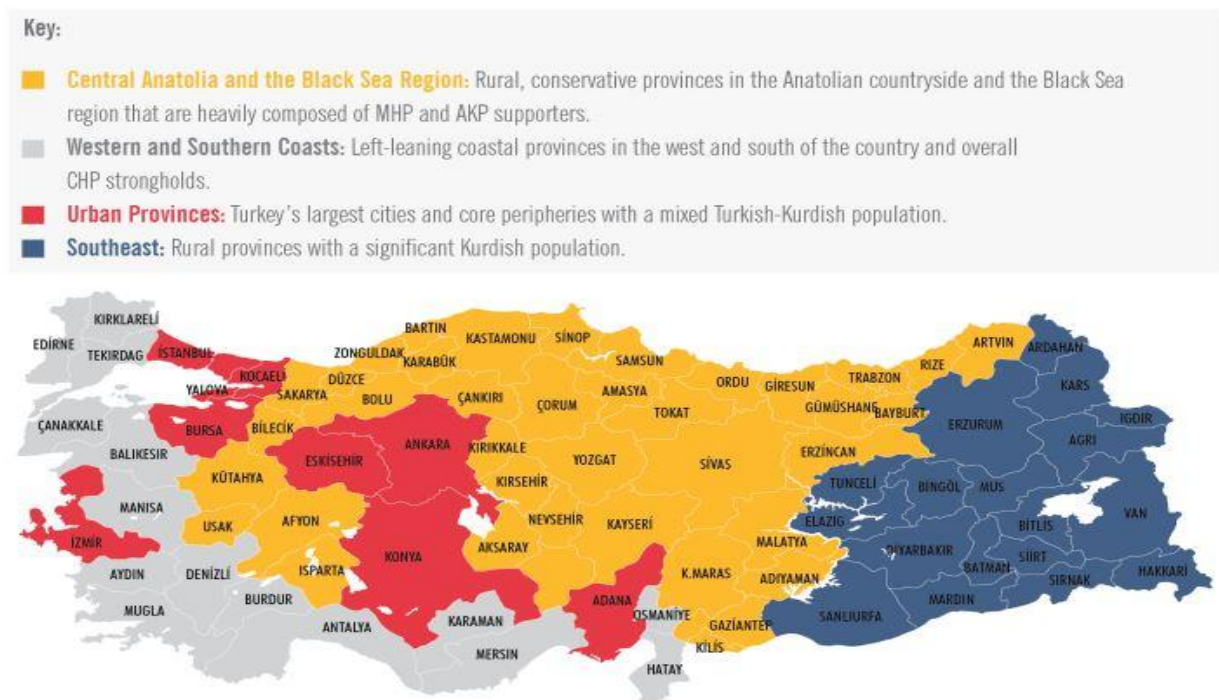
**Map 1. The contemporary demographic distribution of Kurds.** Source: Gunter (2011: xii).



**Map 2. Map of Turkey.** The area coloured in light-blue is where the pro-Kurdish ‘Peoples’ Democratic’ party (in Kurdish: *Partiya Demokratîk a Gelan*, and *Halkların Demokratik Partisi* (HDP); in Turkish) won the majority in the June, 2015 elections of Turkey. Source (Cengiz & Kirişçi, June, 2015).<sup>37</sup>



**Map 3. Map of Turkey.** The provinces in blue colour have significant Kurdish population. Source: (Bipartisan Policy Centre, May, 2017).



<sup>37</sup> In the Turkish parliament elections of June 2015, the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) got more than 13% of the overall votes. This was the first time in the history of Turkey that a pro-Kurdish party gets such result and passes the 10% threshold required to enter the parliament as a political party (see Cengiz & Kirişçi, June 2015).

## **Introduction**

The research highlights that the Turkish official discourse dislocates the Turkish-Kurdish conflict from its historical and political context and constructs it as a phenomenon of terrorism perpetrated by one actor; the PKK. The research also revealed in the literature review chapter that the mainstream studies on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict are influenced by the Turkish official narrative of terrorism, and they usually overlook the historical and political context of the conflict. This is discerned in the work of scholars of mainstream studies like Criss (1995), Heper (2007), Dikici (2008), Radu (2001), Cinar (2010), and Yilmaz (2011).

This chapter aims at overcoming the deficiency in dealing with the historical roots of the conflict and the Kurdish question in the mainstream studies. In addition, the chapter provides a background for the AKP opening approach, which paved the way for the peace process. The latter is a main subject of this research and is covered in chapter 7 and 8. This chapter consists of two main sections.

The first section deals with the historical background of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict since the era of Ottoman empire. The section discusses the conditions that led to the rebellions of Kurds against Turkey and the policies of the Turkish governments against the Kurds. However, the section concentrates on the repressive policies and political conditions that led to the last Kurdish rebellion of the PKK. The chapter discusses the emergence and growth of the PKK, and the judicial and military measures adopted by the Turkish authorities to confront the rebellion. The section also discusses the abduction of the PKK leader Ocalan and the EU stance regarding Ocalan and the PKK.

The second section discusses the background of the opening approach of the currently ruling Turkish party of Justice and Development (in Turkish: *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* AKP) regarding the Kurds. The section concentrates on the agenda of AKP, which influenced its approach regarding the Kurds. These include the AKP agenda regarding both the role of military and the Kurdish electoral support for the AKP. The first part connects the AKP opening approach to the struggle of AKP to limit the role of military in the political life of Turkey. The second part connects the opening approach to the AKP efforts to win the support of Kurds in the elections and changing the constitution. However, the section begins with introducing the AKP and its ideology.

### ***Section I: Historical background of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict***

The Kurdish homeland, *Kurdistan* underwent long-term domination by the Ottoman and Safavid empires, which were in antagonism and sporadic armed conflicts during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38 39</sup> The majority of these conflicts occurred in the Kurdish areas (see Appendix Map 11). However, in 1639 the Ottoman and Safavid empires agreed to end the conflict and signed the Treaty of Zuhab, which demarcated their borders and divided Kurdistan into two parts between both empires (Gunter, 2011: 313; McDowall, 2007: 26). Although the Kurdish homeland was divided, some Kurdish principalities like Bitlis, Botan, Hakkari, Baban, and Ardalán maintained various degrees of autonomy under the domination of both empires (Gunter, 2011: 91; McDowall, 2007: 25-31). Nonetheless, the autonomy of these principalities

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<sup>38</sup> The name of Kurdistan was first used by Sulcus then it was documented by the Ottoman authorities (see Appendix Map 11. The southern and eastern areas of Ottoman Empire). Name of Kurdistan is also documented in the 1920 Treaty of Severs. See: Treaty of Peace with Turkey. (1920).

<sup>39</sup> In addition to Region of Iraqi Kurdistan, which has a federal status as part of Iraq, 'Kurdistan' was also the name of two shortly lived Kurdish states in both Iran and the Soviet Union. Mahabad was the capital of Iranian Kurdistan, which was announced in January 1946 and was crushed in December of the same year by the Shah regime of Iran (Gunter, 2008, 132). Soviet Kurdistan was called 'the Red Kurdistan' and was part of the Soviet Union (NRT, 14 February, 2017). Red Kurdistan was established in 1923 and consisted of the Kurdish populated region between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Lachin was its capital. However, Red Kurdistan was diminished by Moscow in 1929. This was followed by a campaign of repression against the Kurds of Red Kurdistan by both the Stalin regime and government of Azerbaijan (NRT, 14 February, 2017).

dwindled gradually until their demise. The last of these principalities was the principedom of Botan, which demised in 1847 following the failure of its rebellion against the Ottoman Empire (Gunter, 2008: 3). Failure was also the fate of the following Kurdish rebellions of 1880-1881 led by Ubeydullah Nahri and 1918-1922 led by Ismail Simko, which were against the rule of both empires.

Following the defeat of Ottoman Empire in World War I, the victorious allies divided the territories of the empire. The two major victorious allies, Great Britain and France got the largest parts of the territories of the Ottoman Empire. Great Britain and France demarcated the areas of their mandates according to the 1916 agreement of Sykes-Picot and the subsequent amendments of borders, which created new colonial entities (Gunter, 2011: 282-283; McDowall, 2007: 115-121; O'Shea, 2004: 121-145). The new colonial entities ended with the establishment of Syria, Iraq and other states, and the remnants of the Ottoman and Safavid empires were converted into the new nation-states of Turkey and Iran. Accordingly, the Kurdish homeland 'Kurdistan' dissolved mainly in the newly established nation states of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria (see Appendix Map 12). The division of Kurdistan was not only geographical, but it also transformed the position of Kurds as a large nation to become minorities in states ruled by other nations (see Map 1). Accordingly, the Kurds were transformed from one nation into four minorities in four countries. Gunter (2004: xxvii, 2008: 2) estimated the numbers of Kurds in each of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, and this is shown in the table 1 below.

Country	Estimated number	Percentage of overall country population
Turkey	12-15 million	18-23%
Iran	6.5 million	11%
Iraq	4-4.5 million	17-20%
Syria	1 million	9%

The numbers that Gunter (2004, 2008) estimated in the tablet 1 above are below the current estimations of the Kurdish Institute of Paris (January, 2017). The latter are shown in the table 2 below.

Country	Estimated numbers	Percentage of the overall country population
Turkey	15-20 million	19-25%
Iraq	8-8.5 million	25-27%
Iran	10-12 million	13-17.5%
Syria	3-3.6 million	12.5-15%

However, both charts do not provide adequate, but estimated numbers because there are no official statistics about the numbers of Kurds in these countries.<sup>40</sup> The charts depend on non-

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<sup>40</sup> Although Kurdistan region of Iraq has its own statistics regarding Kurds who live in the region, but this does not include Kurds who live in the disputed territories outside the authority of the Kurdish regional government (KRG).

official sources.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the charts support the point that dividing Kurdistan transformed the Kurds from a large nation to minorities.

### **Kurds and the establishment of Turkey**

Although the victorious allies had promised Kurds the right to have autonomy in their homeland, Kurdistan that could progress towards independence according to the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, they dishonoured their promise later. According to Articles 62, 63 and 64 of the Treaty of Sevres, Kurds were given the right to autonomy growing to independence after one-year autonomy (Yildiz, 2005: 135; Martin, 2007: 789).<sup>42</sup> However, the Treaty of Sevres was nullified by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne (Martin, 2007: 959; McDowall, 2007: 137-143; O'Shea, 2004: 141-143).<sup>43</sup> In 1922 the Nationalist Turkish movement of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk succeeded in its campaign against the Ottoman authorities. Ataturk opposed the Treaty of Sevres and any kind of independence or autonomy for Kurds (McDowall, 2007: 137-143). The allies agreed with Ataturk and signed on 24 July, 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne which replaced the Treaty of Sevres. The treaty of Lausanne not only omitted what Sevres stated about the autonomy and independence of Kurds, but it also avoided any reference to the Kurds as a nation or even as minorities inside the newly established nation states (Gunter, 2011: 131; O'Shea, 2004: 141-143; Yildiz, 2005: 7 & 99-100).<sup>44</sup>

Lausanne was a green light for the nationalist Turkish movement of Ataturk to announce the republic of Turkey as a nation-state out of the remnant of Ottoman Empire on 29 October 1923. This was followed in 1924 by the announcement of the Turkish constitution, which considered the Turkish identity as the sole identity of Turkey and its people and denied any reference to

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<sup>41</sup> See also BBC. (14 March, 2016), and Leduc, S. (22 March, 2015).

<sup>42</sup> See also Treaty of Peace with Turkey (1920: 21).

<sup>43</sup> See also Treaty of Peace with Turkey (1923).

<sup>44</sup> See also Gunter (2008: 99)

the Kurdish identity and other identities (Ozcan, 2006: 15). Article 88 of the 1924 Turkish constitution stated that “the people of Turkey are called ‘Turkish’ by virtue of citizenship irrespective of religious and racial differences” (quoted in Kadioglu, 2013: 144). The denial of Kurdish identity led Kurds to revolt against the rule of the nationalist Turks. However, their rebellions were crushed one after the other. This was accompanied with systemic prohibition of Kurdish language, costumes and any sign to the Kurdish identity (Ozcan, 2006: 54-72; Yildiz & Muller, 2008: 15). The Kurds reacted by launching a rebellion in 1925 led by Sheikh Said Piran. However, the Turkish authorities supported by both the Soviet Union and the authorities of the French mandate in Syria managed to crush the rebellion (Gunter, 2008: 4). This was also the fate of the 1927 rebellion of Mount Ararat led by General Ihsan Pasha and the 1936-1938 rebellion of Dersim province led by Seyid Riza which ended by the Dersim massacre against Alawi-Kurds perpetrated by the Turkish military (Gunter, 2008: 4-5; McDowall, 2007: 209).<sup>45</sup> Ozcan (2006: 73-74) stated that the Turkish government responded to the 1937-1938 rebellion of Dersim by “indiscriminate massacres, massive deportations and the elimination of anything that might be associated with Kurdishness—all of these were used to intimidate the population into silence, submission and obedience”.<sup>46</sup> In its statement about Dersim, the Turkish regime celebrated the crush of rebellion and described its response as an act of civilization. The statement included that “what the Republican regime has been doing in Tunceli is not a military operation, but the march of civilisation” (quoted in Yegen, 1999: 263). Tunceli is the Turkified official name of Dersim.

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<sup>45</sup> Alawi (adj) is written here as it is pronounced in its original Arabic origin. Alawites is a sect of Islam which claims that ‘Imam Ali’ is more spiritually profiled than the Muslims’ prophet Mohammed. Alawi in the international sources is transliterated as Alavi. The latter is derived from the Turkish sources which use Turkish letters. There is no letter ‘W’ in Turkish. Instead it has V.

<sup>46</sup> The original name of ‘Dersim’ was changed into the Turkish name ‘Tunceli’ by the Turkish government in 1936.



This kind of description for the repressive policies against Kurds was accompanied with stigmas that aimed at delegitimizing the Kurdish rebellions. This is discerned in the terms used against the Kurdish rebels and rebellions by the Ottoman, Turkish authorities, and Turkish media. The Kurdish rebels were usually dubbed as “brigands and bandits” and the Kurdish rebellions were named as “banditries” (White, 2000: 63; Yegen, 1999: 564).<sup>47</sup> <sup>48</sup> Yegen (1999: 564) quoted the July 1930 texts of Turkish *Cumhuriyet* newspaper which described the military action against the 1930 Kurdish rebellion that “our aircraft have heavily bombed the brigands” “The republic was defended by our citizens against the bandits”.

### **The Turkish policies of repression and assimilation of Kurds**

The national sentiments of Turkishness, which dominated the political life of Turkey, were built on the denial of the rights and existence of other ethnic groups. In some cases, the euphoria of victories over the Kurdish rebellions made members of the Turkish governments express publicly their ultranationalist sentiments such as the statement of the 1930 Turkish minister of Justice, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt. Bozkurt stated that “we live in a country called Turkey, the freest in the world. As your deputy, I feel I can express my real convictions without reserve: I believe that the Turk must be the only lord, the only master of this country. Those who are not of pure Turkish stock can have only one right in this country, the right to be servants and slaves” (quoted in Chaliand, 1993: 56; Ozcan, 2006: 70).

After the demise of the Kurdish rebellions of the 1920s and 1930s, the Turkish authorities launched a systemic campaign for changing the demography of Kurdistan and muting the Kurdish identity. Following the 1925 rebellion the Turkish authorities applied martial law in

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<sup>47</sup> The term of ‘bandits’ was also used against the PKK in its early years. See Marcus (2007: 83).

<sup>48</sup> See also Üngör, U. Ü. (2012). Rethinking the violence of pacification: State formation and bandits in turkey, 1914-1937. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol, 54(4), pp. 746-769.

Kurdistan, which granted the Turkish forces extra authority and enabled them to perpetrate large-scale violence against Kurds including mass killings, torture, village destruction, and deportation from the Kurdish region to the west of Turkey (Yildiz & Muller, 2008: 15-16).<sup>49</sup>

The Turkish governments denied the Kurdish identity and used the term ‘mountain Turks’ instead of the term ‘Kurds’. For example, the head of the 1960 military coup Cemal Gürsel used such a phrase to denote Kurds while threatening them. Chaliand (1993: 65) quoted Gürsel statement that “if the mountain Turks do not keep quiet, the army will not hesitate to bomb their towns and villages into the ground. There will be such a bloodbath that they and their country will be washed away”. However, using the phrase of ‘mountain Turks’ to denote Kurds became more common in the governmental statements and media language following the coup of 1980 (Akyol, January, 2013).

The repression of Kurdish identity and imposing the Turkish identity on Kurds became more systematic following the military coup of 1980. The coup of 1980 made it worse for Kurds as it gave the Turkish military and security forces more authority to rule the Kurdish provinces under martial law (Yildiz & Muller, 2008: 16). In addition, the post-1980 Turkish governments prohibited any written or spoken signs for the Kurdish identity or history and punished those who infringed such restrictions (Meho, 1997: 9-10). The post-1980 Turkish governments even punished those who spoke in Kurdish publicly. This policy of identity repression accompanied with imposing the Turkish identity on Kurds. The authorities systematically changed the

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<sup>49</sup> During the 1950s Turkey experienced some kind of political openness and democratization by the government of Adnan Menderes (Ozcan, 2006: 74). However, the Kurdish region was isolated from such openness. The Turkish authorities continued isolating the Kurdish region from the political developments of the country, and they carried out the policies of repression and denial of Kurdish identity during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In addition, attempts for political openness and democratization in Turkey were not successful as they were faced by military coups. This was the case of Menderes democratization attempts whose government was toppled by a military coup in 1960, and it was also the case of the later pro-democracy governments, which were toppled down by the military coups of 1971 and 1980 (Marcus, 2007: 22 & 50-51).

Kurdish names of villages, towns, mountains, and other geographical entities into Turkish names (Yildiz & Muller, 2008: 16-17). Robert Fisk (July, 2017), an author and senior journalist who is specialized in the Middle Eastern issues estimated that by 1986 the Turkish authorities changed the names of 2,842 Kurdish villages into Turkish names. Moreover, Kurdish names were not permitted for new-borns, and Kurdish surnames were changed into Turkish names (Aslan, 2009). Ozcan (2006: 62) argued that the Turkish policies of assimilation against the Kurds were extreme to the level that the Ataturk motto ‘happy is the one who calls himself a Turk’ was displayed not only on the public squares and the streets of towns and counties but also on countless rural hillsides with huge lettering made of stone and concrete”. Happy is the one who calls himself a Turk is the translation of the Turkish text ‘*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene*’. Using google-map, Turnbull (2005) shows a location where this motto is carved out near the city of Cizre. (click the google-map link provided by Turnbull, 2005).<sup>50 51</sup>

### **The emergence of the PKK**

The long-term and systemic policies of repression by the Turkish state against Kurds in addition to the growth of Kurdish nationalism following the military coup of 1980 laid the ground for the emergence of PKK. In 1978 the PKK was established in a village near the major Kurdish city of Diyarbakir (in Kurdish: *Amed*) in the south-east of Turkey (Marcus, 2007: 46-51). The PKK ideological foundations were influenced by the Marxist-socialist revolutionary tendencies, which were dominant among the leftist Turkish opposition of 1960s and 1970s.

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<sup>50</sup> The motto of Ataturk carved on the mountainous area of Cizre. See: Turnbull, A. *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene/ Google Sightseeing*. Available at: <http://googlesightseeing.com/2005/08/ne-mutlu-turkum-diyene/#comments> [accessed: 25 June 2014]. Happy is the one who call himself a Turk is the translation of ‘*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene*’

<sup>51</sup> Carving this motto near Cizre is also an expression for the Turkish official position against the Kurdish motivation of independence. This is because Cizre has a symbolic importance for the Kurds as it was the capital of the last semi-independent Kurdish principality of Botan, which was toppled down in 1847 following its rebellion against the Ottoman empire (Gunter, 2008: 3).

Ozcan (2006: 73-74) argues that the majority of the uprisings and revolutions which preceded the PKK revolution were led by religious figures or tribal chieftains. The growth of Kurdish nationalism and the secular approach of PKK movement helped its rebellion to remain active until the date of writing this research, unlike the previous Kurdish rebellions which were not able to continue for more than one year. In addition, the organizational growth of the PKK boasted by the increasing numbers of its recruiters who found the PKK as a refuge from the repressive policies of the Turkish authorities. The repressive policies exacerbated in the 1980s following the military coup of 1980. Post-1980 coup treatment of Kurds by the Turkish authorities was harsh to the extent that any activity related to expressing the Kurdish identity or political conditions of Kurds was an enough reason for imprisonment, torture, and extra judicial killing by the Turkish authorities (Marcus, 2007: 85-113).<sup>52</sup> In such an environment of repression, Kurdish activists believed that they had no room to operate, and therefore, many of them decided to join the PKK guerrilla in the mountains.

The PKK also took advantage of the antagonistic relationship between Turkey and Syria. Following the coup of 1980 in Turkey, the PKK leadership chaired by Abdullah Ocalan fled from Turkey to Syria. Certain longstanding political matters, which impacted the Syrian-Turkish relations, encouraged the PKK leadership to believe that the Syrian regime of Hafiz Al-Assad would support the PKK against Turkey. The disapproval of the Syrian governments of annexing the province of Alexandretta (in Arabic: *Iskenderun*, and *Hatay*: in Turkish) to Turkey was a major political matter between Syria and Turkey. Alexandretta was part of the French mandate over Syria, but it was relinquished to Turkey by France in 1939 (McDowall, 2007: 480). Another matter which crippled the Turkish-Syrian relations was related to the

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<sup>52</sup> Casier (2011b: 513) stated that following the 1980 military coup “hundreds of thousands of political prisoners were incarcerated, with leftist and Kurdish activists in particular targeted”.

Turkish policies regarding the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris, which cross Syria and have been major sources of irrigation and electricity. In particular, Syria was worried about the Turkey plans of building more dams over the rivers, which eventually deprived Syria from considerable amounts of the Tigris and Euphrates water (Marcus, 2007: 60; McDowall, 2007: 480). The Syrian regime also concerned over a security matter related to the support of Turkey for the Syrian opposition group of Muslim Brotherhood (Marcus, 2007: 60).<sup>53</sup>

### **Response of the Turkish governments to the PKK rebellion**

The PKK was dubbed by the Turkish authorities and media as “bunch of bandits” when it started its armed action on 15 August 1984 (Ozcan, 2006: 73). As stated earlier, the label of ‘bandits’ was used against the Kurdish rebels during the Ottoman empire and following the establishment of the republic of Turkey. In the early stage of conflict, the Turkish governments resorted to “Counter-Guerrilla” special forces in order to deal with the guerrilla tactics of the PKK (Ganser, 2005: 240). The Counter-Guerrilla operations intensified gradually and became systemic policies of the Turkish state in the Kurdish areas. Later, the name of Counter-Guerrilla special forces was changed to be Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terror Unit (in Turkish: *Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terorle Mücadele*, JITEM), which conducted its military actions in coordination with the Special Warfare Department (in Turkish: *Özel Harp Dairesi*, OHD) (Kaya, 2009: 103; Taş, 2014: 173). The latter was replaced in 1992 with the Special Forces Command (Global Security, 2016c). These special forces acted jointly with both the paramilitary village guards (in Turkish: *Korucular*) and the other divisions of Turkish Military (Kaya, 2009: 103; Taş, 2014: 173).

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<sup>53</sup> Other concerns of the Syrian regime were considered such as the NATO membership of Turkey, and its alliance with Israel.

Changing the name of the special forces of ‘Counter-Guerrilla’ to ‘Counter-Terror’ was influenced by the NATO discourse of counter-terrorism. In particular, the label ‘terrorist’ was mainly used by the major member of NATO, the US against certain leftist and national liberation movements (Blakeley, 2009: 12-24; Jackson *et al.*, 2011: 36 & 191). The Turkish governments found that labelling the PKK as ‘terrorists’ instead of ‘bandits’ matches the NATO and US discourse of counter-terrorism and their policies. The Turkish governments and media also employed the counter-terrorism discourse to excuse the disproportionate usage of force, which has become commonplace in the Kurdish region.

This resulted in crimes against humanity including acts of assassinations, extrajudicial executions, mass detentions, torture, and forced displacement of Kurds. Pro-Turkish sources have usually attributed such violations to the PKK. In many cases, the Turkish governments and media attributed acts of assassination and extrajudicial execution against Kurdish activists and civilians to unknown perpetrators or even to the PKK (Gunter, 2008: 112; MEJ, 2012: 532; Today’s Zaman, 23 January, 2012). However, this contradicts with the fact that the conflict has occurred in the Kurdish region, and accordingly, the majority of the violent acts have been perpetrated against Kurds although a considerable number of Turkish soldiers and security forces are among the casualties of conflict. The conflict also left the Kurdish rural areas of Turkey devastated. In addition, the cross-border operations of the Turkish army against the PKK damaged the rural areas of the Kurdish region of Iraq near the border of Turkey. Several reports by human rights organizations estimated that about 3000 villages and hamlets in the Kurdish region of Turkey were destroyed and evacuated by the Turkish forces (HRW 1994; Jongerden, 2007: xxi; Yildiz & Breau, 2010).<sup>54</sup> Gunter (2008: 6) estimated that about 3 million

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<sup>54</sup> See also Jongerden (2007: 66-80), and ICG, September, 2012.

Kurds were forcibly evacuated by the Turkish forces from their houses and driven out of their villages and towns.

### **The Turkish judicial measures against the PKK and Kurdish activists**

In addition to military measures, the Turkish governments adopted judicial measures against the PKK and Kurdish activists. The Turkish laws and constitutions have made barriers and punished the expression of Kurdish identity. Articles 14, 26, 27, and 28 of the Turkish constitution of 1982 considered any reference to the Kurdish identity as a threat to the national security of Turkey (Gunter, 2008: 99). Even using the word ‘Kurd’ was a taboo in Turkey. Although the Turkish constitutions and laws considered any reference to the Kurdish identity as a criminal act, they avoided stating the word of ‘Kurd’. Instead, they used phrases such as “anyone who publicly denigrates Turkishness”, which was considered as an offence according to article 301 of Turkish penal code of 2004 (DTF, 2008).<sup>55</sup> This article was widely interpreted against any kind of verbal or written criticism of the Turkish discrimination against Kurds.<sup>56 57</sup> Another example of punishing the expression of Kurdish identity without reference to the term ‘Kurd’ is article 312, which states that “provoking hatred or animosity between groups of different race, religion, region or social class” is punished with imprisonment (Gunter, 2008: 6).<sup>58</sup> In 1995 the prominent Kurdish writer, Yasar Kamal and the American Journalist of Reuters news agency, Aliza Marcus were charged separately according to this article because

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<sup>55</sup> Article 301 is referred to as article 299 in another document of the Turkish criminal code of 29 September 2004, which was published on 12 October, 2005. See (UNODC, 2005).

<sup>56</sup> . This article also targeted activists, writers, and intellectuals who expressed critical views regarding the violations of Ottoman or Turkish authorities against non-Turkish ethnicities and non-Sunni religious groups. This article was used against the Armenian activist Hrant Dink who was assassinated later, reportedly by ultranationalist Turks, because of his writing about the Armenian massacres by the Ottoman authorities (BBC, 17 January, 2012; BBC Monitoring, 23 January, 2012)

<sup>57</sup> Dink was allegedly assassinated by by ultranationalist Turks who had previously threatened him for his writings about the massacres of Armenians by the Ottomans.

<sup>58</sup> The number of this article changed to be 216 in the amended law. See (UNODC, 2005).

of their writings about the Kurdish problem (Gunter, 2008: 97; Marcus, 2007: 351; Meho, 1997: 206).

Turkey also adopted in 1991 its anti-terror law, which targeted specifically both the sympathizers of the PKK and other Kurdish activists. This law was adopted as the PKK attained considerable military and organizational advances and created a security dilemma for Turkey at the beginning of 1990s (Ozcan, 2006: 175-176). This law was also used by the Turkish government as a tool to face the growth of the Kurdish nationalism at the beginning of 1990s, and to suppress any kind of Kurdish activism. Article 8 of the 1991 anti-terror law stated that “written and oral propaganda and assemblies, meetings and demonstrations aimed at damaging the indivisible unity of the Turkish Republic with its territory and nation are forbidden, regardless of the methods, intentions and ideas behind such activities” (UNODC, 1991). Accordingly, any kind of expression of the Kurdish identity violated this article which was widely interpreted against Kurds and their sympathizers.

The anti-terror law was amended in 2003, 2006 and 2010 as part of the democratic reforms of the AKP government.<sup>59</sup> However, the last amendments were not enough to assure the right of Kurds to express their identity. The law enabled interpreting any kind of Kurdish activity as part of the ‘propaganda of terrorist organization’. According to the abstracted articles of law any idea related to Kurdish nationalism or even to protesting the disproportionate usage of force in the Kurdish areas might be interpreted as part of the ‘propaganda of terrorist organization’. This is because such ideas are also propagandized for by the PKK, which is considered as the main terrorist organization by the Turkish official establishments. Gunter

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<sup>59</sup> See the Anti-Terror Law and its amendments named as ‘Law on Fight Against Terrorism’ on Legislationline.org: <http://www.legislationline.org/topics/country/50/topic/5> [accessed: 15 June 2014].



(2008: 98-99) argues that in spite of the amendments, the law remained a barrier to the freedom of expression, and particularly the law kept targeting Kurds and punishing the expression of any idea contrary to the official ideology of Turkish state regarding the Kurdish question.

### **The abduction of Ocalan and the EU stance**

In the middle of September, 1998 Turkey massed its troops close to the Syria border threatening the Syrian president Al-Assad that it would launch a military operation against Syria if Al-Assad did not expel Ocalan from Syria (Gunter, 2008: 59; Marcus, 2007: 270). Under the Turkish pressure the Syrian government informed Ocalan that he had to leave Syria (Marcus, 2007: 217). On 9 October, 1998 Ocalan left seeking refuge in Europe (Marcus, 2007: 272). Although Ocalan entered each of Greece, Russia, and Italy seeking asylum, his request was refused by the governments of these countries (Gunter, 2008:60). Finally, in mysterious conditions Ocalan was advised by Greek officials to travel to Africa where they would help him to find a country to accept him, and after few days of staying in the Greek embassy in Kenya he was forcibly handed to the Turkish intelligence on 16 February 1999 (Gunter, 2008: 60; Marcus, 2007: 278-279). The abduction of Ocalan led to mass demonstrations and protests by the Kurds in home countries and the diaspora (Ozcan, 2006: 13-14).

Following the capture of Ocalan, he was sentenced to death for treason by the Turkish court (BBC, 29 June, 1999).<sup>60</sup> Before and during the trial, the Turkish government treated Ocalan as a criminal who was responsible for the death of thousands, but not as a leader of an armed movement which was engaged in a conflict. The majority of references of Turkish politicians

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<sup>60</sup> See also: CNN. (8 June, 1999). Turkish prosecutors rest case, demand that Ocalan hang. *CNN*. [online]. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/meast/9906/08/ocalan.01/> [access: 10 August, 2012].

and media regarding Ocalan made him directly responsible for the killing of 30-35 thousand people. The Turkish government and media avoided any description for the conditions of armed conflict between the Turkish forces and the PKK, which led to such number of casualties. The Turkish governments and media actually made no reference to the armed conflict, but they merely accused Ocalan and the PKK with the acts of killing this number of victims. This accusation was even considered as taken for granted by the Turkish court (BBC, 17 February, 1999; CNN, 8 June, 1999). This is although the accusation was propagandized for by the Turkish governments and media before the abduction of Ocalan. For example, the Turkish prime-minister Mesut Yilmaz called in November, 1998 the Italian government to extradite Ocalan and accused him of the killing of 30000 people (BBC, 14 November, 1998). The Turkish court actually adopted the accusation without investigation and without admitting proper legal representation and defence for Ocalan or for the Kurdish victims. On 12 March 2003 the Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights described the trial and treatment of Ocalan as “unfair trial” and “inhuman treatment” and that this violated article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (Clapham, 2003).<sup>61</sup>

The death penalty against Ocalan was not carried out by the Turkish government and was changed to life imprisonment in 2002. Gunter (2008: 64: 81-84) argues that changing the sentence was due to the pressure of the EU who warned Turkey that it might lose its chance of EU membership as the death penalty contradicted with the European laws and constitution (Gunter, 2008: 64: 81-84). The Turkish statesmen were also worried about the potential domestic consequences of executing Ocalan, which could inspire more sympathy by the Kurds towards the PKK, and this would lead to wider Kurdish rebellious action. The PKK already

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<sup>61</sup> Andrew Clapham is Professor of Public International Law, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva.

warned that if the Turkish authorities executed Ocalan, it would wage a “total war” against Turkey (quoted in Peterson, 30 June 1999). Moreover, the Turkish authorities considered that keeping Ocalan in prison could serve not only in avoiding such a Kurdish action but also in creating rifts and weakness in the PKK. This assumption was built on Ocalan’s call to the PKK militants to withdraw from Turkey (Balta-Paker, 2005; Strategic Comments, 2007). In addition, Ocalan himself participated in creating the assumption that he would serve ending the rebellion.<sup>62</sup> During his trial, Ocalan stated that “you can hang me if you like but let me solve the Kurdish problem first. You cannot do it without me” (quoted in BBC, 2 June 1999).

During and following the trial of Ocalan, the EU encouraged Turkey to conduct reforms in the fields of democracy and human rights. The EU also accepted Turkey as a candidate for the membership in December, 1999 (Castle, 11 December, 1999). Avci (2005: 132-137) argues that the decision of EU paved the ground for both public support and enthusiasm of several Turkish statesmen. However, Turkey accession to the EU was conditioned to fulfil the ‘Copenhagen Criteria’, which consist of certain political and economic developments introduced by the EU in 1993 and 1995 (Eur-Lex, 2016). To meet the political criteria Turkey was required to conduct certain reforms in the fields of democracy and human rights. Although the EU encouraged Turkey to conduct the reforms, the Turkish authorities conducted modest reforms related to the Kurds. Even these reforms remained inactive. In the light of the Copenhagen Criteria, academic and former Austrian diplomat, Hochleitner (2005) studied Turkey’s claimed reforms regarding the Kurds. Hochleitner (2005) argues that the claimed

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<sup>62</sup> See also Akinci, B. (24 June, 1999).

reforms remained mostly on paper and did not reflect the actual practices of Turkish authorities.<sup>63 64</sup>

Although the EU was in the middle of encouraging Turkey to conduct reforms related to the Kurds, the EU Council announced on 3 May 2002 the designation of the PKK as a terrorist organization (Casier, 2010: 10-11; EC, 3 May 2002). The decision of the EU Council to designate the PKK as a terrorist organization came when the rhetoric of insecurity that prevailed following the 11 September 2001 attacks of Al-Qaeda. In particular, the Bush doctrine of 'War on Terror' and the ensuing cooperative measures of security and counter-terrorism by NATO members influenced the decision of the EU authorities to designate the PKK. Yildiz and Breau (2010: 150) argue that the pressure of the US played a main role in the EU decision. The Bush administration was considering the importance of Turkey in the ongoing war against Al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan and the prospected invasion of Iraq, which turned to a reality in 2003.

The decision of the EU Council to designate the PKK as a terrorist organization had negative impacts on efforts of ending the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and encouraging democratic reforms in Turkey. The decision was taken, while the EU was demanding peaceful solution for the Kurdish question in Turkey as part of its commitment to empowering democracy in Turkey (Casier, 2010). However, the decision of the EU encouraged Turkey to continue its repressive policies against the Kurds (Yildiz & Breau: 2010). In addition, the decision impacted the perceptions of ending the Turkish-Kurdish conflict through negotiations. Casier (2010: 12-13)

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<sup>63</sup> Hochleitner (2005) also highlighted that the Turkish authorities continued to expose the Kurds to violations of human rights.

<sup>64</sup> Erich Hochleitner is a former Austrian diplomat, and he holds the degree Juris Doctor in Law. See more on *Australian Institute for European and Security Policy (AID)*. Link: <https://www.aies.at/english/aies/staff/hochleitner.php> [accessed: 20 August, 2016].

argues that the decision impacted on the trust of Kurdish leadership and PKK in the EU intention and efforts of encouraging Turkey to conduct democratic reforms.

The decision of the EU Council did not depend on adequate measures related to the characteristics and amount of violence perpetrated during the conflict. This is because the EU did not send for such a purpose any delegations to study the field of conflict and the actions of both parties including the PKK and the Turkish forces, but it mainly depended on the accounts of the Turkish authorities which represent one party of the conflict. In 2008, the EU Court of First Instance (CFI) ruled against the decision of designating the PKK as a terrorist organization by the EU Council (Mahoney, 2008; Reuters, April 2008). The court argued that the EU Council did not provide proper justification for the designation. However, the EU Council maintained its position and continued labelling the PKK as a terrorist organization. In their paper at the Congress of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, Fermon *et al.*, (2005: 4) argue that such designation has been used as a stigma to demonize the PKK, and that this had no relation to the fight against terrorism. They argue that the decision did not consider that the PKK character as national liberation movement which is engaged in an armed conflict against the Turkish government, and therefore, such a decision would not help in ending the conflict.

## ***Section II: Background of the AKP and its Kurdish approach***<sup>65</sup>

The recognition of the Kurdish question, and accordingly, the political characteristic of Turkish-Kurdish conflict as a political issue remained a taboo during the Ecevit government. However, as the AKP came to power in 2002 a different approach took place. The AKP approach breached the taboo and considered the conflict as a political matter, which needed a

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<sup>65</sup> AKP, in Turkish: *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, and in English: Justice and Development Party.

peaceful solution although the AKP authorities continued to name the conflict as ‘terrorism’ by the PKK. This approach of AKP authorities was not limited to the PKK but it extended to other Kurdish parties including the civic Kurdish parties in Turkey and the Syrian Kurdish PYD and YPG. This research uses the terms ‘AKP authorities’ or ‘AKP leadership’ to indicate the AKP high-ranking officials of the Turkish prime-ministry and presidency. Accordingly, the research concentrates on the official discourse of Turkey which is produced or reproduced during the rule of AKP. The latter has been dominated by the doctrine of the AKP chairman Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The AKP was established in 2001 and has governed Turkey since 2002 (BBC, 21 July, 2016; Encyclopædia Britannica, 2015). Erdogan served as the prime-minister of Turkey from 2003 until 2014 when he was elected as the president of Turkey succeeding his fellow AKP leadership member Abdullah Gul (Letsch, 10 August, 2014). Erdogan was formally chairing AKP until he was elected as the president of Turkey. However, Erdogan continued to act as the chairman of AKP even during his presidency (BBC, 21 July, 2016). Following his election as the president of Turkey, Erdogan had to resign partisan affiliation as this is stipulated in Article 101 of the Turkish constitution.<sup>66</sup> Erdogan formally stepped down from chairing AKP, and Ahmet Davutoglu was elected as the new chairman. However, Erdogan maintained his powerful influence over AKP, and acted as its de-facto chairman.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Article 101 of the Turkish constitution states that “if the President-elect is a member of a party, his/her relationship with his party shall be severed and his/her membership of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey shall cease”. See: The Grand National Assembly of Turkey. (n.d.). Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. *The Grand National Assembly of Turkey*. [online]. Available at: [https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution\\_en.pdf](https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf) [accessed: 10 August 2014].

<sup>67</sup> Erdogan’s desire to keep the AKP leadership and his influence over the party are discerned in many of his speeches and statements. For example, during the ceremonies of appointing Davutoglu as the chairman of the AKP, Erdogan stated that “I’m sure you see how hard it is for me to leave. I’ve seen the tears of brothers, sisters. The AK Parti is like my child” (Hurriyet Daily News, 27 August, 2014). In addition, during the campaign of 2015 elections Erdogan propagandized for AKP although his action was a breach to the Turkish constitution. Many international sources described Erdogan as an authoritarian leader who admires Ottoman Sultans and who has the ambition to have Sultan power in Turkey (Gagnon, 5 June, 2013; Idiz, 2012; Tisdall, 24 October, 2012).

In addition to his action as the actual leader of AKP throughout the period that the research covers, Erdogan produced more detailed speeches and statements regarding the Kurds than any other Turkish official. In addition, Erdogan acted as the mastermind of the AKP policies regarding the Kurds. Therefore, the research focuses on many of his speeches and statements. In order to discuss the background of the opening approach of AKP authorities regarding the Kurdish question, it is important to put a light on the ideology of AKP.

### **Ideology of the AKP**

AKP's ideology grew out of the remnants of its predecessor Islamist Turkish parties including Welfare party (in Turkish: *Refah Partisi*, RP) and Virtue party (in Turkish: *Fazilat Partisi*, FP) (Hale & Ozbudun, 2010: 1-19). The RP coalition government was forced to dissolve by the military in 1997 and the party was banned in 1998 by the Turkish court (BBC, 2 September, 2013). FP was also banned by the Turkish court in 2001 (BBC, 22 June, 2001). Subsequently, in 2001 AKP was founded by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Abdullah Gul, Bulent Arinc and others (Erken, 2013: 183). Many of the founders of AKP were former members of RP and FP. The AKP describes its ideological doctrine as 'conservative democracy'. Some Turkish scholars like Hale and Ozbudun (2010:22) argue that AKP ideology is moderate and democratic, and they named the AKP doctrine as "passive secularism". Hale and Ozbudun (2010) argue that the foundations of AKP were transformed by the modernist wing in the RP who supported the adoption of more moderate doctrine which accepts the secular principles of governing. They also highlighted that the AKP support the Free Market economy.

This is although the religious leaning is more dominant in the rhetoric of AKP leadership.<sup>68</sup> In particular, this has dominated the statements and speeches of Erdogan since the 1990s. Hale and Ozbudun (2010) overlooked such rhetoric of Erdogan although their work includes quotes from Erdogan statements in which he expressed his obligation to non-secular Islam. For example, Erdogan stated that “my reference is to Islam”; ‘democracy is not an aim, but a means’; ‘the system we want to introduce cannot be contrary to God’s commands’; ‘human beings cannot be secular’” (quoted in Hale & Ozbudun, 2010: 9). Erdogan was actually sued by the Turkish court for a religious statement, which the court considered as extreme to the extent of inciting public hatred (BBC, 4 November, 2002; Hurriyet Daily News, 27 March, 1999). The statement was part of Erdogan 1997 speech in Siirt in which he read a poem by Ziya Gokalp that “our minarets are our bayonets, our domes are our helmets, our mosques are our barracks” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 27 March, 1999).<sup>69</sup> This is although the AKP ideology is not similar to these of fundamental Islamist movements that call for adopting Sharia Law. Still, many statements of AKP officials defend Islam as the religion of society, value Ottoman legacy, and defend Sunni Islamist movements abroad. In particular, the AKP has supported the Islamist movements of Muslim brotherhood and others in Egypt, Syria, Libya and other countries.

The ideology of AKP mainly glorifies the legacy of Ottoman empire. Erdogan has pioneered the position of defending this legacy, and he has even called for reviving it. For example, Erken (2013: 184) quoted Erdogan statement in 2012 that “presiding over the heritage of our ancestors, the Ottoman state that ruled the world for 600 years, we would revive the Ottoman consciousness again”. The AKP rhetoric about the Ottoman legacy shows dissatisfaction for the demise of empire which was replaced later by the republic of Turkey. For example, in the

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<sup>68</sup> Nardelli, *et al.*, (2015) describe AKP as Islamic-conservative.

<sup>69</sup> See also Mays, S. (2017) about Erdogan.



2011 *Türk ocakları* conference the then foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu expressed his sadness because of the demise of Ottoman empire which he named as “the political centre of ancient civilization”, that “was torn apart” and “replaced by a new republic founded in 1923 as a nation-state” (quoted in Erken, 2013:184).

The AKP also established relations with many Islamist movements and Muslim Brotherhood parties in the majority Arab countries (Aydin-Düzgit, 2014; Yakis, 2014). Some of these relations were inherited from its predecessor the Welfare Party. The AKP authorities considered the Arab-Spring as an opportunity to impose Turkey’s regional role in the Arab countries. As the regimes of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya were toppled down during the uprisings of Arab-Spring which started in Tunisia in 2010, the AKP government tried to represent itself as “role model” for the new governments of these countries and supported the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist movements of Egypt, Syrian, Tunisia and Libya and hosted many of their meetings (Aydin-Düzgit, 2014; Gurpinar, 2015: 30-32; Yakis, 2014).<sup>70</sup> To achieve its ambitions, the AKP government worked on reviving the spirit of Ottoman heritage among conservative Muslims in the Arab countries. This was through the platforms of Muslim Brotherhood parties and other Islamist groups that have acted as opposition parties in the Arab countries.

This pro-Ottoman legacy and Islamist background of AKP worsened its relations with the Kemalists, who supported the secular principles of Turkey.<sup>71</sup> The disagreement and animosity

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<sup>70</sup> For more information on the Arab Spring events, see Blight, *et al.*, (2012).

<sup>71</sup> Kemalism and Kemalists are term used to denote Turkish establishments, individuals and parties that defended the doctrine of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of Turkey. See more on Kemalism in Hale and Ozbudun (2010) and Burak (2011).

between Kemalists and AKP is deep and goes beyond the era of AKP governing of Turkey to the era of establishing the republic of Turkey in 1923 by the nationalist movement of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who replaced the Ottoman Islamist traditions with pro-secular traditions (Ackerman, 2016). During the 2002-2009, the AKP authorities avoided criticizing Ataturk. Later, as the AKP gained more strength, AKP politicians implied in many occasions that Ataturk movement was a reason for the demise of Ottoman heritage and strength. For example, Erdogan disapproved the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which is celebrated by the Kemalists as this treaty settled the borders of Turkey out of the territories of divided Ottoman empire (BBC, 30 September, 2016; Harris, 2016). Erdogan considered the treaty as a trap by the victorious allies in the World War One who confiscated large Ottoman territories.<sup>72 73</sup>

### **The Kurdish opening**

As the AKP won the Turkish elections of 2002, it started a new approach regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question. In November 2002, the long-term state of emergency was lifted in the Kurdish region of Turkey (BBC, 30 November, 2002). Yegen (2015: 5) argues that this was a ground for a new policy by AKP which he describes as “no repression plus slim recognition”. The new era opened a narrow space for civic Kurdish activities. However, the Turkish authorities avoided to consider the Turkish-Kurdish conflict as a problem that can be solved peacefully until the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, 2005 when Erdogan, the then Turkish prime-minster and chairman of AKP acknowledged the existence of a ‘Kurdish problem’ in Turkey, and that it should be solved through democratic reforms (BBC Monitoring, 10 August, 2005). Erdogan hinted at the need for a peaceful approach to the conflict and highlighting that it was not possible to end it through military means as he stated that “Kurdish problem is not a problem

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<sup>72</sup> See also how CHP Kemalist leader responded to Erdogan disapproval of Kemalists agreement of Lausanne that “we defend republic, they defend caliphate” (Hurriyet Daily News, 30 September, 2016).

<sup>73</sup> See more on the Treaty of Lausanne on Encyclopædia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Lausanne-1923> [accessed: 10 June, 2014].

that may be solved through violence and/or methods disrupting social peace" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 10 August, 2005). This was also the first time since the establishment of the republic of Turkey that a Turkish official referred publicly to the Kurdish problem in Turkey. However, Erdogan used the term 'Kurdish problem' to indicate the problem of the 'armed conflict' and its solution through peaceful methods and reforms, and it was not about recognizing the Kurdish question. This is because the Kurdish question is a reference to the existence of the Kurdish nation in Turkey, and this contradicts with the constitutional principle of 'indivisibility' of Turkey, which emphasized on the territorial integrity of Turkey and its national identity. Even during the peace process, Erdogan and the other Turkish officials denied the existence of the Kurdish question, and they referred instead to 'problems of Kurds' which mainly consisted of terrorism and underdevelopment. This is elaborated in chapter 7.

Although the PKK welcomed Erdogan's statement and called for negotiations, the AKP leadership rejected the PKK offer. The PKK leadership stated that Erdogan's statement "created a positive atmosphere for a resolution" (quoted in Smith, August, 2005), then the PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire. Nonetheless, the Turkish authorities refused to talk to the PKK. This is although Erdogan and the AKP carried on propagandizing for their goal of conducting the democratic reforms required to join the EU (Balta-Paker, 2005). The suggested reforms included among others the recognition of mother tongue and limited cultural rights, which were related to the Kurds.

Two main factors made the AKP leadership not willing to conduct negotiations with the PKK following the 2005 statement of Erdogan. First, the AKP was worried about the reaction of Turkish military led by the Kemalist military officials who showed dissatisfaction towards the statement of Erdogan in which he referred to the Kurdish problem. During the August 2008

meeting of the Turkish National Security Council (in Turkish: *Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*, MGK) the military members of MGK requested Erdogan to explain his statement about the Kurdish problem. They asked Erdogan “what exactly does he mean by the Kurdish problem, what kind of a plan does he have for its resolution, and what does he mean by a democratic republic?” (quoted in Ozcan, 2007: 47). In addition, the military officials insisted on including the Kemalist principles of the indivisibility and secular characteristics of Turkey in article 2 of the declaration of the MGK meeting. Military members of MGK also warned the AKP not to take “extraconstitutional” actions (Rubin, 2007: 6). This implied that the military would not accept any action related to the recognition of the Kurds as a nation in Turkey. In addition, military chief of staff, General Hilmi Ozkok asserted that the Turkish military would continue fighting the PKK and disregarded the PKK announcement of ceasefire. Ozkok stated that “the aim of the Turkish armed forces is to ensure that the separatist terrorist organization bows down to the law and the mercy of the nation” (quoted in Balta-Paker, 2005).<sup>74</sup>

Second, the AKP had the concern that it would lose its public support among the Turkish electors if it carried out any negotiations with the PKK before the 2007 elections. This is because the opposition Kemalist parties of CHP and MHP used anti-PKK nationalist discourse to propagandized against Erdogan and AKP.<sup>75</sup> In particular, they used this discourse as a tool to both undermine the public credibility of AKP and to gain more voices in the elections (Kirişci, 2007: 8). This is discerned in many statements in which CHP and MHP voiced publicly against Erdogan’s approach regarding the Kurds. CHP and MHP even described Erdogan’s usage of the term ‘Kurdish problem’ as “treason” against the indivisibility and the

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<sup>74</sup> The term “separatist terrorist organization” is usually used in the Turkish official discourse as a reference to the PKK.

<sup>75</sup> The Republican People's Party (in Turkish: *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP), and The Nationalist Movement Party (in Turkish: *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP).

Turkish identity of Turkey (The Economist, 2005; Caldwell, 2005).<sup>76</sup> The chairman of MHP, Devlet Bahçeli even went further to criticize the democratic reforms that were suggested by the EU as he claimed that these reforms were an indirect support to the PKK by the EU (BBC Monitoring, 2005, 29 August; IPR, 30 August, 2005).

Under the pressure of Turkish military generals and opposition, Erdogan government announced in February 2008 a military operation against the PKK bases in the Qandil mountainous areas of Iraqi Kurdistan (Attewill, 2008: BBC, 26 February, 2008; Kirişci, 2007: 8). The Turkish government announced this operation although the PKK repeated its call for the Turkish government to conduct negotiations. The last call was in November 2007 in which the PKK leadership stated that it is “open to dialogue on starting a process that would totally exclude weapons, based on a political project” (quoted in Edmonton Journal, 10 November, 2007). The Turkish military generals claimed that the 2008 military operation would crush the PKK (BBC, 26 February, 2008; ICG, 2008: 8-10). However, the operation was not able to achieve its goal of crushing the PKK as the military generals promised (BBC Monitoring, 5 March 2008, 16 October, 2008; ICG, 2008: 8-10).

It was only at the end of 2008 when the Turkish government launched secret talks with the PKK leadership. The Turkish negotiations with the PKK were conducted by high-ranking officials of Turkish intelligence service (in Turkish: *Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, MIT) headed by its undersecretary, Emre Taner who was succeeded by Hakan Fidan (Hurriyet Daily News, 13 September, 2011; Kutschera, 2012). The MIT-PKK secret talks were conducted in two different places. The MIT undersecretary was in talks with Ocalan in the Turkish prison of

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<sup>76</sup> See: The Grand National Assembly of Turkey. (n.d.). Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. *The Grand National Assembly of Turkey*. [online]. Available at: [https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution\\_en.pdf](https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf) [accessed: 10 August 2014].

Imrali (Hess, January, 2013; Hurriyet Daily News, 13 September 2011; Kutschera, 2012). The MIT undersecretary was also chairing the Turkish delegation in the talks with the representatives of PKK in Oslo, Norway (Hurriyet Daily News, 13 September 2011; Kutschera, 2012)<sup>77</sup>. However, these talks were disrupted in 2011 and both parties resumed armed hostilities (Kutschera, 2012). Two main purposes were behind limiting the secret talks with the PKK to the MIT institution. First, to keep the information about the talks classified by the MIT, which is the institution that was more capable than any other state institution to do so. Second, to justify the talks as part of the MIT authority of serving the security of the state against terrorism. This in case of leaking the information about the talks to the public. This is what actually Erdogan claimed when some information about the talks were leaked to the media in 2011 (BBC Monitoring, 16 September, 2011; Hurriyet Daily News, 13 September, 2011).

As the negotiations were going on secretly, Erdogan started in 2009 to pave the ground for attaining the public acceptance to end the conflict through negotiations. Accordingly, Erdogan carried on describing the conflict as a counterproductive choice that would only lead to more pains for the families of Turkish soldiers. Erdogan During the 30 August 2009 celebration of Turkish national day stated that “this pain should stop without delay.’ Everyone wants the bloodshed and the tears to stop. Everyone wants mothers to stop crying woefully. Everyone wants children to stop dying and getting killed and coming back in martyrs' coffins wrapped in a crescent-and-star flag” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 31 August, 2009). This kind of negative description for the armed action was repeated in other statements and speeches of Erdogan (BBC, 19 November, 2009). Erdogan also encouraged the return of PKK members to Turkey. For example, in 2009 a group of PKK activists who were named by the PKK as “peace ambassadors” returned to Turkey following the amnesty promises of Erdogan and AKP

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<sup>77</sup> See more in Dombey, D. (February, 2012), Hess, J. (January, 2013), and Freedom House. (2013).

government (Al-Jazeera, October 2009). Erdogan described the return of this group as "very positive and pleasing development", and he called the other members of PKK to return to "return to their country without losing time" (quoted in Al-Jazeera, October 2009). Nevertheless, Erdogan and AKP leadership approach remained vague as they carried on describing the PKK as terrorist organization and considered the return of PKK members as surrender, while the PKK and Kurdish activists described them as ambassadors of peace.

The AKP authorities also announced in 2009 its "Kurdish opening" approach or "Kurdish overture" (The Economist, August, 2009; Yegen, 2015: 6). This was accompanied with reforms related to removing the restrictions over using the Kurdish language and limited cultural activities. These reforms initially presented in November, 2009 to the parliament as a package of democratic reforms by the Turkish interior minister, Besir Atalay. During the session of the parliament Atalay connected the reforms to the principles of justice and equality that all Turkey citizens should enjoy although he avoided any reference to the terms 'Kurd' or 'Kurdish problem'. Atalay stated that "we should never forget that behind all our problems lies injustice" and added that "we want everyone in this country to be treated equally" (quoted in BBC, 13 November, 2009). Although some of the reforms of the package were already requested by the EU as part of the democratic reforms, the AKP authorities considered them as part of the Kurdish opening (Yegen, 2015; The Turkey Analyst, October, 2009). The reforms also warranted launching TRT6, which was the first Kurdish language TV channel sponsored by the government.

The Kurdish opening approach of the AKP aimed at serving the AKP agendas regarding both limiting the role of military and gaining votes in the elections and changing the constitution. Although the ambition of joining the EU influenced certain democratic reforms, the AKP

leadership agendas regarding ‘the elections, new constitution and the role of military’ played significant role in its Kurdish opening approach.<sup>78</sup> These agendas of the AKP are explained in the following two sections.

### **The AKP agendas regarding the role of military**

Powerful role of the military in Turkey and the long-term militarization of the Kurdish problem constituted an important factor that encouraged the AKP to search for a non-military solution for the problem. Viewing the Kurdish question only as a security matter dealt with through military force maintained the taboo on discussing any peaceful solution. The extensive special military and security measures under the conditions of martial law and state of emergency, which were applied in the Kurdish region since the 1925 rebellion strengthened the political authority of the Turkish military.<sup>79</sup> The power of military was maintained by the state establishments, which were dominated by the Kemalists who considered themselves as the guardians of the indivisibility of Turkey and its Kemalist principles of nationalist-secularism (Burak, 2011: 146). Through the MGK,<sup>80</sup> the military generals practiced a powerful role in the political life of Turkey (Gunter, 2008: 109-111; Özcan, 2007: 42-43). MGK, which was dominated by the military officials practiced its power as the body responsible for the national security of Turkey. Gunter (2008: 109) argues that “the MGK often served as the ultimate source of authority in Turkey”.

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<sup>78</sup> As explained earlier, the military and opposition parties were the major obstacle that prevented the AKP authorities from such negotiations with the PKK before the 2007 elections. However, as the AKP won the 2007 elections and as the Turkish military failed to crush the PKK in its 2008 operation, the AKP was more confident to recognize the political characteristic of the conflict. On the other hand, the military and opposition parties were losing power although they remained the major concern of AKP leadership. To keep their strength in the parliament and to succeed in changing the constitution, the AKP leadership wanted to bring the Kurds to its side. The AKP leadership needed the Kurds to support them in their future battles against the Kemalists in both the elections and in any referendum or polls for changing the constitution. The AKP leadership was also considering any political solution for the Kurdish problem as a blow to the role of military generals and for the Kemalists who for long term militarized the Kurdish question.

<sup>79</sup> For more on martial law and state of emergency in the Kurdish region of Turkey see: Yildiz & Muller (2008: 15-16), and Yildiz (2005: 45).

<sup>80</sup> National Security Council (in Turkish: *Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*, MGK)



The AKP leadership considered the powerful military generals as a threat to both its rule and survival. The AKP leadership was worried about any possible coup by the military and was searching for provisions to overcome such a possibility. The Turkish military had already conducted four military coups between 1960-1997 (Heavens & Yackley, July 2016). The last one was against the coalition government led by the pro-Islamist Welfare Party (BBC Monitoring, 16 April, 2012; Heavens & Yackley, July 2016).<sup>81</sup>

In 2007 these fears were higher as the AKP government uncovered the clandestine network of ‘Ergenekon’, which according to the accounts the AKP authorities was planning for a military coup (Hurriyet, 11 January, 2009). The information about arresting many members of the Ergenekon were surfaced to the media in 2007.<sup>82</sup> The majority of those arrested were military officials. Hundreds of suspects including high ranking military officials were sued for alleged links to Ergenekon (Tavernise & Arsu, October, 2008; Ünver, 2009: 9-10).<sup>83</sup> Among the suspects was the former military chief, Ilker Basbug (The Economist, 2 February, 2013).<sup>84</sup> The information about the network were exposed during the tension between the AKP government and military following the 2007 elections as the AKP won the elections and nominated Abdullah Gul for the presidency of Turkey (De-Bellaigue, 2007). The then military chief of

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<sup>81</sup> See also: BBC Monitoring. (28 February, 2013). Top commanders of 1997 coup arrested in probe in turkey. BBC Monitoring European. *ProQuest*. [online]. Available at: <http://search.proquest.com.brad.idm.oclc.org/docview/1312790831?accountid=17193> [accessed: 20 June 2013].

<sup>82</sup> Ünver (2009) highlighted the role of military in Ergenekon and connected it to the Turkish Deep State, which was established since the cold war. Ünver (2009) even returned it back to the groups that were established clandestinely during the two last decades of Ottoman empire. For more on Ergenekon and the Turkish Deep State see: Ünver, H. A. (2009). Turkey’s “Deep-State” and the Ergenekon Conundrum. The Middle East Institute: Policy Brief. No. 23. [online]. Available at: <http://www.mei.edu/content/turkeys-deep-state-and-ergenekon-conundrum> [accessed: 10 September, 2014].

<sup>84</sup> See more about the Ergenekon network and Turkish Deep State on Kaya, S. (2009), Taş H. (2014), and Radikal. (12 August, 2008).

staff reacted to the AKP victory and stated that “there were secret plans being developed to undermine secularism in Turkey and divide up the country” (quoted in Kirişci, 2007: 30).

The AKP leadership was struggling to limit the influence of military in the political life of Turkey. The AKP struggle to limit the power of military was underway since 2003 and was supported by the EU proposed democratic reforms. The Turkish ambition to join the EU, and the EU demanded reforms played a significant role in limiting the role of military in the political life of Turkey. Among other reforms, the EU required limiting the influence of military in the political life of Turkey (Bac, 2005, 20; Gunter, 2008: 109).

The AKP reforms mainly targeted the domination of military officials in the MGK and minimized their influence in the judicial system. The taboo on discussing the role of military was already breached during the Ecevit government who made few regulations regarding the role of military in the MGK in 20001 (Ozcan, 2007: 43-49). Although these amendments were nominal, they paved the ground for the later significant adjustments by the AKP, which gradually changed the characteristics of MGK and considerably limited the role of military officials in the MGK. The major changes in the characteristics of MGK were made by the AKP authorities during the years 2003-2005 (Gunter, 2008: 111; Ozcan, 2007: 44). Balta-Paker (2005) stated that MGK was transformed from “the main institution of army influence” to become “a purely advisory body”. The AKP also abolished the State Security Courts in 2004, which were under the influence of military officials (Bac, 2005: 21 & 26). The steps of abolishing these courts by the AKP authorities preceded by the Ecevit government step of changing the shape of the State Security Court in Ocalan trial in 1999. State Security Courts had three judges including two civilian and one military. However, the Ecevit government replaced the military judge with a civilian judge during the trial of Ocalan (Bac, 2005: 29).

As part of its struggle to limit the role of military, the AKP leadership considered limiting the leverage of military over Kurdish problem. As discussed earlier the military power had a relationship with the militarization of the Kurdish question. Therefore, the AKP leadership considered searching for a non-military solution to end the conflict. The failure of Turkish military in its 2008 operation against the PKK in Iraqi Kurdistan created a pressure over the military officials to let the AKP government find a solution for the conflict (Larrabee & Tol, 2011: 145). The AKP leadership already claimed that the problem would be solved through democratic reforms, dissimilarly to the Kemalist approach which considered the Kurdish problem as a security matter that needed to deal with only through military means. Furthermore, the failure of the military operation was an opportunity for the AKP leadership to assert its view that the military was not capable of solving the political problems of Turkey.

### **The AKP agendas regarding the elections and changing the constitution**

As stated earlier, the AKP won the 2007 elections and gained 46.6% of the overall votes (Álvarez-Rivera, 2015). However, for Erdogan and the AKP this did not mean that the battle with Kemalists was over as Erdogan and the AKP had the ambition to rule Turkey for longer term. This was expressed later in the 2012 congress of AKP in which Erdogan propagandized for transforming Turkey to become a developed country in 2023 under the rule of AKP (Hayatsever, 1 October, 2012). However, this vision faced the obstacle that Erdogan would not be able to secure his position as prime-minister to that date as the Turkish laws would not allow him to run the same position for another term (Hacaoglu, 15 June 2012; Pidd, 10 June 2011). Therefore, Erdogan had the motivation to gain the position of the presidency of Turkey in the future. As the presidency position was ceremonial and the president could not exert authority over the government, Erdogan and the AKP propagandized for changing Turkey's ruling system from parliamentary into presidential and described the Turkish system as less functional

because it was “multi-headed” (BYEGM, 23 March, 2015b; TCCB, 27 January, 2016; TRT, 29 January, 2015). This is although the AKP dominated each of the parliament, the government and presidency. However, to change the ruling system of Turkey, there was a need to change the constitution (Hayatsever, 1 October, 2012). Accordingly, the AKP leadership claimed that the Turkish constitution was flawed and undemocratic because it was written by the military junta of 1980, and that there was a need for a “civilian” constitution (Kirişci, 2007: 22). The AKP politicians claimed that they would propose a democratic constitution, which would guarantee the democratic rights of all citizens of Turkey. This was fervently opposed by the Kemalist parties and the high-ranking officials of military.

The Kurds similarly to the AKP claimed that the Turkish constitution was undemocratic and flawed, and they expressed their wish for the constitutional changes that would guarantee their national identity and demands. This is discerned in the statements of the members of the Kurdish legal parties. For example, Akin Birdal, deputy of the Kurdish party of Democratic Society (in Turkish: *Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP) in an interview with Radical newspaper stated that the new constitution would be accepted if it “calls for the coexistence of different cultures in equality and freedom,” and if it says that “each and every citizen is a free and equal citizen” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 14 March, 2008). Similarly, Filiz Kocali the chairman of Socialist Democracy Party asserted the need for a new constitution which recognizes “the Kurds as free and equal partners” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 14 March, 2008).

In order to secure the future support of Kurds in the 2011 elections and changing the constitution, The AKP leadership carried on promising to end the armed conflict through peaceful means and democratic reforms. The minister of interior, Besir Atalay hinted that the AKP had good intentions to end the conflict peacefully as he stated that “we are advancing

towards a solution with a good plan” (quoted in Al-Jazeera, October 2009). Some AKP politicians also implied that the new constitution would solve the Kurdish problem. For example, Sebahattin Cevheri, the AKP Sanliurfa deputy stated in an interview with Radical newspaper that “it is primarily necessary to prepare a truly democratic and pro-freedom constitution in Turkey” Which would help in removing “all the laws that restrict the rights of the Kurds, the Circassians, the Laz, and the other peoples” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 14 March, 2008).

The AKP leadership also used the language of Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood. The researcher used the term *‘brothering discourse’* to denote certain constructions that Erdogan and other AKP politicians used in their speeches and statements, which refer to the Kurds. These constructions are mainly built in Islamist and Ottoman contexts, which assume a positive relationship between the Turks and Kurds. In particular, these constructions aim at creating the assumption that Kurds have positive relation with the AKP. The Brothering discursive constructions usually include terms like ‘brothers, brotherhood and fraternity’. For example, Erdogan stated at the eve of the Kurdish national holiday, Newroz of 21 March, 2007 that “may the seeds of hatred that aim at our brotherhood burn and disappear in the fires that are being lit” (quoted in BBC, 21 March, 2007).<sup>85</sup>

The research argues that three main characters of the AKP encouraged many Kurds to vote for it in the elections including each of its democratic façade, brothering discourse, and promises to end the conflict through nonviolent means. The rhetoric of Erdogan and the AKP was more

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<sup>85</sup> Another example, during the celebration of Turkish national day in 31 August 2009, Erdogan stated that “this is why I say that the essence of this nation is fermented with brotherhood. This nation has lived together for thousands of years. It has worked hard to elevate this homeland with its Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Laz, Abkhazians, Georgians, Arabs, Bosnians, and Albanians. No one, and I mean no one, has the power to spoil our brotherhood that has been built up over thousands of years” “you will never, never be able to shake our brotherhood” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 31 August, 2009).

attractive to the Kurds and their political representatives than those of the CHP and MHP who adhered to the Kemalist- nationalist doctrine, which insisted on the Turkishness of Turkey, and refused the Kurdish identity. Kirişçi (2007: 15) described the Turkish nationalist parties of MHP and CHP as “hard-liners” who “have repeatedly stressed their intention to prevent any reforms that may undermine the unitary nature of the Turkish state and its unitary national identity”. Overall, the positive environment that the Kurdish opening approach of the AKP created paved the ground for the peace process. The latter is discussed in chapter 7 and 8.

## **Conclusion**

The Kurdish question in Turkey and the Turkish- Kurdish conflict are historically rooted and they date to era of Ottoman empire. However, the nationalist policies adopted following the establishment of Turkey as a nation-state exacerbated the relationship between the Kurds and the Turkish state. The repressive policies adopted against the Kurds led to the growth of contemporary Kurdish nationalism. This was shaped by the emergence of the PKK as a modern national movement that managed to continue its rebellion until the date of writing this research. At the beginning of the rebellion, the PKK rebels were named as ‘bandits’ by the Turkish authorities. However, the Turkish authorities later used the label of ‘terrorists’ against them. This matched the usage of the label of ‘terrorist’ by the US and other NATO allies against certain movements. Labelling the PKK as terrorist also shaped the Turkish military and judicial policies, which were conducted under the banner of counter-terrorism.

The Islamist AKP led by Erdogan adopted a new approach regarding the Kurdish problem and this laid the ground for the emergence of a new narrative regarding the Kurdish question in the Turkish political discourse. This was mainly about limited recognition of the Kurdish identity through democratic reforms. However, the new approach was adopted to respond to the

agendas of AKP and Erdogan in two major areas. First, the new approach aimed at limiting the role of powerful military officials who used their approach regarding the Kurdish question as a tool to influence the political life in Turkey. Second, the AKP approach aimed at gaining the Kurdish support in the elections and in changing the constitution. The narrative used by the AKP leadership, which depended on democratic reforms and brotherhood stimulated the Kurdish support to the AKP. The major characteristics of the AKP approach towards the Kurdish question during the period of 'Kurdish opening' included secret talks with the PKK and limited recognition of the Kurdish identity. These characteristics distinguished the AKP authorities from the previous Turkish governments and other major Turkish parties, which denied and oppressed the Kurdish identity and rejected any negotiations with the PKK. However, the Kurdish opening approach was a step toward the peace process, which is discussed in chapter 7 and 8.

## **Chapter 5: *Analysis of the discursive constructions of PKK in the Turkish official texts***

### Introduction

The core of the Turkish narrative of terrorism that this research deals with is the PKK and its action. This chapter reveals the main constructions and narratives that constitute the Turkish official narrative regarding the PKK by analysing the relevant Turkish official texts. To critically challenge the arguments of the Turkish official texts, the analysis depends on various texts, which are mainly taken from non-Turkish sources. The Turkish official texts that are analysed in this chapter include texts published by the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs, parts of Turkish constitution, Turkish counter-terrorism law, and other laws in addition to parts of statements, speeches, and interviews of Turkish officials (see the list of the Turkish officials in Appendix Table 6). As explained earlier, the research usually uses the terms ‘statement’ or ‘stated’ before quoting the parts of statements, speeches, and interviews of Turkish officials. However, the analysis in this chapter concentrates on the texts of the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs. To avoid repetition of the term ‘Turkish ministry of foreign affairs’, the research uses the abbreviation ‘TMFA’.

This chapter deals with five main constructions and narratives regarding the PKK in the texts of TMFA and other official texts. These include the following:

- The PKK is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organization.
- The PKK is a separatist organization.
- The PKK is an ethnically motivated movement that does not represent a nation.
- The PKK is a group of “murderers” who target civilians and civic services.



- The PKK is a “criminal group that is involved in the organized crime of international drug-trafficking”.

Some of these constructions and narratives are given more space in the analysis. This is because they are given more space in the texts of ministry and repeated more frequently in the other official texts. The analysis also introduces the other originations that are designated as terrorist by the Turkish authorities according to the texts of TMFA. However, before delving into the constructions of the PKK, the analysis provides a general comparison between the constructions of the PKK and two other organisations designated as terrorist by the Turkish authorities. These two organizations are the Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front (in Turkish: *Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*, DHKP-C), and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The purpose of this comparison is to put a light on the influence of ideology on the ways that the PKK and these two organizations are described in the texts of ministry and other official texts. Omitting the full names of PKK and ISIL in the texts of TMFA and other official texts is discussed as a major point of this comparison. Nevertheless, the chapter begins with the Turkish definition of terrorism according to the Turkish Law of Fight against Terrorism, and the construction of separatism as terrorism in this law and other texts. This section highlights the construction of various types of Kurdish activism as separatist-terrorism.

### **The Turkish definition of terrorism**

The Turkish official definition of terrorism is represented in various texts. The most important of these texts is the text of Law on Fight Against Terrorism of Turkey. The text defines terrorism as the following:

“Any criminal action conducted by one or more persons belonging to an organisation with the aim of changing the attributes of the Republic as specified in

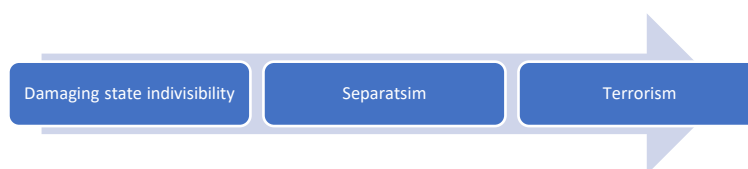
the Constitution, the political, legal, social, secular or economic system, damaging the indivisible unity of the State with its territory and nation, jeopardizing the existence of the Turkish State and the Republic, enfeebling, destroying or seizing the State authority, eliminating basic rights and freedoms, damaging the internal and external security of the State, the public order or general health, is defined as terrorism” (quoted in Legislationline, 2016).

Although the definition characterizes terrorism as a crime, it connects it to various ranges of actions. Nevertheless, the definition focuses on the actions that target ‘the State’, which is Turkey. The definition constructs terrorism, widely to include the actions that target the ‘political, legal, social, secular or economic system’ of the state and its constitutional principles. This gives the judicial authorities the freedom to interpret the text, and accordingly, to consider various violent and non-violent actions as terrorism. Although the last two lines of the text refer to some domains that go beyond the state’s ‘system’ and its ‘constitutional attributes’ to the ‘basic rights and freedoms’ of individuals, the rest of the text highlights the ‘State’ as the main target of terrorism. This implies that the text concentrates on the acts that target the state, its governing system and main constitutional principles. The text also limits the definition of terrorism to the acts that target Turkey and makes no reference to the acts that target other countries.

### **Separatism as terrorism**

As the text highlights that terrorism is any action that targets ‘the attributes of the Republic as specified in the constitution’, it connects between the definition of terrorism and the main principles of Turkish constitution. This relationship is also inter-discursive as it connects various discursive constructions. However, constructing ‘separatism’ as terrorism is more

relevant to the subject of this research. This is because the term ‘separatism’ according to the Turkish official discourse usually denotes various actions of pro-Kurdish nationalism, and mainly the actions of the PKK and the affiliated Kurdish groups. Constructing ‘separatism’ as terrorism is discerned in the part of text which considers as terrorism the acts that aim at ‘damaging the indivisible unity of the State with its territory and nation’. This part of the text builds an interdiscursive relationship between separatism-terrorism and the Turkish constitutional principle of the indivisibility of Turkey (see Figure 2 below). As explained in chapter 3, critical discourse analysts describe interdiscursivity as the articulation of more than one discourse in the text (Fairclough, 2003: 218).



**Figure 2. The interdiscursive relationship of damaging the principle of state indivisibility, separatism and terrorism.**

The anti-separatist principles of the indivisibility of Turkey and its Turkish identity are the most valued principles of the Turkish constitution. The preamble of the Turkish constitution states that “no protection shall be accorded to an activity contrary to Turkish national interests, Turkish existence and the principle of its indivisibility with its State and territory, historical and moral values of Turkishness” (the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, n. d: 1-2).<sup>86</sup> Article 3 of the Turkish constitution also states that “the State of Turkey, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible entity. Its language is Turkish” (the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, n.d.). The principles of indivisibility, territorial integrity, and national unity are also emphasized in

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<sup>86</sup> This version of Turkish constitution was first adopted in 1982. However, it was amended and republished in 2011 by the Turkish national assembly.

Articles 5, 14, 26, 28, 58, 68, 81, 103, 118, 122, and 130 of the Turkish constitution.<sup>87</sup> This made various violent and non-violent actions of pro-Kurdish nationalism liable to the classification as acts of terrorism.

Considering ‘separatism’ as terrorism indicates that the Turkish definition of terrorism, mainly targets the PKK and other Kurdish parties. This is discerned in the construction of the PKK as ‘separatist-terrorist organization’ in the Turkish official texts. In particular, the term ‘separatist-terrorist’ is repeated by Erdogan and other Turkish officials as a reference to the PKK (Asia News Monitor, June, 2016; FT, December, 2016). The Turkish officials also use this term against the PYD-YPG, and they construct them as parts of the PKK (BBC Monitoring, 22 October, 2014). For example, Erdogan stated that “we are as determined about the PYD, the separatist terror organization's Syrian wing” (quoted in El-Deeb, 2016).<sup>88</sup> Constructing the PKK as separatist is discussed in more details later in this chapter, and constructing the PYD-YPG as part of the PKK is discussed in the next chapter. As the PYD-YPG are described as organic part of the PKK in the Turkish official discourse, the constructions and narratives regarding the PYD-YPG in the Turkish official texts usually involve the PKK.

Constructing the Kurdish national action as ‘separatism’ and considering ‘separatism’ as terrorism also impacted civic Kurdish parties. This has been the case of the Kurdish legal parties of Turkey since the 1990s (HRW, 20 March, 2017). Human Rights Watch claimed that thousands of BDP and HDP members have been detained by the Turkish authorities since July

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<sup>87</sup> See: The Grand National Assembly of Turkey. (n.d.). Constitution of the Republic of Turkey. *The Grand National Assembly of Turkey*. [online]. Available at: [https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution\\_en.pdf](https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf) [accessed: 10 August 2014].

<sup>88</sup> The research connects the acronyms PYD-YPG although the PYD is a political party, while the YPG is a military organization. However, the research uses these acronyms together to match the way the acronyms used together or interchangeably in the Turkish official texts.

2015 under charges of supporting terrorism (HRW, 20 March, 2017).<sup>89</sup> This also includes elected Kurdish parliamentarians and mayors (AI, 4 November, 2016; HRW, 20 March, 2017). For example, the co-chair of HDP co-chairs Selahattin Demirtash and Figen Yüksekdağ were charged of “making propaganda for a terrorist organisation”, which Amnesty International described as “a provision routinely used to stifle dissent on Kurdish issues in Turkey” (AI, 4 November, 2016). Erdogan labelled HDP as “the political extension of separatist terrorist organization” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 2 September, 2015) and prior to this he labelled BDP as “the extension of the terrorist organization” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012).

The Turkish authorities charge civic Kurdish activists with terrorism even if they are not partisans or not members of any organizations. This is although the Turkish anti-terrorism law considers as terrorism any separatist acts by individuals “belonging to an organisation” (quoted in Legislationline, 2016). This is discerned mainly in the cases of activists who criticize the treatment of Kurds by the Turkish authorities and those who disseminate such views in the media. A Turkish journalist, Murat Yaktin (13 October, 2016) stated that “if you criticize or report rights abuses in anti-PKK operations, you can be easily labelled by pro-government sources as a "helper of terrorists" or a "separatist”. Erdogan labelled those who are involved in expressions that criticize the Turkish polices regarding the Kurds as “supporters of terrorism”, or “terrorists” (quoted in Weise, March, 2016), regardless of their profession or the non-violent character of their action. Erdogan stated that “their titles as an MP, an academic, an author, a journalist do not change the fact that they are actually terrorists” (quoted in Weise, March, 2016). Erdogan described as ‘terrorists’ those “holding a gun or a bomb and those who use

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<sup>89</sup> HDP is the acronym of (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*: In Turkish), Peoples’ Democratic Party. BDP is the acronym of (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*: in Turkish), Peace and Democracy party.

their position and pen to serve the aims of terrorists” (quoted in BBC, 14 March, 2016b). In another statement regarding the detained HDP deputies, Erdogan stated that “those who support terrorist organizations are not deputies, but terrorists” (quoted in Yeni Şafak, February, 2016).

The Turkish authorities usually consider the expressions that criticize its repressive policies against the Kurds as “terror propaganda” (BBC Monitoring, 8 February, 2017), which aims at “disrupting the unity of the state” (HRW, 28 December, 2016; Pen International, 9 September, 2016). For example, in 2016 writers and journalists who worked for the newspaper of Özgür Gündem, which usually criticized the Turkish policies against the Kurds, were charged with both spreading terror propaganda and disrupting the unity of the state (HRW, 28 December, 2016; Pen International, 9 September, 2016). Those who were charged included the renowned writers, Necmiye Alpay, Ragıp Zarakolu, and human rights lawyer Eren Keskin alongside others (HRW, 28 December, 2016; Pen International, 9 September, 2016).<sup>90</sup> Dealing with the Kurdish legal parties and pro-Kurdish activists as ‘supporters of terrorism’ is discussed in chapters 7 and 8.

### **Texts of Turkey’s ministry of foreign affairs: The terrorist organizations**

As stated earlier, in addition to other official texts, this chapter deals with texts of the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs (TMFA). As the texts published on the website of TMFA, they represent the view of Turkish authorities, and accordingly, they reflect the official Turkish discourse. Although the TMFA website shows 2011 as the date it was launched, the texts show no publishing dates. However, the texts include post-2011 issues and dates such as the

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<sup>90</sup> Another example, in May, 2017 special Turkish forces of anti-terrorism arrested many academics for signing a petition which called for peace and denounce violence perpetrated by the Turkish government and the PKK (Cusack, 2017). This is also discussed in chapter 8.

international campaign against ISIL and the July, 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, which implies that the website is up to date. In order to deal with the problem of undated texts of ministry the research use (n. d.) to cite and refer to these texts. To distinguish every cited text and its reference, every text is given a letter in its citing and referencing brackets such as (MFA, n. d., a), and (MFA, n. d., b). These texts are referenced in the list of research references according to their order on the website of the ministry. The texts are also included in the appendices (See Appendix Texts of TMFA 1-7).

TMFA designated 7 originations as terrorist organizations that target Turkey. These organization include the PKK, DHPK-C, ISIL, Al-Qaeda, ASALA, 17 November, and Fethullah Gulen movement (FETO). Although the PYD and YPG are also referred to in the text of ministry titled 'PKK', they are considered as part of the PKK. This is discussed in the next chapter, which deals with the discursive constructions of PYD and YPG. The texts of ministry also provide no further discussion about each of Al-Qaeda, ASALA and 17 November.<sup>91</sup> ASALA and 17 November are currently inactive groups (TRAC, 2016, 2016b). ASALA is a nationalist Armenian organization influenced by Marxist-Leninism, and 17 November is Marxist-Greek organization (The Guardian, 4 September, 2015; TRAC, 2016, 2016b). The latter was removed from the US list of terrorist organizations in September, 2015 (The Guardian, 4 September, 2015). This is although the group was mainly targeting the US and NATO premises in Greece. 17 November claimed responsibility for the assassination of the Athens chief of CIA, Richard Welch in 1975 (The Guardian, 4 September, 2015).

FETO is the acronym given by the Turkish authorities to the Hizmet Islamist movement of Turkish cleric Fethullah Gülen by the Turkish authorities (BBC,18 December, 2013; BBC

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<sup>91</sup> See NDTV. (December, 2016) which shows no Al-Qaeda attacks during the era of AKP rule.

Monitoring, 21 October, 2015). Previously, the Turkish authorities used other terms to name the movement including “parallel structure”, “parallel origination” and “parallel state” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 3 March, 2014; Hurriyet Daily News, 12 December, 2014). The term ‘parallel’ indicates that the movement was working clandestinely inside the institutions of Turkish state (BBC Monitoring, 3 March, 2014). However, following the coup attempt of 15 July, 2016, FETO was labelled as a terrorist organization by the Turkish authorities, and it was added to the list of terrorist originations on the website of TMFA. The Turkish authorities accused FETO of the involvement in the 15 July coup attempt although its leader, Gulen denied any involvement (BBC, 21 July, 2016b; Beaumont, 2016). Except its alleged involvement in the coup attempt, the research found no evidence of armed actions by the FETO, and there is no record of attacks targeting Turkey by this movement.

Although FETO has been considered as a main foe of the AKP authorities since the coup attempt of 15 July 2016, the section of terrorism in the website of the TMFA did not provide a text introducing the movement and its ideology (MFA, n. d., a). The website allocates FETO a link titled “fight against FETÖ and July 15 coup attempt” (MFA, n. d., g). However, the link leads to an empty page, but it includes another link leading to another page, which includes links of news pages about the 15 July coup attempt (MFA, n. d., h).

### **General comparison between the constructions of DHKP-C, ISIL and PKK**

The texts of TMFA provide more reference about the PKK, DHKP-C, and ISIL than the other groups, which are discussed above. Each of these three organizations is allocated a separate text in the section of ‘terrorism’ in the website of the ministry. Yet, there are more references about the PKK than the other organisations. The imbalance in the references and constructions about the PKK, DHKP-C, and ISIL invited the researcher to conduct a general comparison



between the ways these three organizations presented in the texts of the ministry. This comparison assists in understanding the influence of ideology in the construction of these organizations in the texts of TMFA. Critical discourse analysts, Van Dijk (2006b: 126), Wodak (2001a: 10), and Fairclough, (2003: 218) emphasized the importance of deciphering the features of ideology in text in order to demystify its messages.

Text of TMFA, which is titled ‘DHKP-C’ shows DHKP-C full name, the Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front, and briefs its history, ideology, methods and field of armed action (MFA, n. d., f).<sup>92</sup> The text states that DHKP-C “was originally formed in 1978 as Devrimci Sol, or Dev Sol. It was a splinter faction of the Turkish People's Liberation Party/Front. It was renamed as the DHKP-C in 1994 after factional infighting. It has a Marxist-Leninist ideology. It aims at overthrowing the Turkish state through violence and removing the US and NATO presence in Turkey” (MFA, n. d., f). This description is brief and does not cover everything related to the ideological motivations, and methods of action of DHKP-C. However, this description does not contradict with the way the DHKP-C describes its ideology and actions. For example, following the 10 August 2015 attack on the US consulate of Istanbul the DHKP-C named the US as "chief enemy of people in the Middle East and in the world" (quoted in BBC, 10 August, 2015). The ministry’s text claimed that the DHKP-C attacked the diplomatic premises of the US in 2013 and 2015, and that it assassinated the Istanbul prosecutor in 2015. The DHKP-C declared its responsibility for these actions (BBC, 10 August, 2015; Orsal & Pamuk, 31 March, 2015)”

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<sup>92</sup> For more about DHKP-C, see: Hay, M. (2015). What we know about the left-wing militant group that took a prosecutor hostage in Turkey. Available at: <http://www.vice.com/read/what-we-know-about-the-left-wing-militant-group-that-took-a-prosecutor-hostage-in-turkey-402> [accessed 20 November, 2015].

Unlike the DHKP-C, ISIL full name and acronym are omitted in the texts of TMFA and Turkish official texts that the research deal with. The text titled “Turkey’s contribution to anti-Daesh coalition” omits both the term ‘the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant’ which is the full name of organization and its internationally used acronyms (ISIL, IS, or ISIS) (MFA, n. d., c). TMFA text and the other Turkish official texts use ‘Daesh’ as an acronym of the Islamic State instead of ISIL. Daesh (داعش) is the Arabic acronym of ISIL. This is also discerned in the text of the interview of Turkish FM, Mevlut Cavusoglu (MFA, 24 September, 2016) in which he used the Arabic term Daesh 8 times and never used the name of Islamic State or its acronyms ‘ISIL, ISIS or IS’ although the interview was in English. Using Daesh as the only reference to the Islamic State is also discerned in the statements and speeches of the Turkish president, Erdogan and Turkish prime-minster (PM), Ahmet Davutoglu (AA, 5 March, 2015; BYEGM, 21 January, 2015, 22 January, 2015; TCCB, 9 October, 2016).

As it is explained earlier, the Islamist ideology of ruling AKP refuses connecting the term terrorism to Islam, and therefore, the AKP authorities prefer to use Daesh instead of ISIL, ISIS, or IS.<sup>93</sup> CDA highlights that omitting certain details in the text has an ideological function (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2006b; Mayr, 2008). Mayr (2008: 19) states that “the powerful analysis does not only deal with what is stated in the texts but also what is omitted”. In several statements, Erdogan disapproves the usage of the terms ‘Islam and Islamist’ to describe a terrorist organization by the international media and governments, and he claims that such kind of description is influenced by the “Islamophobia” that “emerged from the Western countries” (quoted in AA, 1 April, 2016). Following the January, 2015 Jihadist attack against Charlie Hebdo magazine in France, Erdogan stated that “we are against such wrong definitions as Islamic terror. No one can associate Islam with terror because Islam is the religion of peace”

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<sup>93</sup> See also Black, I. (21 September, 2014).

(quoted in BYEGM, 22 January, 2015). The AKP authorities denounced connecting Islamist beliefs to terrorism even when the attackers announced that they were driven by Islamist Jihadist ideology. For example, Davutoglu stated that “this terror attack cannot be linked with Islam. Any connection established between Islam and these activities is wrong” (quoted in AA, 7 January, 2015). Erdogan even considered it as an offend to connect terrorism to extreme Islamist ideologies as he stated that “those who try to associate terrorism and our religion not only disrespect our religion but also insult us” (quoted in BYEGM, 3 February, 2015).

The texts of the TMFA also do not provide details about the motivations and methods of ISIL, unlike the way the ministry texts deal with the DHKP-C or PKK (MFA, n. d., a).<sup>94</sup> The Islamist ideology of AKP is also behind omitting any description for the Islamist ideological motivations and Jihadist methods of ISIL in the texts of TMFA. In particular, these are omitted from the text titled ‘Turkey’s contribution to anti-Daesh coalition’ (MFA, n. d., c). The text is limited to general references to the technical participation of Turkey in the anti-ISIL international coalition. Although another text of TMFA used the term “religiously motivated” as an attribution to Daesh and Al-Qaeda, the term has no further description in the text, and the text made no reference to ‘Islam’ as the religion, which is linked to the claims and motivations of these movements (MFA, n. d., b).

The texts of TMFA omit the full name of PKK similarly to ISIL (MFA, n. d., a) (see Table 3 below).<sup>95</sup> However, the texts of TMFA focus on the PKK more than ISIL and DHKP-C. In addition, the texts of TMFA attribute certain motivations and methods of action to the PKK. This is although the constructions and narratives of these texts about the PKK do not match the

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<sup>94</sup> See Appendix Texts of TMFA 1-7; MFA, n. d., a; MFA, n. d., b; MFA, n. d., c; MFA, n. d., e; MFA, n. d., f; MFA, n. d., g; MFA, n. d., h; MFA, n. d., i.

<sup>95</sup> See the texts of TMFA of the section of terrorism in the appendices.

way the PKK describes itself. They also do not match the findings of this research. Unlike, the constructions of DHKP-C, which do not contradict both the way the DHKP-C describes itself and the findings of the research. Omitting the name of PKK and constructing its motivations and methods of action in the texts of TMFA are analysed below. In addition to the texts of TMFA, other official texts are included in the analysis. However, the arguments of these texts are mainly challenged by the findings of the research, which depend on various sources.

### **Omitting the full name of the PKK**

The full name of PKK, which is the Kurdistan Workers' Party (in Kurdish: *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*) is omitted not only in the texts of the ministry but also in the other official Turkish texts analysed in this research.<sup>96</sup> Instead of the full name, the Turkish authorities either use the acronym 'PKK' or the terms 'the terrorist organization' and 'the separatist-terrorist organization'. This is discerned in the statements of Turkish officials. For example, in his speech of 14 January, 2016 Erdogan repeated 3 times the term "the terrorist organization" instead of the acronym of PKK (quoted in TCCB, 14 January, 2016). Another example, in a press conference on 27 January, 2016, the Turkish presidential spokesperson, Ibrahim Kalin, used the term "the terrorist organization" 17 times, and the acronym "PKK" 7 times in different parts of his statement (quoted in TCCB, 27 January, 2016). In both statements, Erdogan and Kalin did not use the full name of PKK. Other official texts neither use the full name nor the acronym of 'PKK'. Instead, the terms 'the terrorist organization', and 'separatist terrorist organization' are used. For example, in his speech of May 2015 in Hakkari, Erdogan repeated 4 times the term "the terrorist organization" and did not use the acronym 'PKK' (quoted in BYEGM, 26 May, 2015).

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<sup>96</sup> See Table 3.

Omitting the full name of the ‘Kurdistan Workers Party’ is due to that the term ‘Kurdistan’ is denied in the Turkish nationalist discourse and prohibited by the Turkish law. The Turkish nationalist foundations deny the existence of Kurdistan. Using the term ‘Kurdistan’ indicates separatism and infringes the constitutional principle of the indivisibility of Turkey.<sup>97</sup> Thus, using the term ‘Kurdistan’ could be considered as an act of terrorism according to the Turkish law of anti-terrorism as discussed earlier. In addition, article 203 of the Turkish Penal Code punishes using the term Kurdistan. Paragraph 1 of article 302 of Turkish Penal Code states:

“Any person who commits an act to place all, or part, of the territory of the State under the sovereignty of a foreign state or to disrupt the unity of the State or to weaken the independence of the State or to separate part of the territory under the sovereignty of the State from the State administration shall be sentenced to a penalty of aggravated life imprisonment” (quoted in Venice Commission, February 2016).

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<sup>97</sup> Article 3 of the Turkish constitution states that “The State of Turkey, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible entity. Its language is Turkish” (The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, n.d.).

**Table 3. Inclusion/ exclusion of names and acronyms of the DHKP-C, ISIL and PKK in the TMFA and other official texts.**

Organization	Full name	Acronym/s	Other acronym/ term	Ideological considerations of not including name or acronym
DHKP-C	Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front <u>Included</u>	DHKP-C Included	-	-
ISIL	Islamic State <u>Not included</u>	ISIL, ISIS, or IS Not included	Daesh	AKP Islamist ideology influenced not including the full name and English acronyms. Instead the term Daesh is used.
PKK	Kurdistan Workers’ Party <u>Not included</u>	PKK Included	The terrorist organization, Separatist-terrorist organization	Turkish nationalist discourse and Turkish law influenced not including the term Kurdistan.

The ministry’s text titled ‘PKK’ constructs the PKK ideology as “revolutionary Marxism-Leninism and separatist ethnonationalism” (MFA, n. d., e). The following sections deal with each of the constructions of ‘revolutionary Marxism-Leninist’, ‘separatist’ and ‘ethnonationalist’.

### **The PKK is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organization**

The ‘revolutionary Marxist-Leninist’ characteristic is a main reason for designating certain movements as terrorist organizations by the US and its allies (Blakeley, 2009: 102-103; Jackson *et al.*, 2011: 191). Labelling the PKK as ‘revolutionary Marxist Leninist’ in the text of the Turkish ministry creates the assumption that the PKK has the same doctrine as these organizations. This aims at maintaining the negative view of the Western governments towards the PKK as well as its designation as a terrorist organization. In other words, by adding the

term ‘revolutionary’ to the label Marxist-Leninist’, the construction implies that the PKK is anti-capitalist movement that has an antagonistic view towards the Western political and economic systems. Such construction matches the ideology and actions of DHKP-C that has expressed its anti-capitalist view and targeted the US premises in Turkey as discussed earlier. However, labelling the PKK as ‘revolutionary Marxist-Leninist’ contradicts with the rest of sentence which constructs the PKK as ‘separatist ethnonationalist’. The latter implies that the PKK aims at separating a part of Turkey for ethno-nationalist purposes, and this construction is at odd with the ideology of revolutionary Marxist-Leninist movements who usually disregard ethnic and national questions and focus on the question of working class, and therefore, aim at toppling down the capital political and economic systems to establish communist-like systems. Fairclough (2003: 41, 55-60) argues that assumptions usually serve bias and ideology.

The text of TMFA, which is titled ‘PKK’ describes the PKK as a Marxist although the PKK already abandoned Marxism. The early profile of the PKK shows that it was established as a national liberation movement, which was influenced by the Marxist ideology and its goal was to establish an independent and unified Kurdistan with a socialist system (ICG, 2012: 7-30; Ozcan, 2007). However, during 1990s the PKK gradually abandoned Marxism and transformed itself by adopting a post-modernist doctrine, which Ozcan (2007: 101) named as “humanization” doctrine. This has been discerned in many statements by Ocalan. For example, Ocalan in 1991 and 1992 stated:

“The PKK movement, beyond being an entity of nationalization and national emancipation, is a humanization movement”, “you should call our movement a humanitarian movement—not a class movement but a movement for the freedom of the human being” (quoted in Ozcan, 2007: 101-102).

The PKK transformed its ideological position as a movement that had the goals of establishing a Kurdish state with a socialist system to become a movement that defends the national rights of Kurds in Turkey through democratic reforms. This transformation also matched the era of post-Cold War, which witnessed the demise of the communist bloc. The last ideological transformation of PKK is expressed in its goal of establishing “democratic autonomy” for the Kurds in Turkey (Uzun, 2014: 22-23). The new doctrine of PKK depended on the Ocalan concepts, which call for radical democracy through the decentralization of nation states. These are discussed in his books of *Democratic Nation* and *Democratic Confederalism* (Ocalan, 2016, 2011).<sup>98</sup> Ocalan’s new concepts are influenced by the post-modernist views that deal with the questions of identities, unlike the Marxist theory, which concentrates on the question of working class. Ocalan’s concept of ‘democratic nation’ calls for the re-establishment of nation-states like Turkey on the bases of decentralization and democratization of society where different identities are recognized and have equal rights (Ocalan, 2016: 19-22). This concept of Ocalan is influenced by the Murray Bookchin’s doctrine of “social ecology” (Bookchin, 1982; Biehl, 2012). The Bookchin doctrine called for limiting the hierarchal system of state that serves domination, and that this is possible by adopting systems that empower harmony between individuals and their natural and social milieus, admitting social dissimilarities and supporting the freedom and democratic rights of various identities (Bookchin, 1982).

The label of ‘Marxist’ also has domestic ideological messages. The AKP officials label the PKK as Marxist as an indication of the atheist character of the PKK, which devalues Islam. This is to provoke the antagonism of the conservative Muslims in Turkey against the PKK. Describing the PKK as a group that devalues Islam also matches the ideology of the ruling AKP that shows itself as the guardian of Islam against those who want to devalue it. For

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<sup>98</sup> The last name of PKK leader Ocalan is pronounced ‘Ojalan’ in English.



example, following an attack in the majority Kurdish city of Van, the Turkish FM, Cavusoglu stated that the PKK militants' basic target "is the faith of our Muslim, faithful, conservative Kurdish siblings. They are trying to make them Marxists and atheists. They are oppressing those [who they cannot change]" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 15 September, 2016). However, Erdogan produced statements that construct the PKK as an atheist group that devalues Islam more than any other AKP official. In a speech in Istanbul, Erdogan claimed that the PKK insulted Quran and stated that " the PKK terror group that targets the Holy Quran does not belong to these lands" (quoted in Daily Sabah, 12 June, 2016). Erdogan also accused the PKK for setting fire to mosques (Daily Sabah, 21 May, 2016). In an earlier speech in March, 2015 Erdogan denounced the PKK and the pro-Kurdish HDP party and described them as atheists as he stated "marginal, atheist and nonbelieving movements disconnected to the values of these lands" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 26 March, 2015).

Erdogan also used the label "Zoroastrians" and connected it to the label "atheists" to describe the PKK (quoted in Akyol, 11 June, 2016). Zoroastrianism is an ancient religion of Kurds, which prevailed before the emergence of Islam (Izady, 1992: 137-153).<sup>99</sup> National Kurdish movements like the PKK and PYD show their respect to Zoroastrianism as a part of Kurdish national identity. In addition, Ocalan in his writings prized Zoroastrianism as an indicator of Kurdish resistance against colonials and tyrants (Ocalan, 2007, 2008).<sup>100</sup> Erdogan, on the other hand, denounced prising Zoroastrianism by nationalist Kurds and stated that "some say the Kurdish people's religion is Zoroastrianism and Islam was forcefully imposed. This is not true" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 26 March, 2015). Erdogan also considered Zoroastrianism as a sign of atheism as he described the PKK militants as "atheists, and Zoroastrians" who act at

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<sup>99</sup> Some Zoroastrian traditions are preserved in some Kurdish religious sects of Alevisism, and Yarsan and Yezidism (Izady, 1992: 139-152).

<sup>100</sup> See also Foltz, R. (2016).

odd with the values of the majority Muslims in Turkey (quoted in Bulut, 2017; Korkmaz, 2016; Svirsky, 2016).<sup>101</sup> Erdogan also used these constructions in order to create the sense of disapproval of the PKK among the Kurdish conservative Muslims. In a speech in the majority Kurdish city of Kars, Erdogan claimed that the Turkish authorities possessed “documents” which prove that the PKK militants who “have no relationship whatsoever with Islam” were learning “Zoroastrianism in the mountains”, and added that “ my pious Kurdish brothers won’t get behind them” (quoted in Cheterian, 2016).

### **The PKK is a separatist organization**

Kurdish separatism is the core of the Turkish concern and its policies regarding the PKK, and Kurdish question. This is because the Turkish authorities are influenced by the Turkish nationalist sentiments, which revolve around the constitutional principle of the indivisibility of Turkey. Although the AKP officials used the term ‘Kurd’ in many of their statements, they considered the Kurds of Turkey as part of the nation of Turkey.<sup>102</sup> The AKP leadership used to emphasize the principles of territorial integrity of Turkey and its single national identity. This is discerned in the statement of Erdogan “we should grasp the awareness of one nation, one flag, one country and one state very well” (quoted in TCCB, 29 January, 2015). Erdogan carried on repeating this motto, and it was also repeated by other AKP officials like the Turkish prime-minster, Binali Yildirim (Daily Sabah, 10 November, 2015; TCCB, 23 December, 2016, 11 February, 2017; Tezcür, 2010: 188; VOA, 7 August, 2016). Yildirim was clearer in emphasizing this motto as a message against the PKK separatism as he stated:

“I exempt those who want to divide the country and serve others. Terror organizations cannot have a place among us”, “our struggle is for four things: One

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<sup>101</sup> See also Yackley , A, J. (2016).

state, one flag, one nation and one country. This is indispensable for us” (quoted in AKParti, 2017).

As explained earlier, that the Turkish law of Fight Against Terrorism considers separatism as terrorism. The Turkish official discourse constructs the Kurdish separatism as ‘separatist-terrorism’ and the PKK as ‘the separatist-terrorist organization’. The label ‘separatist’ is usually used against the PKK alongside the label ‘terrorist’ in the Turkish official texts (Asia News Monitor, June, 2016; BBC Monitoring, 2 September, 2015; FT, December, 2016; Koyuncuoglu, 2016; TCCB, 9 October, 2016). The Turkish official texts also use the construction of ‘the separatist-terrorist organization’ as a reference to the PKK instead of the acronym ‘PKK’. For example, Erdogan in his statement following the PKK attack on the Turkish military on 9 October 2016 repeated 3 times the term “the separatist terrorist organization” as a reference to the PKK, and he used only one time the acronym “PKK” (quoted in TCCB, 9 October, 2016). The label of ‘separatist’ is also connected with ‘treason’. Cavusoglu stated that “they [PKK] are separatists and traitors”, and they "cannot divide this country” (quoted in Koyuncuoglu, 2016).

Using the label ‘separatist’ also creates the assumptions that the PKK is chaotic movement. Separatism implies disintegration and chaos in the already established states. Unlike separatism, the term ‘independence’ is connected to the right to self-determination which is documented in the international law and norms. For example, articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (UN, 1960) adopted by the UN in resolution No 1514 (XV) of 1960 states:

“1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the

United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.

2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development”.

Therefore, the term ‘independence, implies a legitimate right of the subjugated peoples who are governed by a colonial states or regimes. On the other hand, the term ‘separatism’ has no such status in the international law and norms. Unlike the claim of the Turkish texts, when the PKK was established it declared its goal as the independence of Kurdistan (in Kurdish: Serxwebun),<sup>103</sup>and this was the foundation of its nationalist discourse until 1993 when it changed the goal to federalism then to democratic autonomy (Ozcan, 2006: 242; ICG, 2012: 7-30; Marcus, 2007: 1). In 1993 the PKK announced federalism as a solution to the Kurdish question (ICG, 2012: 7-30; Marcus, 2007: 1). Later, in 2013 the PKK called for ‘democratic autonomy’ for the Kurdish region of Turkey (Bayik, 2015; Uzun, 2014). As explained earlier, this depends on the new concepts of Ocalan which considers the system of nation-states of the Middle East as dysfunctional and incapable to solve their ethnic and sectarian problems. The doctrine supports establishing political systems where different identities have equal rights to self- administration (Ocalan, 2011: 9-27). Ocalan claims that in order for the local administrations to function, there is a need to decentralize the governing system of state. As the PKK changed its goal to solve the question of Kurds through autonomy, it concentrated on democratic reforms in Turkey to pave the way for accepting the Kurdish autonomy (Uzun, 2014).<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Serxwebun (in Kurdish) is pronounced Serkhwebun in English.

<sup>104</sup> The PKK in its publications following the 2013 peace call of Ocalan considers the democratization of Turkey as part of its mission (see [www.PKKonline.com](http://www.PKKonline.com)).

Abandoning the goal of independence by the PKK was not enough to ease the Turkish nationalist sentiments that influenced Turkey's official discourse, which continued to describe the PKK as separatist, and the Kurdish nationalist demands as separatism. In an interview by the BBC with the PKK executive chief, Cemil Bayik (in English: Jamil Bayk) stated that although the PKK no more called for an independent Kurdish state, Turkey continued to label the PKK as separatist (BBC, 4 November, 2016). This is because separatism according to the Turkish constitution and laws extends beyond the acts that target the territorial integrity of Turkey to include the acts that target its 'national unity'. In other words, the acts that target the Turkish identity of Turkey, or the 'Turkishness'.

### **The PKK is an ethnically motivated movement that does not represent a nation**

The TMFA construct the PKK as "ethno-nationalist" (MFA, n. d, e). The label connects the words 'ethno' and 'nationalist' to create the term 'ethno-nationalist' although this term has a vague meaning because it joins two words, which have different connotations. While ethnicity denotes the racial and cultural characteristics of certain group, nationality is usually related to a group of people who have a homeland or country (Anderson, 2010: 56-63; Eriksen, 2010: 46-47). However, attributing the term "ethno" or "ethnic" to the PKK creates two assumptions (MFA, n. d, b; MFA, n. d, e). These assumptions are similar to these of the label 'separatist' as discussed above.

First, using the terms 'ethno' or 'ethnic' to label the PKK creates the assumption that the motivations of the PKK are built on ethnic grounds, and therefore, have no credits of legitimacy in the international law and norms. One of the well-established principles of international law is the right of 'peoples' or 'nations' to self-determination. This is highlighted in articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (UN,

1960), which is stated above.<sup>105</sup> This is also demonstrated in paragraph 2 of article 1 of the UN Charter, which emphasizes the right to “self-determination” for nations (UN, 1945). These articles used the terms “nations”, and “peoples” (UN, 1945; UN, 1960). However, there is no such noticeable code in the international law that includes the term ‘ethnic group’ alongside the right to self-determination.

Second, the term ‘ethno’ or ‘ethnic’ as a label of an armed movement creates the assumption that the movement is merely based on racial reactions and has no rooted political question related to a subjugated people. Thus, the term devalues the PKK character as a national liberation movement and constructs it instead as an armed movement with racial character. The TMFA states that “PKK wants to suppress the diversity of Turkey, prevent participation and integration of Turkey’s citizens of Kurdish origin and intimidate the people in the region” (MFA, n. d., e). This implies that the PKK is anti-diversity movement, which prevent part of the Turkish society from enjoying the already existed political system that encourages diversity of citizens in Turkey.

This text of TMFA that shows the PKK as ‘anti-diversity’ is inconsistent and contradicts with its own ‘pro-diversity’ claim (MFA, n. d., e). The text names Kurds as “Turkish citizens of Kurdish origins” (MFA, n. d., e). Thus, the text orders the term ‘Turkish citizens’ before the term ‘Kurdish origins’. The term ‘origins’ indicates secondary and earlier status, while the term ‘citizens’ indicates the primary and contemporary status. This implies that the Kurdish origins are less important than the Turkish citizenship. In addition, the text used ‘Turkish citizens’ instead of ‘citizens of Turkey’. Thus, the text implies that Kurds are part of the ‘Turkish nation’ although Kurds have asserted their national identity through armed and non-armed resistance

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<sup>105</sup> See also UN Charter (UN, 1945).

against the policies of assimilation by the Turkish governments. As stated in chapter 4, some of the Kurdish rebellions were during the Ottoman empire even before the establishment of Turkey as a nation-state. Nevertheless, the Turkish official discourse constructs the Kurds as an element of the Turkish nation. Examples on this point were presented in the previous section that discusses the label of ‘separatist’. In addition, the text of TMFA considers the identity of Turkey to be ‘Turkish’, although it used terms like ‘diversity’ and ‘Kurd’. The text also uses “integration” as a euphemism for ‘the forced assimilation of Kurds’ in Turkey, which have taken place by the Turkish governments since the establishment of Turkey (see euphemism in Van Dijk, 2006). Yildiz (2005: 15-16) argues that the Kurdish identity was oppressed, and Kurds in Turkey underwent decades of forced assimilation into the Turkish identity. It is relevant to highlight that the long-term forced assimilation was one of the factors that encouraged the PKK and previous Kurdish rebellions (Brinlee, 2011; Ozcan, 2006: 112).

### **The PKK is a group of “murderers” who target civilians and civic services**

The texts of TMFA and the statements of Turkish officials described the PKK action as mass and random killings that usually target civilians. This narrative takes place in the Turkish official texts about the PKK more than the other narratives that are discussed in this chapter. This narrative supports establishing as a reality the claim that the PKK action is terrorism, and this depends on the common understanding of the actions of terrorism as acts that mainly target civilians although there is no universal definition of terrorism. The text of TMFA, which is titled ‘PKK’ states that “since its foundation in 1984 more than 40 thousand people lost their lives because of PKK terrorism” (MFA, n. d., e). According to this sentence, the PKK terrorism is the reason of the death of this number of victims. The text implies that the PKK terrorism is like any epidemic disease that causes mass-death. This is because the sentence is abstracted and does not refer to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, or the involvement of Turkish forces in the

armed violence. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Turkish governments of the 1990s also accused the PKK for the death of 30 thousand people. This number increased to 40 thousand in the era of AKP rule. Like the account of the TMFA text, Erdogan has repeated the same claim in many of his speeches and statements. Examples of Erdogan's statements that support this narrative: "PKK killed more than 40 thousand of our citizens" (quoted in BYEGM, 23 October, 2014), "we have suffered many losses due to terrorism. More than 40,000 of our people have unfortunately been victims of terror in these lands for 35 years" (quoted Hurriyet Daily News, 19 April, 2017). Berkay Mandıracı (2016), a researcher in the International Crisis Group argues that the original source of this death toll is the accounts of the Turkish government.

The Turkish authorities' narrative that blames of 'the PKK terrorism' for this death toll has been repeated by the mainstream Turkish media and dealt with as a reality. The mainstream Turkish media usually avoid discussing the responsibility of Turkish forces or the impact of the conflict on the Kurdish region. This is discerned in the outlets of the Turkish news agencies such as *Anadolu Agency* and *Daily Sabah*. For example, a text by *Anadolu Agency* (2 August, 2013) states that "the peace process aimed at ending terrorism perpetrated by Kurdish separatist group PKK that has killed 40.000 people in the last thirty years". Another text by *Anadolu Agency* states that the PKK "has waged a 33-year terror campaign against Turkey that has led to more than 40,000 deaths" (AA, 2 June, 2017). Likewise, a text by *Daily Sabah* (10 April, 2017) states that the PKK "has waged a terror campaign against Turkey for more than 30 years, during which more than 40,000 people have been killed".

Although the international media agencies copied the Turkish sources regarding the death toll of 40.000, they usually consider the death toll as the result of the conflict between the PKK and



Turkish forces. Some of the international reports probe into the consequences of the conflict on the Kurdish region. For example, a report by BBC reporter Andrew Hosken states:

“More than 40,000 people have died. During the conflict, which reached a peak in the mid-1990s, thousands of villages were destroyed in the largely Kurdish south-east and east of Turkey, and hundreds of thousands of Kurds fled to cities in other parts of the country” (Hosken, 2016).

The text of TMFA, which is titled ‘PKK’ limits its description of the PKK military action to non-military targets including civilians and civic services. The text states that “PKK’s primary targets include police and military” (MFA, n. d., e). However, the text omits any description for the PKK actions against the Turkish forces. Instead, the text named wide-range civic services and claims that they have been targeted by the PKK including “tourism, economic infrastructure, educational Institutions, teachers, hospitals, public and private enterprises particularly in southeast Turkey” (MFA, n. d., e). The text added other civic services targeted by the PKK and the methods of targeting these services including “attacking infrastructure, various facilities, schools and ambulances, kidnapping nurses, customs officials to using cyanide to poison drinking water supplies; and engaging in unconventional tactics, assassination to drive-by shootings, executing uncooperative civilians, ambushes, kidnapping etc” (MFA, n. d., e). The text hyperbolically attributed various criminal deeds to the PKK in order to create the assumption that the ‘PKK terrorism’ is simply a phenomenon of ‘targeting civilians and sabotaging civic services’. CDA considers hyperbole as a structure that serves bias and ideology in text (Van Dijk, 2006, 2006a, 2006b). There is no doubt that the PKK as an armed organization involved in an armed conflict has practiced armed violence and perpetrated violations against human rights including these perpetrated against the Turkish forces and civilians. However, the PKK is not the only actor in the conflict as the text implies.

In order to hide the violence and violations perpetrated by the Turkish forces in the Kurdish region, the text adds that the terrorist acts of the PKK target “particularly the southeast of Turkey”, which is actually the Kurdish region where the conflict has occurred. According to the narrative of text, the PKK mainly targets the Kurdish people whom the PKK claims that it represents and defends.

Like the text of the TMFA, the statements of the Turkish officials usually construct the PKK as an organization that targets civilians, but they omit references to the violent actions of Turkish military. Van Dijk (107: 2001) described this as “omitting the agents of negative actions”, which serves the interests of text producer. Many of such texts omit any references to the conflict between the PKK and Turkish forces, or do not refer to the impact of the excessive use of force by the Turkish forces. For example, during the Turkish military operation of 2015 against the Kurdish Units of Protecting Civilians (in Kurdish: *Yekineyên Parastina Sivîlan*, YPS) that are described by the Turkish authorities as the urban branch of PKK, Davutoglu accused the PKK of using children schools in the Kurdish areas as “weapon warehouses”, and added that “how will children go there and study?” (quoted in Daily Sabah, 17 December, 2015). Davutoglu also stated:

"One cannot leave these places to their [PKK] justice and mercy. The barbarians and tyrants caused damage both in historic and humanitarian ways. We are doing our best to take humanitarian measures" (quoted in Daily Sabah, 17 December, 2015).

Davutoglu used certain lexicons to describe the PKK negatively and the Turkish authorities and forces positively. He described the PKK as ‘barbarians and tyrants’ that caused historical damages, while he described the Turkish authorities and forces as ‘humanitarian’ who conduct

'humanitarian measures'. This is described by Van Dijk (2001: 108) as the positive self-presentation and negative presentation of the other.

Other texts describe civilians as the primary target of the PKK and the Turkish forces as their secondary target. Abdurrahman Büyükelçi (2016) the Turkish ambassador in UK stated that the PKK "continues its bloody acts of terror in Turkey, targeting civilians as well as security forces". Other statements show the Turkish forces as the guarantor of for the safety of civilians and civic services. For example, presidential spokesperson, Ibrahim Kalin stated that "Turkish security forces have expended great effort toward ensuring the security of every region in the country and thwarting PKK attacks against security officers, public institutions and civilians" (quoted in Daily Sabah, 15 September, 2015)

The statements of Turkish officials use lexicons and structures that criminalize the PKK. CDA highlights the importance of revealing such lexicons and structures and the implications that they serve (Van Dijk, 2006). Such lexicons and structures are discerned in the statements that attribute criminal deeds to the PKK such as kidnaping children and murdering civilians. For example, Nurettin Canikli, Turkey's deputy prime minister described the PKK as a group that "massacred civilians for many years" (quoted in AA, 14 July, 2016). Erdogan in his October, 2015 speech in the parliament used more structures against the PKK as he in described it as a group that killed innocent people and massacred children. Erdogan stated:

"We have seen that this structure that killed scores of innocent people without blinking an eye for the sake of their own objectives, still insists on the same methods and we shivered", "This mentality that has massacred Elif Şimşek, Yasin Börü and Fırat Simpil and moreover despitely conducts perception operations

over dead bodies of children can have nothing in common with my Kurdish brothers” (quoted in TCCB, 1 October, 2015).

In this part of Erdogan speech, he used the lexicons and structures ‘killed innocent people’, ‘massacred children’, and that the PKK has continued with such ‘methods’, that ‘shivered’ the Turkish authorities. In another statement, Erdogan uses the metaphor “blood sucking vampires” to refer to the PKK (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 11 June, 2014). Van Dijk (2006) and Bhatia (2009) argue that metaphor has an ideological function as it aims at influencing the cognition of audience in order to accept the message of text.

The narrative of Turkish official texts, which limits the acts of killings and armed violence (or ‘terrorism’) against civilians to the PKK is challenged by many sources, which blame the Turkish authorities for large-scale violations against human rights in the Kurdish region. Uncovering the clandestine network of Ergenekon that allegedly plotted against the AKP authorities in 2007, led Erdogan to admit the existence of a deep-state in Turkey in which the Turkish Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terror Unit (JITEM) played a powerful role (Kaya, 2009: 103; Taş, 2014: 173; Ünver, 2009).<sup>106</sup> The AKP campaign against the Ergenekon affiliated military officials led also to uncovering important details about the relationship between JITEM and the cases of “unresolved murders” which denote the extrajudicial killings of thousands of Kurdish activists and civilians during the 1980s and 1990s whose perpetrators remained unknown to the public (Avşar, *et al.*, 2013; Bayramoglu, 2017; Laizer, 2017; Seibert, 2010).<sup>107</sup> However, ‘unsolved murders’ were described by a retired Turkish admiral Atilla Kıyat as “state policy” and blamed the responsibility about these crimes to JITEM and

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<sup>106</sup> Ergenekon network is also discussed in chapter 4.

In Turkish: *Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele, JİTM*.

<sup>107</sup> Laizer, S. (2017) provides detailed report which discusses testimonies and events and claimed the involvement of high Turkish officials in some cases of extrajudicial killings of Kurdish businessmen by special Turkish agents. Laizer (2017) also argues that the current Turkish authorities of AKP have also prepared lists of political enemies including Kurdish activists and Gulen movement (FETO) members who live in Europe.

the head of Turkish governments of the 1990s (Hurriyet Daily News, 8 August, 2010; Seibert, 2010). Daniel Steinvoth (2009, 2009b) in his reports revealed clues to the practices of disappearance, torture, and killing of PKK suspected sympathisers by JITEM. Steinvoth (2009) stated that “throughout the 1980s and 1990s, thousands of civil rights activists, politicians and businesspeople suspected of having ties with the PKK were kidnapped and murdered”. Steinvoth (2009, 2009b) interviewed eyewitnesses and former JITEM members who fled to the Western countries. Abdülkadir Aygan, one of the former members JITEM stated:

"We used to murder people at night during the long hours when the soldiers weren't around", and that JITEM tortured victims to the point of death as he stated “no one survived an interrogation by JITEM people" (quoted in Steinvoth, 2009b).

An example of the human rights reports of the 1990s that blame the Turkish forces for large-scale violations against civilian Kurds is the 1993 report of Helsinki Watch, which is a branch of Human Rights Watch. The report unveils details about many cases of violations against human rights perpetrated by the Turkish forces and PKK during the conflict in the Kurdish region of Turkey (Helsinki Watch, 1993). The report revealed to acts of killing by the PKK against the Turkish forces and those who assisted the Turkish forces. However, the report highlights cases of killing large numbers of civilians by the Turkish forces (Helsinki Watch, 1993: 6). The report also reveals that in some cases the Turkish forces opened fire on Kurdish civilians as retaliation for the losses of military in the clashes with PKK (Helsinki Watch, 1993: 6-11). For instance, following a clash between the PKK and Turkish forces in the town of Kulp in 1992, which left casualties among the Turkish soldiers, the Turkish forces randomly opened fire on “houses, shops and vehicles until nightfall” causing deaths and injuries among civilians.

The recent reports of human rights organizations also blame the current Turkish authorities of AKP for grave violations against Kurds. Following the collapse of peace process between the PKK and AKP authorities in 2015, the Kurdish region of Turkey underwent another episode of large-scale violations against human rights including killing, torture, forceful displacement and demolishing of properties (AI, 2016a, January, 2016, December, 2016; Corporate Watch, 2016; HRW, July 2016; OHCHR, 2017, 2018). This is more detailed in chapter 8.

**The PKK is a “criminal group that is involved in the organized crime of international drug-trafficking”.**

The text of TMFA titled ‘PKK’ constructs the PKK as an organization that practices organized crime, and that its crimes are threat to the international community (MFA, n.d., e). The text also suggests that the PKK sympathizers in Europe are involved in criminal acts, and it urges the European authorities to take tough measures against them. The text uses terms like “subsidiaries” who “exploit” “the democratic rights and freedoms” in the European countries to describe the PKK sympathisers, and it describes their actions as “unlawful acts” (MFA, n. d., e). In its second paragraph, the text states that the “PKK is also involved in extortion, arms smuggling, and drug-trafficking” (MFA, n. d., e). The text also states that “in a number of European countries there are ongoing investigations and court cases related to financing of PKK terrorism” and that “in a major European country, the number of court files related to PKK related illegal activities exceeded five thousand” (MFA, n. d., e). The text does not provide any reference to the name of country or type of ‘illegal activities’ that are investigated. The text avoids referring to that the PKK as a political party is banned in many EU countries, and accordingly, any activity of supporting the PKK is ‘illegal’. The illegal activities of the PKK could mean any activity such as public meetings and fundraising. However, the text implicitly establishes connection between these ‘illegal activities’ and the acts of organized

crime. This is as the term ‘illegal activities’ is situated in the context of constructions of organized crime in the text (MFA, n. d., e).

The text mainly constructs the PKK as a group that is involved in ‘international drug-trafficking’. This implies that the crime of ‘drug trafficking’ is the funding source of the ‘PKK terrorism’. As evidence for its claim, the text refers to two texts by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which were produced in 2009 and 2011. These two texts accuse major figures of the leaderships of the PKK and Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) of drug-trafficking (US Department of the Treasury, 2009, 2011). The American texts do not refer to KNK but consider all the named persons accused of drug-trafficking as members of PKK. KNK is a civic political organization affiliated with the PKK and its leadership is based in Europe (Gunter, 2013b: 82-84; Uzun, 2014: 23).<sup>108</sup> Although the text TMFA alleges that there are thousands of legal files against the PKK in a single unidentified European country, it refers only to two American texts as evidence for this claim. The two American texts are not detailed reports but one-page press statements. The American texts abstractly accuse the leadership members of KNK and PKK of drug-trafficking, and they announce bans on all financial transactions related to the PKK. In addition, both texts have no reference to a particular case of drug-trafficking inside or outside the US (US Department of the Treasury, 2009, 2011). The research also did not find any such an American case of drug-trafficking related to the PKK. Furthermore, the research found no record for financial or investment activities related to the PKK in the US. Therefore, the American texts are not related to actual cases of drug-trafficking investigated by law enforcement institutions in the US.

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<sup>108</sup> See also KNK. (2017). Kurdistan National Congress. *Kongreya Neteweyî ya Kurdistanê (KNK)*. [online]. available at: <http://www.kongrakurdistan.net/en/> [accessed: 10 April, 2017].

The two American texts were produced as part of the policy of US administration of to support Turkey in its anti-terrorism measures. The texts merely depend in their accounts on the claims of Turkish authorities with whom the agencies of the US administration coordinated in the counter-terrorism policy. Therefore, the information of the Turkish government and agencies have been treated by the US agencies as part of evidence against the PKK. One of the sources of information about financing terrorist groups that the US agencies rely on is the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in which Turkey is a member. The Turkish membership of FATF is also stated in the text of TMFA, which is titled ‘Turkey’s contributions to international community’s efforts to fight terrorism’ (MFA, n. d., b). The research found only one reference to the PKK in the website of FATF. This reference is found in the 2007 FATF report about Turkey (FATF, 2007: 5). The report is 231 pages and claimed that drug-trafficking constituted 42% of predicate offences in Turkey (FATF, 2007: 3). However, in its 5<sup>th</sup> page, the report referred to the PKK as drug trafficker, and this reference depends on a claim by the Turkish General Directorate of Security’s Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organised Crime (FATF, 2007: 5). The American text of 2009 claims that there are cases related to drug-trafficking against PKK members in Germany, which is the country that has the largest and most active Kurdish community in Europe (Casier & Jongerden, 2011: 19-20).<sup>109</sup>

This claim of the American text was disapproved by the 2011 annual report of the Protection of the Constitution by the intelligence service of Germany who denied any involvement of the PKK leadership in drug-trafficking (BfV, 2011: 342). Two KNK figures whom the American texts accused of drug-trafficking ‘Remzi Kartal and Zübeyir Aydar’ live in Europe as leading Kurdish activists, and if such allegations have any foundations they would be sued as suspects of drug-trafficking (Gunes, 2016; Kutschera, 2012). Remzi Kartal refused such accusations

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<sup>109</sup> See also Galip, O. (2014).



and stated that "how can we have anything to do with drug-trafficking; these are all slander", "were they able to present a single evidence to prove that we were involved in drug-trafficking?" (quoted in BBC Mentoring, 27 June 2013).<sup>110</sup>

The research suggests that the American texts of 2009 and 2011 were produced at the request of the Turkish government in order to practice more pressure on the PKK and the Kurdish negotiating team during the 2009-2011 peace talks between the PKK and Turkey. Remzi Kartal, Zübeyir Aydar, Sabri Ok and Adem Uzun who were described in the American texts as drug traffickers, were the members of the Kurdish team for peace negotiations which began in 2009 in Oslo (BBC Monitoring, 27 June, 2013; Kutschera, 2012; Hurriyet Daily News, 26 September, 2012; Peace in Kurdistan, 2013). It is important to notice the dates of publishing the American texts in 2009 and 2011 (US Department of the Treasury, 2009, 2011). 2009-2011 are also the dates in which the negotiations between the Turkish authorities and the PKK began and stopped (Kutschera, 2012).

Text of TMFA, which is titled "Turkey's contributions in the fight Against drug-trafficking" serves the same implied messages and agenda of the text titled 'PKK' (MFA, n. d., d). Although drug-trafficking and terrorism are different subjects, this text is located in the section of terrorism and under the general title of 'terrorism' in the website of the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs (MFA, n. d., a). Drug-trafficking is part of organized crime, and the website has a separate section titled "Combating organized crime", which briefs the subject of drug-

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<sup>110</sup> Leading pro-PKK activists who live in Europe usually face different kind of accusation presented to the Interpol and EU institution by the Turkish authorities (AA, 20 March, 2016). Remzi Kartal, Zubeyir Aydar and Adem Uzun were sued for membership in the PKK by Belgian Federal prosecutor and their cases were in front of the court between 2006-2016 (Kurdish Question, November, 2016). However, the court decided in November 2016 that their action against the Turkish authorities was not terrorism (Sanderson, 2016; Kurdish Question, November, 2016).

trafficking in few sentences (MFA, n. d., i). Locating a text about drug-trafficking in the section of terrorism, which shows the PKK as the only international drug-trafficking group has a message, which aims at delegitimizing and criminalizing the PKK and its sympathizers in Europe, and this is the same implied message of the text titled 'PKK'. The text creates the assumption that the Turkish policies against the PKK and its sympathizers are to protect Europe from organized crime. The text referred only to the PKK as an international drug-trafficking organization, which operates between Turkey and Europe as it states that "PKK/KCK terrorist organization is considered to be an important player in the international drug smuggling network due to its widespread connections in Turkey and Europe" (MFA, n. d., d). The term 'connections' implies the sympathisers and supporters of PKK. This is because the PKK is banned and has no official or permitted offices or 'connections' in Europe, but it has a large Kurdish community of sympathisers and supporters there (see Reuters, 18 March, 2017).

The text describes Turkey as a global hub of drug-trafficking, which has played a principal role in the war on drug-trafficking. However, the text implies drug-trafficking as non-Turkish phenomenon. As highlighted above, the text referred only to the PKK as the international organization of drug-trafficking, and it omits any reference to the names or details of Turkish individuals and gangs involved in drug-trafficking inside Turkey or abroad. It is relevant to invoke the 1996 Susruluk scandal which exposed the involvement of some high-profile Turkish personnel in organized crime and international drug-trafficking, and was quickly covered up by the then Turkish government (Gunter, 2008:117-118; Jongerden, 2007: 55-56 & 65; Kinzer, 31 December, 1996). However, the following investigations revealed more details about the scandal (Hurriyet Daily News, 28 October, 2001, Paoli *et al.*, 2009: 287-288). The information revealed that several Turkish officials who were involved in drug-trafficking and other crimes were also part of counter-terrorism operations, which mainly targeted the PKK and Kurds.

Michael Gunter (2008: 66) argues that as part of its counter-terrorism measures against the PKK, the Turkish authorities “hired right-wing criminals on the lam to murder hundreds of perceived civilian enemies of the state in return for turning a blind eye to their drug-trafficking”. As the text of TMFA omits certain agent who is responsible for a negative action, it serves certain ideological considerations (Van Dijk, 2001: 107).

Like the text of TMFA titled ‘PKK’, the text of TMFA titled ‘Turkey’s contributions in the fight against drug-trafficking’ provides no concrete evidence for its narrative regarding the involvement of PKK in international drug-trafficking (MFA, n. d., d; MFA, n. d., e). Although the text claims that the investigation in the cases of drug-trafficking related to the PKK is one of three pillars of the Turkish counter-narcotics policy, it allocated only 5 abstracted lines out of its 69 lines to describe the PKK involvement in drug-trafficking (MFA, n. d., d). As an evidence to its claim, the text states that “details of statistics and related analysis may be accessed through [www.kom.pol.tr](http://www.kom.pol.tr)” (MFA, n. d., d). The text used the terms ‘details, statistics, and analysis’ in order to create a sense of credibility to the reader. However, the website-address, which the text used as an evidence to support its claim is run by the Turkish authorities and in Turkish language. Accordingly, using such a website as an evidence is because the producer of the ministry’s text could not provide evidence in English language from non-Turkish source other than the two texts of US Department of Treasury which are discussed above.

The narrative that the PKK is a drug-trafficking organization, which constitute a major threat to Europe is also discerned in the statements of the AKP officials. For example, during a visit to UK, the Turkish prime-minster, Binali Yildirim claimed that the EU supports the PKK as a

punishment against Turkey although the PKK is involved in drug-trafficking in Europe.

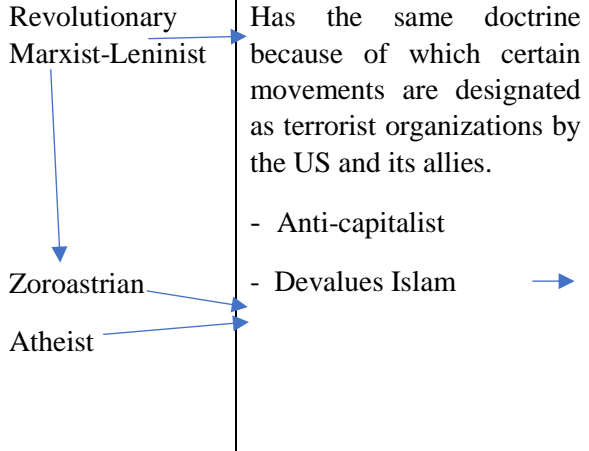
Yildirim stated:

“The PKK deals in drugs: it peddles heroin and cocaine to the European youth – that’s how they make money”, “yet the European Union still supports this organisation. If they are doing this to punish Turkey, they should think about the health of their future generations” (quoted in Sengupta, 2017).

The construction of PKK as drug trafficker is also employed in creating the sense of legitimacy regarding the Turkish military operations and excessive use of force in the Kurdish region. This is discerned in the statement of Turkish minister of interior, which constructs the military operation of 2015-2016 in the Kurdish region as an operation to destroy drug production. This is although the military operation has resulted in flagrant violations of human rights, which were referred to in a previous part of this chapter. The Turkish interior minister claimed that the Turkish forces managed to destroy a large cannabis field of the PKK in the south-east of Turkey (Hurriyet Daily News, June 2016). In another part of his statement, the minister considered the armed campaign as a provision to deal with the threat of establishing autonomy by PKK in Turkey and he claimed that the PKK has already established the Syrian Kurdish autonomy as he stated:

“They have tried to declare ‘cantons’ inside Turkey after they did the same in Syria. They launched these efforts in 12 different provinces in Turkey. But they now realize that Turkey is not Syria and they have all been cleared from these provinces” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, June 2016).

**Table 4. Summary of the major constructions and narratives regarding the PKK in the Turkish official texts.** The table also states the assumptions that these constructions and narratives create, their expected outcomes and challenging arguments. CDA highlights that assumptions serve bias and ideological implications (Fairclough, 1995; 2003).

Constructions and narratives		Expected outcomes	Research arguments and findings
Label	Assumption/ implication		
Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist  Zoroastrian Atheist	Has the same doctrine because of which certain movements are designated as terrorist organizations by the US and its allies. - Anti-capitalist - Devalues Islam	- Negative Western view. - Antagonism of Turkey's Muslims.	- Had Marxist foundations. - No more supporting the working-class question of Marxism, but the question of identities, which is post-modern doctrine.
Separatist	-Its action is considered as 'separatist-terrorism' according to the Turkish law of anti-terrorism. - It is against the national unity of Turkey = against Turkishness identity. - Chaotic movement that aims at disintegration and instability of Turkey. - Its goal is not supported by the international law.	- To delegitimize the goal of PKK.	- PKK was calling for the independence of Kurdistan. - PKK no more calls for independence, but for the autonomy of Kurdistan.
Ethno-nationalist	- Ethnically motivated armed movement = racist. - Its motivations are not supported by the international law.	- To delegitimize the motivations of PKK.	- PKK is a movement of Kurds who are a nation and not part of the Turkish nation.

<p>Murderers who targets civilians and civic services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Terrorist</li> <li>- Criminal</li> <li>-Perpetrator of sabotage actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To consider as reality the narrative that the action of PKK is terrorism.</li> <li>- To delegitimize the PKK and condemn its actions.</li> <li>- To hide the violent role of the Turkish forces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The violence of the PKK is part of an armed conflict, which involves both the Turkish forces and the PKK.</li> <li>- Turkish forces were involved in large-scale violations against the Kurds.</li> </ul>
<p>Involved in the organized crime of international drug-trafficking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criminal</li> <li>-Its terrorism is founded by drug-trafficking.</li> <li>- It is a threat to the international community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To delegitimize the PKK and to condemn its actions.</li> <li>- To persuade the EU countries to take measures against the PKK sympathisers in Europe.</li> <li>- To legitimate the excessive use of force against the Kurds by the Turkish authorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No concrete evidence provided in the Turkish texts.</li> <li>- The claim was refused by the leading Kurdish activists who live in Europe, and it was also dismissed by the German authorities.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

The Turkish definition of terrorism is interdiscursively connected to both the constitutional principle of indivisibility and separatism. This interdiscursive relationship constructed ‘separatist-terrorism’, which is considered as a main form of terrorism and is given a large space in the Turkish official discourse. Separatist-terrorism is not limited to the violent action of the PKK, but it is also applied against various non-violent actions of pro-Kurdish nationalism by other groups and individuals. The mutual characteristic of such violent and non-violent actions is that they all infringe the constitutional principle of the ‘indivisibility’ of Turkey.

The analysis of Turkish official texts in this chapter reveals that the full name of Kurdistan Workers' Party is omitted in the texts of TMFA and other official texts. This is mainly due to that the term 'Kurdistan' is denied in the Turkish nationalist discourse and forbidden by the Turkish law. The analysis also reveals that 5 main constructions and narratives are formed in the context of the dominant narrative of terrorism that targets the PKK. These include the construction of the PKK as revolutionary Marxist-Leninist, separatist, ethnically motivated, and group of 'murderers' who targets civilians and civic services, and a criminal group who is involved in international drug trafficking. Some of these narratives and constructions are taking more space than the others in the Turkish official texts. However, the narrative that PKK targets civilians and civic services is more dominant than all other narratives in the Turkish official texts. The analysis revealed that these constructions and narratives have certain implied messages and hidden agendas. The analysis highlights that the major messages behind these constructions and narratives is to delegitimize the PKK, and to legitimize the action of the Turkish authorities against the PKK and Kurds.

The Turkish official texts continue to construct the PKK as a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organizations although the PKK abandoned Marxism since the 1990s. The analysis revealed that the construction of the PKK as revolutionary Marxist-Leninist creates two assumption that serve certain agenda. First, the construction creates the assumption that the PKK has the same doctrine of the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist movements that are designated as terrorist organizations by the US and its allies. This construction creates the assumption that the PKK is anti-capitalist movement, and this assumption aims at maintaining both the negative view of the Western countries and their designation of the PKK as a terrorist organization. Second, the label Marxist creates the assumption that the PKK is an organization that devalues Islam, which is the main religion in Turkey, and this incites the antagonism of conservative Muslims against

the PKK. To support the assumption that the PKK devalues Islam, the Turkish officials also construct the PKK militants as Zoroastrians and atheists. On the other hand, the AKP officials show the AKP as the guardian of Islam in Turkey.

Turkish official texts also continue to construct the PKK as ‘separatist’ although it already abandoned independence and it has called for the autonomy for Kurds in Turkey. However, separatism, which is considered as a form of terrorism in the Turkish law and official discourse extends the acts of infringing the territorial integrity of Turkey to include disrupting the national unity of Turkey or degrading its Turkish identity. The term of ‘separatist’ also creates the assumption that the PKK is chaotic movement that aims at the disintegration and instability of Turkey. Like the construction ‘separatist’, the construction “ethno-nationalist” creates the assumption that the PKK is an armed group that has ethnic motivations, which are not supported by the international law and norms. The construction of the PKK as ‘separatist group’ that has ‘ethnic’ motivations is interacted with the implications of denial of the Kurdish nation in the Turkish official discourse, which constructs the Kurds as a part of the nation of Turkey.

The Turkish official texts construct the PKK as a group of murderers who target civilians and civic services. This narrative supports the establishment as reality the narrative that the PKK action is terrorism. This depends on the common understanding of terrorism as the armed violence that target civilians. This construction is reinforced by the widely repeated narrative that the PKK terrorism resulted in the death of 40 thousand people. However, the Turkish official texts omit and background references to the armed conflict and the involvement of Turkish forces in the violence. Several reports of international organizations of human rights challenge the narrative of the Turkish authorities and accuse the Turkish forces of large-scale



violations of human rights perpetrated in the Kurdish region. The reports disclose that these violations were not only during the rule of previous governments but also during the rule of the current government of AKP.

The Turkish official texts also construct the PKK as a criminal group that is involved in international drug-trafficking to fund its terrorism. The findings of the research challenged the claims of the Turkish texts about the involvement of PKK in international drug-trafficking and revealed that these claims are not based on concrete evidence. The analysis highlights that this narrative creates the assumption that that the PKK constitutes a criminal threat against the international community. In addition, constructing the PKK as drug-trafficking group in the Turkish official texts, which mainly targets the sympathisers of PKK in Europe, aims at persuading the European authorities to conduct tough measures against them. Constructing the PKK as drug trafficker also serves legitimating the excessive use of force and repressive policies of the Turkish authorities against the Kurds in Turkey.

## **Chapter 6:** *Analysis of the discursive constructions of PYD and YPG in the Turkish official texts*

### Introduction

The Turkish official discourse constructs the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (in Kurdish: *Party Yekitiy Demokrat*, PYD), and the People's Protection Units (in Kurdish: *Yekineyen Parastina Gel*, YPG) as organic parts of the PKK. Although the Units for Protecting Women (in Kurdish: *Yekineyen Parastina Jin*, YPJ) operate alongside the YPG, they share the same central command of the YPG (YPGRojava.org, n. d; YPGRojava.org, January, 2017).<sup>111</sup> In addition, the Turkish official texts usually do not refer to the YPJ, and instead they refer to the YPG. Therefore, the research uses the acronym of YPG as a reference to both YPG and YPJ. As stated earlier, the Turkish official texts use the acronyms 'PYD or YPG' as reference to both organizations although the PYD is political party, while the YPG is the armed force of *Rojava* semi-autonomous administration (see Map 4).<sup>112</sup> Therefore, the researcher frequently uses PYD-YPG instead of PYD and YPG.

The construction of PYD-YPG as part of the PKK implies that the same constructions and narratives of the Turkish official discourse regarding the PKK are applied to the PYD-YPG.<sup>113</sup> However, certain narratives and constructions are mainly used against the PYD-YPG in the context of the Turkish narrative of terrorism. This is although these constructions and narratives

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<sup>111</sup> The source: YPGRojava.org has no publishing date. Therefore, (n. d.) is used.

<sup>112</sup> During the years 2012-2016 the de-facto *Rojava* semi-autonomous administration was formed, and in July 2016 its legislative council adopted federalism as a system of governance and relationship with the rest of Syria (Sary, 2016: 11). This is although the Syrian government does not recognize the *Rojava* administration. *Rojava* is ruled by the PYD and other parties, and it consists of three main administrative cantons including *Jazira*, *Kobani*, and *Afrin* (see Map 4).

<sup>113</sup> The research frequently uses PYD-YPG instead of PYD and YPG.

usually involve the PKK. The constructions and narratives about the PYD and YPG in the Turkish official texts are formed according to three main dimensions. These dimensions are the following: a). The PYD-YPG constitute a threat against Turkey, b). They constitute a threat against Syria, c). They constitute a threat against the international community. However, these constructions and narratives are ordered in the chapter as the following:

- The PYD and YPG are organic parts of the PKK.
- They constitute a threat to the national security of Turkey.
- They are involved in attacks inside Turkey.
- They are proxies used by other countries against Turkey.
- As separatist organizations they constitute threats to both the territorial integrity of Syria and national security of Turkey.
- They constitute a security threat against the international community.
- They are criminal organizations that are involved in acts of ethnic cleansing in Syria.

The analysis reveals the implied messages of these constructions and narratives, which serve certain agenda and policies of the Turkish authorities. The analysis also highlights the relationship between ideological considerations of the Turkish authorities and their anti-PYD-YPG policy.

### **The PYD and YPG as organic parts of the PKK**

Majority of the texts that reflect the Turkish official view about the PYD and YPG construct an organic relationship between the PYD-YPG and PKK. Unlike the PKK who is allocated a text titled 'PKK' in the website of the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs, the PYD and YPG are not allocated a separate text. However, the ministry's text, which is titled 'PKK' constructs the PYD-YPG as organic branches of the PKK. The text states:

“PYD/YPG’s affiliation with PKK is clear. PYD/YPG was set up under the control of PKK terrorist organization in 2003. They share the same leadership cadres, organizational structure, strategies and tactics, military structure, propaganda tools, financial resources and training camps” (MFA, n. d., e).<sup>114</sup>

Constructing the PYD and YPG as organic parts of the PKK is also discerned in the statements of Turkish officials. For example, Ibrahim Kalin, spokesman of the Turkish presidency described the YPG as “an organic extension of the PKK” (quoted in AA, 12 July, 2016). The Turkish officials even describe the PYD-YPG to be the PKK itself, but in other names. For example, Davutoglu claimed that the YPG “receives instructions from the PKK” and that “the PKK and PYD are the same” (quoted in Daily Sabah, February, 2016). Likewise, Erdogan stated that “YPG and PYD are the offshoots of the PKK. They are together. They are the same” (quoted in MFA, 28 September, 2016). Erdogan also claimed that because the PKK is classified as a terrorist organization, it tries “to deceive the international community and win legitimacy by operating under the name of PYD in Syria” (quoted in Pamuk & Tattersall, 22 October, 2015). Likewise, the Turkish prime-minister (PM), Binali Yildirim stated that “the PYD as well as the YPG are the same as the PKK” (quoted in Anadolu Agency, 4 October, 2016b). Yildirim claimed that the PKK uses the names YPG and (Syrian Democratic Forces, SDF) as he stated that “the PKK takes different initials like YPG and SDF. But they are all the same” (quoted in Sengupta, 2017).<sup>115</sup> SDF was established in October, 2015 as an umbrella that joins YPG, YPJ, and Arab and Syriac groups, and it constitutes the main ground-force of the US-led coalition against ISIL (Al-Khalidi & Perry, October, 2015; Casagrande, November, 2016).

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<sup>114</sup> The text of Turkish ministry of foreign affairs has no date of publish. Therefore, the research uses (n. d., e).

<sup>115</sup> SDF is the acronym of Syrian Democratic Forces. (in Kurdish: *Hêzên Sûriya Demokratîk*, HSD), (in Arabic: *قوات سوريا الديمقراطية*). The YPG constituted the majority of SDF. Liz Sly (2016) in her report published on the *Washington Post* estimated that 45000 out of 60000 militants of SDF were YPG members. See more on SDF in Casagrande, G. (November, 2016).

SDF is currently considered as the force of north and north-east region of Syria (see Appendix Map 13).

The PYD-YPG have been in relationship with the PKK. However, this relationship is not organic as the text of Turkish ministry and other official texts claim. In particular, constructing the PYD-YPG as organic parts of the PKK after 2011 is misleading description, which overlooks each of the historical evolvement of PYD and YPG, the geopolitical conditions, and motivations that govern their organizational structures and action. The text of Turkish foreign ministry refers to certain domains where the PYD-YPG and PKK share organic connections. This is although the reference to these domains in the text does not include elaborating details. These domains include the following:

1. Leadership, organizational structure, military structure, 2. Propaganda tools.
3. Strategies, tactics, and training camps, 4. Financial or funding resources.

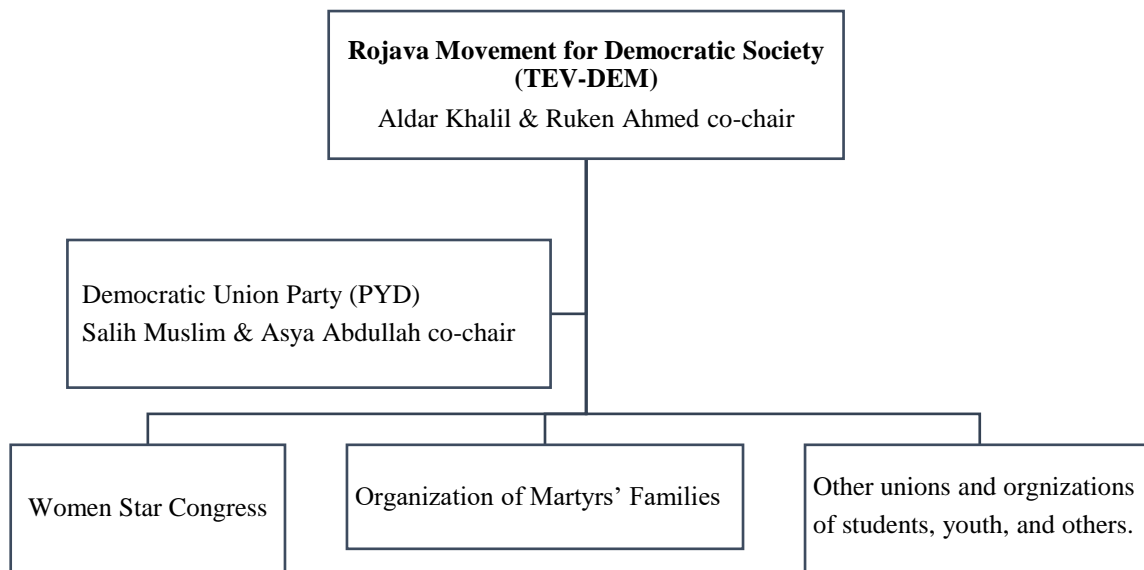
The text of ministry overlooks that the post-2011 conditions of Syria made the PYD more powerful, less dependent on the PKK, and more assertive of its Syrian identity. Following its establishment in 2003, the PYD was oppressed by the Syrian regime and many of its members were imprisoned and mistreated (HRW, 2009; KNK, 2014: 9; US Department of State, 2009). The PYD was acting clandestinely and was more dependent on the PKK protection and support (Jenkins, 2016). However, the PYD hardship eased following the Syrian crisis of 2011 when the Syrian regime ceased its repressive policy against the Syrian Kurds and released many detained members of PYD (BBC, 7 April, 2011; Oweis, 2013). This in addition to the withdrawal of the forces of the regime from the main Kurdish areas in 2012 reflected positively on the publicity of the PYD and its organizational capabilities (Ates, 2012; BBC, 17 October, 2013; Petrocco, 2012). Although the PYD continued its affiliation with the PKK, it began to

emphasize its Syrian identity (Jenkins, 2016). In 2011 the Movement of Democratic Society (TEV-DEM) was established, and the PYD was considered as the major component of TEV-DEM, which currently gathers the PYD and its affiliated Syrian Kurdish political bodies (Sary, 2016:7), (see Figure 3).

The post-2011 statements of PYD and TEV-DEM leaderships repeatedly denied describing the PYD-YPG as branches of the PKK. For example, the PYD co-chair, Salih Muslim denied that the PYD is organically connected to the PKK and stated that “we have no organizational relations with the PKK” (quoted in Lund, 2014). In another statement, Muslim disapproved the claims of Turkish authorities that the PYD and YPG act according to the instructions of the PKK, and he emphasized that the PKK field of action is different from that of the PYD as he stated that the PKK is “Turkey's domestic business” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 7 March, 2016). Likewise, the co-chair of TEV-DEM, Aldar Khalil stated that “it is important to set the record straight. We are not the PKK, no matter how much Erdogan wishes it were so, and it is not difficult to explain why” (Khalil, 2017). Thus, Khalil claimed that the Turkish authorities construct them as part of the PKK although they deny this, and that this construction by the Turkish authorities has certain agendas.

The PYD and TEV-DEM leaderships admitted that the PYD has ideological connections with the PKK (BBC Monitoring, 7 March, 2016). The PYD-PKK ideological affiliations evolve around the Ocalan doctrine of democratic autonomy. Although TEV-DEM co-chair admitted that the PYD adopted Ocalan doctrine like the PKK, he stated that the PYD “implemented Ocalan’s ideas differently and pursued different aims” (Khalil, 2017). PYD has recently altered its doctrine to adopt the federation of *Rojava* and northern Syria, which joins Kurds, Arabs, Syriacs and other ethnic and religious groups, as a future system of governance and relationship

with the rest of Syria (Barfi, 2016: 32), unlike the PKK who has not involved in such system of governance because it has no such level of territorial control inside Turkey. Furthermore, Khalil (2017) highlighted that the PYD and YPG interact with geopolitical players who are different from those with whom the PKK interact. This is as the PYD and YPG have established certain types of relations with each of the US, some European countries, and Russia as the YPG has been involved in the international coalition against ISIL, and has been in conflicts with other Jihadist groups (Khalaf, 2016: 21; Tastekin, 22 April, 2016). The YPG has also clashed occasionally with the forces of the Syrian regime (BBC, 18 August, 2016; Barnard, 2016; Perry, 2016). Most important, the YPG is considered as the key ally of the US in the war against ISIL in Syria (Kirby, 8 February, 2016; Toner, 27 May, 2016, 15 March, 2017). On the other hand, the PKK is designated as a terrorist organization by the US and NATO members, and has no official relations with its governments (BBC, 23 August, 2016). In addition, the PKK is mainly in conflict with the Turkish forces although it actively contributed in the Kurdish resistance against ISIL in the Iraqi Kurdish areas (BBC, 23 August, 2016; Blaser, & Stein, 2016; Plakoudas, 2015). However, both the YPG and PKK cooperated against ISIL in the operation of rescuing Yezidi Kurds in Sinjar mountainous area in Iraq, which is adjacent to the Syrian border (in Kurdish: *Şingal*) (Moroz, 11 September, 2015; Salih & Civiroglu, 2014; Seibert, 16 August, 2014).



**Figure 3. Organizational structure of TEV-DEM.** PYD operates as part of TEV-DEM.

The post-2011 evolvement of the status of PYD accompanied with the evolvement of the YPG.<sup>116</sup> Although the YPG was formed clandestinely in 2004 as the military wing of PYD, it was reorganized in 2011, and was announced as the force of protecting the people of *Rojava* in 2012 (Jenkins, 2016; YPGRojava.org, n. d.), (see Figure 4). Before 2011 the YPG was almost inactive and insignificant militia that had no capabilities to operate in Syria (Jenkins, 2016). This is challenging the claim of the text of the Turkish ministry that the YPG was established as a branch of the PKK in 2003. However, since 2011 the YPG has rapidly grown in number, and has controlled large territories inside Syria. As the YPG gained more strength and control over Syrian Kurdish and non-Kurdish areas, its Syrian identity has dominated its ideology and agendas. The YPG rules of procedure show it as a Syrian military organization whose agendas are limited to Syria (Global Security, 2016a; HRW, June 2014; YPGRojava.org, n. d.).<sup>117</sup> As stated earlier, the YPG currently operates under the umbrella of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The latter joins the forces of

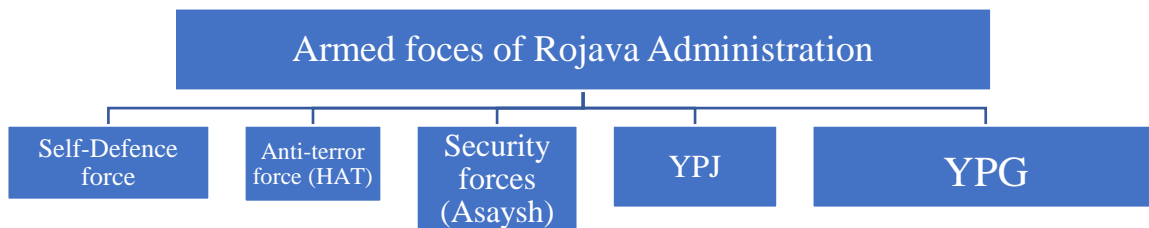
<sup>116</sup> This is also applied to the Units of Protecting the Women (YPJ).

<sup>117</sup> The source: YPGRojava.org has no publishing date. Therefore, (n. d.) is used.

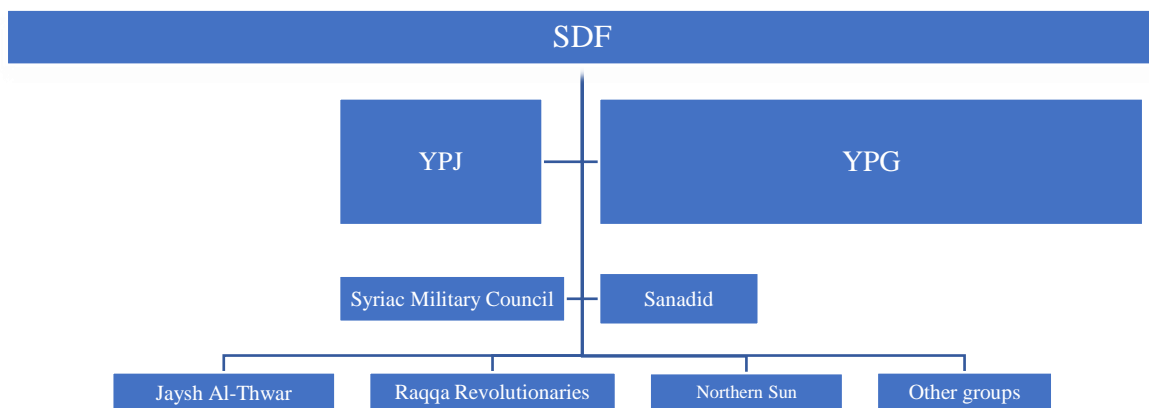


YPG-YPJ and the armed groups of Arabs, Syriacs and other minorities who share the goal of defeating ISIL and protecting the project of Rojava-Northern-Syria Federation (Barfi, 2016: 32; Casagrande, November, 2016; YPGRojava.org, n. d.) (see Figure 5).<sup>118</sup> The YPG defines itself as the following:

“The YPG is a people’s army set up and formed of volunteers. People from all the different nations, religions and spiritual groups of *Rojava* can join the YPG. Arabs, Assyrians, Turkmen, Armenians, Kurds and many other groups living in *Rojava*-Northern Syria are working united in the YPG” (YPGRojava.org, n. d.).<sup>119</sup>



**Figure 4. YPG as an armed force of *Rojava* administration.**



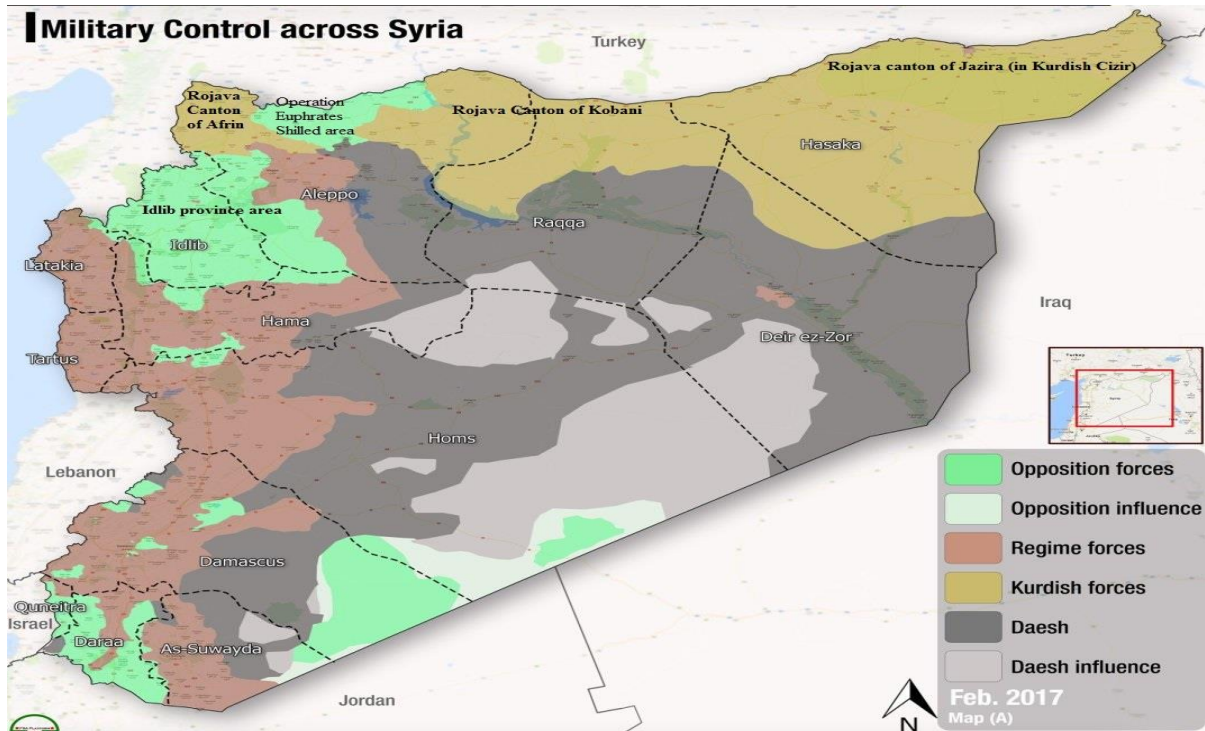
**Figure 5. YPG as part of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).**

<sup>118</sup> The YPG has also included a smaller number of individuals from the Western countries.

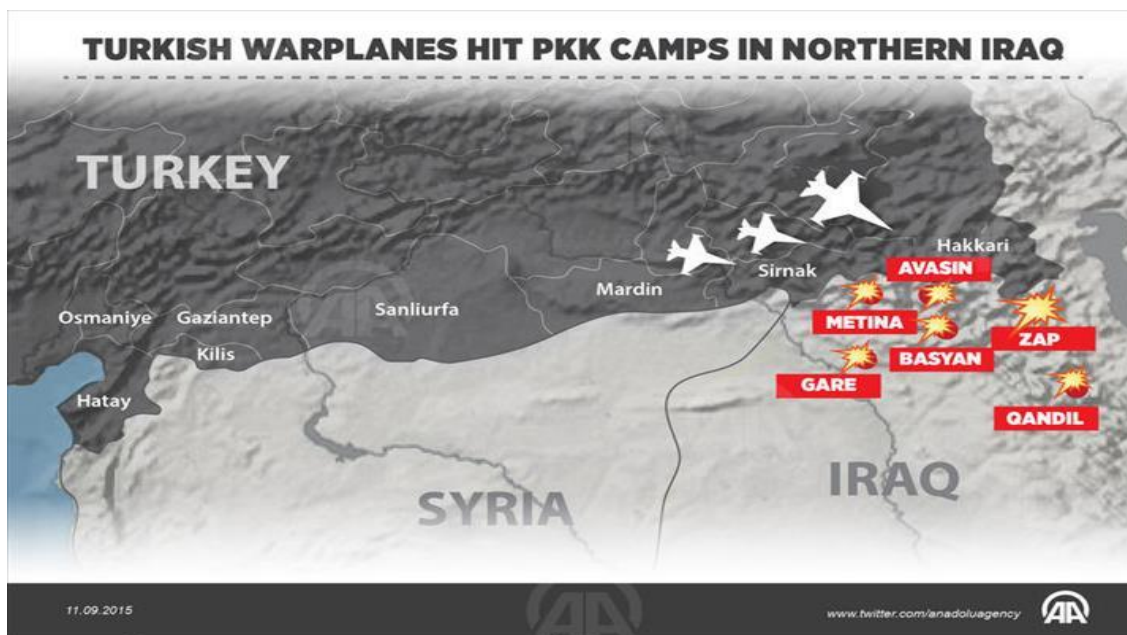
<sup>119</sup> See the footnote above.

The claim of the text of Turkish ministry that the strategies, tactics and training camps of YPG are the same of those of the PKK is also contested. The terms ‘strategies and tactics’ denote military actions. The ministry’s text connected these terms to the PYD although the PYD is a political party and not a military organization. Therefore, these terms are applicable to the YPG, but not to the PYD. The military strategies and tactics of PKK and YPG are different. The PKK mainly targets the Turkish military and police inside Turkey. The PKK usually uses light weapons in its guerrilla attacks of hit-and-run (Blaser, & Stein, 2016; Plakoudas, 2015). This is mostly because the PKK has no considerable territorial control, and it usually shelters its militants in camps in the mountainous areas between Turkey, Iraq and Iran (Stratfor, March, 2013), (see Map 5). Whereas, the YPG has grown from small militia to semi-regular army that conducts wider military operations and uses light and medium size weapons (Kube, 2017; Perry, 2017). In addition, the YPG is supported by air-force of the US-led coalition against ISIL (DW, 19 August, 2016; Perry, 2 February, 2015). Unlike the PKK, the YPG has controlled large territories in the north and north east of Syria (see Map 4) The YPG also get training support from the US and other countries of anti-ISIL coalition in their training centres in Syria (Blake, 2016; DW, November, 2015; MacAskill, 2016; Sisk, 2016; Yildiz, 2015). This challenges the Turkish official claim that the YPG use the same training camps of the PKK. However, constructing the YPG and PKK training camps to be the same of the PKK implies the YPG are involved in military actions inside Turkey (AA, 20 October, 2016; Sanchez, 2017). The claim of Turkish officials that the YPG are involved in attacks inside Turkey is explained later in this chapter.

**Map 4. Military control map of Syria.** The yellow coloured area in the north of Syria was under the control of YPG and SDF before invading the canton of Afrin in the north-west by the Turkish military and Islamist factions of FSA in March 2018 (see Appendix Map 13). Source: World in War (February, 2017). The researcher added to Map 4 the names of the cantons of *Rojava* administration, and the names of the two other regions of north Syria, which are governed by the groups of FSA and Al-Nusrah.



**Map 5. Locations and names of the PKK camps attacked by the Turkish warplanes.** These camps are located in the Kurdish mountainous area between Iraq, Turkey, and Iran. Source: AA. (11 September, 2015).



The claim of the text of the Turkish ministry that the PYD-YPG and PKK use the same tools for their propaganda is also disputed. Although the PYD-YPG and PKK support each other in their media outlets, they are not using the same media tools. The PYD-YPG and PKK official texts are usually published in official newspapers, magazines, internet websites, TV and radio channels. However, the PYD-YPG newspapers, magazines, internet websites, TV and radio channels are not the same of these of the PKK. For example, Ronahi TV channel is pro- PYD (Ronahi TV website: <http://ronahitv.com/>, see also <http://karwan.tv/ronahi-tv.html>), while Med-Nuce TV channel is pro-PKK (Med-Nuce TV website: <http://mednuce.tv/>). Another example, the PYD and YPG official websites are <http://pydrojava.net/english/>, <https://www.ypgrojava.org/english>, while the PKK official website is <https://www.pkkonline.com/en/>. Furthermore, the PYD-YPG usually publish their texts in Arabic and Kurdish, while the PKK usually publish its texts in Turkish and Kurdish. However, as part of their propaganda, the PYD-YPG consider the PKK leader Ocalan as their spiritual leader. The view of PYD and TEV-DEM regarding Ocalan are discussed earlier. In addition, PYD-YPG radio channels considerably cover the news of Kurds in Turkey and their political activities and militant actions. For example, Ronahi TV allocates a space for the news of the Kurdish region of Turkey and quotes the statements of PKK, HDP and their leaderships (Ronahi TV). Likewise, the pro-PKK TVs allocate a considerable space to the news about Syrian Kurds and quote the statements of PYD-YPG leaderships. However, the official websites of PYD and YPG concentrates on Syria and Syrian Kurds, and similarly the PKK website focusses on the issues related to the Kurds in Turkey (to see these websites, click the above links).

The claim of the text of Turkish foreign ministry that the PYD-YPG and PKK have the same finance or funding resources is also challenged. The funding resources of PYD-YPG, mainly

depend on the revenues of oil, agriculture, and tax generated in the areas governed by *Rojava* administration in the north of Syria (Kajjo, July, 2016; Sary, 2016: 15). The YPG also gets weaponry and other types of military support from the US and other anti-ISIL coalition members (Allen, 2017; Snow, 2017). As explained earlier, the PKK who has no such territorial control and international support, therefore, it does not have such funding and weaponry sources. Instead, the PKK depends on limited financial resources. One of the major funding resource of the PKK is the donations by the Kurds inside Turkey and in the diaspora (Dirik, 2015; ICG, 2017). However, constructing the PYD-YPG funding sources to be the same of these of the PKK implies that the PYD-YPG are funded by drug-trafficking money. As explained in the previous chapter, the Turkish official discourse claims that the PKK as is international drug-trafficker although this claim is not based on concrete evidence (see MFA, n. d., d; MFA, n. d., e).

Although the text of Turkish ministry constructs the PYD and YPG to be merely parts of the PKK, the text omits any reference to the political goals of PYD-YPG. As stated earlier, omitting certain information from text is a feature that serves bias and ideology (Van Dijk, 2001; Mayr, 2008). As the goals of PYD-YPG are different from those of the PKK, this implies that the producer of the text intended to hide this dissimilarity between the PYD-YPG and PKK. While the goals of PYD-YPG are limited to the Kurdish rights inside Syria and to the protection of the de-facto *Rojava* administration (Global Security. 2016a, 2016b; PYDRojava.net; YPGRojava.org), the PKK main goal is to find a solution for the Kurdish question in Turkey (BBC, 4 November, 2016; PKKonline.com; Uzun, 2014). However, the Turkish official discourse constructs the PYD-YPG as part of Turkey's security matters, and as a phenomenon, which is alien to Syrian political questions.

The construction of PYD-YPG as part of the PKK indicates that the PYD and YPG constitute a threat to the national security of Turkey. The construction also builds the implication that all the constructions of the PKK in the Turkish official discourse apply to the PYD-YPG. These include constructing the PKK as terrorist, revolutionary Marxist-Leninist, separatist, racial, and criminal organization. In addition to the construction of the PYD-YPG as organic parts of the PKK, there are other dominant discursive constructions and narratives in the Turkish official discourse about the PYD and YPG. These constructions and narratives are repeated in the statements of Turkish officials, which are discussed in the coming sections.

### **The PYD-YPG as a threat to the national security of Turkey**

As stated earlier, the construction of the PYD and YPG as organic parts of the PKK suggests that they constitute a threat against the national security of Turkey like the PKK. Erdogan stated that the PYD and YPG “pose a threat to our country” because they are part of the PKK (quoted in MFA, 28 September, 2016). In addition to the construction of the PYD-YPG as organic parts of the PKK, three other narratives of the Turkish official discourse construct the PYD-YPG as a threat to the Turkish national security. These include the following:

- The PYD-YPG are involved in attacks inside Turkey.
- The PYD-YPG as proxies used by other countries against Turkey.
- As separatist organizations, the PYD-YPG constitute a threat to the national security of Turkey. This narrative interdiscursively connects both the territorial integrity of Syria and the national security of Turkey. This is explained later in this chapter.

### **The PYD-YPG are involved in attacks inside Turkey**

This narrative consists of two forms, which either come in separate statements or come together interdiscursively in one statement. That is, both forms of narrative might come together in one statement. As discussed in chapter 3, interdiscursivity occurs when the text includes the constructions of more than one discourse (Fairclough, 2003: 3).

The first form of narrative is that the PYD-YPG are involved in attacks inside Turkey. The Turkish FM, Cavusoglu claimed that PYD-YPG "trained terrorists in its camps" and sent them to "conduct attacks on Turkey" (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 7 June, 2016). In another statement Cavusoglu stated that "the PKK terrorists who are responsible for the last terrorist attacks, suicide bomb attacks in Ankara, Istanbul, all came from YPG camps in Syria," and he added that the YPG is "just an extension" of the PKK (quoted in AA, 22 March, 2017).

The Turkish authorities accused the PYD-YPG of explosive attacks inside Turkey although other organizations claimed responsibility, while the PYD-YPG denied any involvement. For example, following the attack of 17 February, 2016 against the Turkish police in Ankara, the Turkish authorities were quick to accuse the PYD-YPG. Although The Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK) announced later its responsibility for the attack, the Turkish officials including the president, the prime-minister (PM) and the minister of foreign affairs (FM) continued accusing the PYD-YPG of the attack (Daily Sabah, February, 2016; Letsch, 19 February, 2016; Toksabay, February, 2016). The day following the attack, Turkish PM, Davutoglu claimed that the Turkish intelligence service managed to recognize the perpetrator's identity and that he was member of YPG. Davutoglu stated that "the perpetrators have been fully identified. The attack was carried out by YPG member Salih Necer, who came in from Syria" (quoted in Letsch, 18 February 2016). Davutoglu claimed that the YPG was instructed by the PKK to

conduct the attack. Later, TAK announced its responsibility for the attack. However, Davutoglu considered the announcement of the TAK as a “montage” to "exonerate" the YPG (quoted in Daily Sabah, February, 2016). This is although the YPG leaderships denied any responsibility for the attack and emphasized that it had no interests to act against Turkey (Peace in Kurdistan, 18 February, 2016). PYD leadership also claimed that the accusations against the YPG were used as an excuse for a Turkish military intervention in Syria (Letsch, 18 February 2016).

The second form of narrative, which takes more space in the statements of Turkish officials connects between the PYD-YPG threat to Turkey and the US weaponry support to the YPG. The US weaponry support of the YPG has been a major concern of the Turkish authorities, and therefore, the Turkish officials have repeatedly denounced the US support of the YPG. Turkish officials claim that these weapons end in the hand of PKK (AA, 8 November, 2016; Daily Sabah, 27 April, 2017). For example, following the ISIL invasion of the *Rojava* canton of Kobani in 2014, Erdogan criticized the US weaponry support of YPG and stated that “any support to PYD amounts to support for PKK”, “Turkey would have to fight against any such support to PKK” (quoted in BYEGM, 22 October, 2014). In another statement, Erdogan said that “by giving weapons to these terrorist organizations, you are strengthening sources of threat to our future” (quoted in MFA, 28 September, 2016). Likewise, Turkish PM stated that "what the U.S. does against terror is arming the terrorist YPG in Syria and this directly causes a rise in terrorist attacks against Turkey” (quoted in Daily Sabah, 3 January, 2017).

Turkish officials also constructed a direct connection between the US weapons that are given to the YPG and attacks that occurred inside Turkey. Cavusoglu stated that the US is “cooperating with a terrorist organization that is also attacking Turkey” (quoted in MFA, 24 September, 2016). Cavusoglu claimed that attacks were conducted by terrorists who were trained in YPG



camps inside Syria, and who received weapons from the US (Hurriyet Daily News, 7 June, 2016; MFA, 24 September, 2016). Likewise, Davutoglu connected between the US weaponry support of the YPG and the Ankara attack of February, 2016, which was by TAK as explained earlier. Davutoglu stated that “we can’t excuse any NATO ally, including the U.S.” of having “links with a terrorist organization that strikes us in the heart of Turkey” (quoted in Koren, 2016). Erdogan claimed that the US weapons were used by the YPG in attacks “against civilians” inside Turkey and that these weapons caused “their deaths” (quoted in Toksabay, February, 2016). Erdogan used in his statement the generalization structure ‘attacks against civilians’, which builds the assumption that the US weapons are only used against Turkish civilians and inside Turkey.

This is although the US administration and YPG emphasized that the weapons that the US has given the YPG have been used inside Syria. The US administration emphasized that it supported the YPG with weapons as part of the campaign against ISIL in Syria, and that these weapons have been used for this purpose (Cook, 31 August, 2016; Dombey & Srivastava, May, 2017; McKernan, 2017; Rudaw, 14 May, 2017). The US spokesperson of anti-ISIL coalition forces stated that they "carefully monitor" the weapons they have given the YPG, and that they have made sure that these weapons have been used in the campaign against ISIL (quoted in McKernan, 2017). Likewise, the YPG leadership emphasized that the weapons they receive from the US and other members of anti-ISIL coalition are used inside Syria and only for the purposes of fighting against ISIL and protecting *Rojava* and northern Syria from military aggressions (Ara News, July, 2017; Rudaw, 14 May, 2017).

The claims of Turkish officials that the YPG was involved in explosive attacks inside Turkey, and that YPG supported the PKK with weapons are denied by the US administration. In a press

briefing by US department of defence, Stephen Townsend, the US commander of anti-ISIL operation stated that they observed and worked with the YPG in the anti-ISIL operations, and that they found that the YPG has no interest in attacking Turkey. He stated that “I have seen absolutely zero evidence that they have been a threat to or supported any attacks on Turkey from northern Syria over the last two years” (Townsend, 1 March, 2017). Townsend added that the YPG leadership, on the contrary to the Turkish claims, desires “to have a good working relationship with Turkey” (Townsend, 1 March, 2017). The US administration also repeatedly denied the claim of Turkey that the YPG is part of the PKK (Kirby, 21 September, 2015; Toner, 27 May, 2016, 8 March, 2017). The spokesperson of US department of state stated that “YPG is a separate entity from the PKK” (Toner, 27 May, 2016).

The PYD-YPG leaderships have repeatedly expressed that they want good neighbourhood relations with Turkey and denied that the PYD-YPG have constituted any threat against Turkey (Ballout, July, 2013; Bozarslan, May, 2017; Centre for Kurdish Progress, 2016; Olson, February, 2016). In an answer to a question about the PYD relations with Turkey, PYD co-chair, Salih Muslim claimed that the Turkish ruling AK party is the source of problems and that the PYD wants good relations with Turkey. Muslim stated:

“We would like to have good relations with Turkey. We have no problem with the Turkish people. It is the AKP that has a problem with us. The AKP has a problem with all the Kurds, including their own. ...The PYD has never been a threat to Turkey. The PYD only wants to establish rights in Syria” (quoted in Centre for Kurdish Progress, 2016).

### **The PYD-YPG as proxies used by other countries against Turkey**

Turkish officials labelled the PYD and YPG as proxies used by other countries against the national security of Turkey (see Daily Sabah, 3 April, 2017; Trend News, 2017). Many

statements of the Turkish officials use the term ‘pawns’ to describe the PYD and YPG as proxies used by other countries against Turkey. This is mainly repeated in the statements of Erdogan (BBC Monitoring, 20 October, 2016; Intellinews - Turkey Today, 2016). For example, Erdogan claimed that ISIL and the PYD-YPG "are pawns that serve the same purpose and are supported by the same powers" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 20 October, 2016). Other Turkish officials like the prime-minister and foreign minister also used the same term and narrative against the PYD-YPG (Daily Sabah, February, 2016, 3 April, 2017; Guler & Srivastava, 2016). However, the construction of the PYD-YPG as ‘pawns’ and the associated narrative also involve the PKK. That is, the three organizations are labelled as “pawn organizations” that act together against Turkey (quoted in Daily Sabah, February, 2016).

Constructing the PYD-YPG as proxies used by the other countries against Turkey is usually formed in two narratives. One narrative, which is less dominant, constructs the PYD-YPG and PKK as proxies used against Turkey by both Russia and the Syrian regime. For example, Erdogan stated that “both the PYD and the YPG are the organizations of the Assad regime” (AA, 16 February, 2016). Davutoglu also accused the Syrian regime of using the YPG against Turkey and stated that “the YPG is a pawn of the Syrian regime” (quoted in Guler & Srivastava, 2016). In another statement, Davutoglu constructs the PYD-YPG as proxies of both Russia and Al-Assad regime, and that they used them against Turkey (BBC Monitoring, 16 February, 2016). Davutoglu used certain terms and structures, which invite condemnation for the relationship between PYD-YPG, Russia and Al-Assad such as “puppets of Russia and subcontracted organizations used by the blood-shedder Assad regime and Russia”, and as “legionnaires [and] hired soldiers of Russia" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 16 February, 2016). This narrative was challenged, later as Turkey renewed its relations with Russia and changed its approach regarding Al-Assad regime. The Turkish-Russian agreement was incited by the

consolidation of US-YPG partnership in Syria (Cockburn, 2016). Turkey even offered a military cooperation with Russia and Al-Assad regime against the YPG (Hurriyet Daily News, 10 March, 2017; Tastekin, 2 July, 2017). The Turkish-Russian cooperation led to the Russian permission for a limited intervention by the Turkish military in Syria under the name the Operation of Euphrates Shield, which aimed at stopping the progress of YPG and SDF in connecting Afrin canton to the other *Rojava* cantons of northern Syria (Cockburn, 2016). About one month before the Euphrates Shield operation, the Turkish authorities used a cooperative language while addressing the Syrian regime (BBC, 13 July, 2016). This was expressed by Turkish PM who hinted to retrieve relations with Al-Assad regime as he stated that “I am sure that we will return [our] ties with Syria to normal” and added “we need it. We normalised our relations with Israel and Russia. I’m sure we will go back to normal relations with Syria as well” (quoted in Shaheen & Chulov, 2016). The Turkish authorities have even worked on facilitating the negotiations between the Syrian regime and the Arab groups of Syrian opposition in Astana, Kazakhstan (Tastekin, 2 July, 2017). Russia also allowed Turkey and its allied Islamist groups of Free Syrian Army (FSA) to invade Afrin canton itself in March 2018 (Khalidi, 31 March, 2018; Rasmussen & Aydin, 18 March, 2018). The invasion of Afrin canton is not fully covered in this research as it occurred when the data analysis was finished. In addition, the research has no enough space to add an extra section about the invasion of Afrin (see Appendix Map 13).

The other and more dominant narrative constructs the PYD-YPG in affiliation with the PKK as proxies and part of the Western conspiracy against Turkey. This narrative delegitimizes the Western support of the YPG. Erdogan has pioneered the AKP officials in this narrative. Erdogan denounced the Western support of YPG and considered this kind of support as part of the indirect Western support for the PKK (World Bulletin, February, 2016). Erdogan described

the Western countries as “hypocritical, two-faced” that have “insincere attitude in the face of terror organizations” denoting the PYD, YPG and PKK (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 18 March, 2016). According to Erdogan, the inaction of the western countries against the pro-PYD-YPG demonstrations and other civic activities in Europe is a type of indirect support to the PKK. Erdogan referred to PYD-YPG and stated that in the European countries “the separatist terror organization [PKK] is operating freely under various names”(quoted in BBC Monitoring, 18 March, 2016). Erdogan even accused the Western countries of supporting the PYD and PKK by ethnically cleansing the Syrian Arabs and Turkmen as he stated that “the West is hitting Arabs and Turkmen with their airplanes and settling the terror organizations PYD and PKK in their places” (quoted in Calislar, 2015).<sup>120</sup> <sup>121</sup>This chapter deals later with the Turkish official narrative, which constructs the PYD-YPG as criminal organizations that are ethnically cleansing Arabs and Turkmen in Syria.

The Turkish officials considered the support of some EU politicians for the PYD and YPG resistance of ISIL as a conspiracy against Turkey. For example, as a photographic exhibition by Austrian anthropologist Thomas Schmidinger on *Rojava* and the YPG resistance against ISIL took place in the premises of EU parliament in July, 2016 (Sharkov, 2016), the Turkish officials were quick to criticise the EU and claimed that the exhibition was part of the propaganda of the PKK. Cavusoglu who claimed that the exhibition aimed at supporting the PKK, stated that the EU has "double standards" (quoted in MFA, 12 July, 2016). Cavusoglu stated that the EU parliament was used as “a tool of the propaganda of a bloody terrorist organization that takes the lives of innocent people almost every day and thereby has been

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<sup>120</sup> See also Karadeniz, T & Gumrukcu, T. (2015).

<sup>121</sup> Turkmen are an ethnic group close to Turks. Many international sources incorrectly write the plural of Turkmen as Turkmen. The latter indicate plural of the term ‘man’. The research added ‘s’ to the plural to be Turkmen.

involved in promoting terrorism” (quoted in MFA, 12 July, 2016). Accordingly, Cavusoglu accused the EU of supporting the PKK ‘terrorism’, which Turkey has suffered from. To support his claim, Cavusoglu used the word ‘bloody’, which invites condemnation, and terms ‘innocent people’, which invites sympathy, and ‘every day’, which implies that the type of PKK-YPG-PYD terrorism that the narrative refers to is seriously harmful and limited to civilians. However, the statement omits any reference to the conflict between the Turkish forces and PKK in the Kurdish region of Turkey.

Likewise, the spokesman of the Turkish presidency, Kalin connected the exhibition to the attacks against ‘Turkish citizens’ inside Turkey (Daily Sabah, 13 July, 2016). Kalin criticized the EU parliament and considered the exhibition as part of the propaganda of a terrorist organization ‘the PKK’, as he stated:

“It is unacceptable to see daily propaganda of a terrorist organization targeting Turkish citizens under the roof of European Parliament. We cannot comprehend what the European parliament aims for by glorifying an organic extension of the PKK, which is recognized as a terrorist organization by European Union” (quoted in Daily Sabah, 13 July, 2016).<sup>122</sup>

This narrative also considers the *Rojava* administration as a conspiracy project supported by the Western powers against Turkey.<sup>123</sup> Turkish officials constructed the Western support of YPG as a threat to the indivisibility of Turkey. For example, Turkey’s deputy PM, Nurettin Canikli, claimed that the Western support of the YPG is part of a “global project” that aims at dividing Turkey (quoted in AA, 14 July, 2016). However, the narrative constructs the US as

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<sup>122</sup> See also AA. (12 July, 2016).

<sup>123</sup> See Sary (2016) for more about the Syrian Kurdish self-governance.

the main Western player of the conspiracy. This is as the US has supported the YPG in its armed campaign against ISIL. The construction of the US as part of the conspiracy narrative is discerned mainly in Erdogan statements who claims that the YPG fighting against ISIL is a pretext used for the creation of a separate entity in northern Syrian (Daily Sabah, 12 June, 2016; TCCB, 29 January, 2015; Yeni Safak, February, 2016). Erdogan stated that "saying that PYD/YPG is fighting against Daesh is a big lie" (quoted in Yeni Safak, February, 2016). In another statement, Erdogan said that "you have to be blind to not see the ulterior motives behind the plots staged under the excuse of Daesh" (quoted in TCCB, 26 March, 2016). Erdogan claimed that there was "a serious project" with "insidious aims" by "those who appear as friends", "implemented in northern Syria" (quoted in Daily Sabah, 12 June, 2016). Although the last statement does not clarify the parties involved in the project, it criticizes the US supports of YPG. Erdogan also used the terms 'serious' and insidious' to imply that this 'project' is harmful to Turkey. The statement also refers to northern Syria as the place of this project, which is the area controlled by the *Rojava* administration.

This is although none of the western countries approved the *Rojava* administration, and the US administration repeatedly expressed its disapproval of the Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria (Yeranian & Babb, 2016). The US stance is discerned in the relevant statements of US department of state. For example, the spokesperson of the department stated that "I would just say we've been very clear that we won't recognize any kind of self-autonomous – or self-rule, semi-autonomous zones in Syria", "we're committed to the unity and territorial integrity of Syria" (Toner, 16 March, 2016), and he repeated this stance in the department's press briefing of 23 May 2016 as he stated that "we've also made it clear to these Kurdish forces as well that they should not seek to create autonomous, semiautonomous zones" (Toner, 23 May, 2016).

The narrative that constructs the Syrian Kurdish self-governance as a conspiracy by the Western powers is also connected to the construction of the PYD-YPG as separatist organizations that constitute threats against both the territorial integrity of Syria and the national security of Turkey. The latter construction is explained below.

**PYD-YPG as separatist organizations that constitute threats to both the territorial integrity of Syria and the national security of Turkey.**

The statements of Turkish officials construct the PYD and YPG as a threat to the territorial integrity of Syria because they are separatist organizations that aim at establishing a Kurdish entity or a state in the north of Syria (BYEGM, 1 April, 2016; Hurriyet Daily News, 7 June, 2016; MFA, 21 September, 2015; MFA, 24 September, 2016; Pamuk, 24 October, 2015). For example, Cavusoglu stated that “PYD’s agenda and motives will threaten the territorial integrity and political unity of Syria” (quoted MFA, 21 September, 2015). In another statement Cavusoglu described the PYD-YPG as a “major threat to the territorial integrity of Syria” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 7 June, 2016). This is because the PYD and YPG want “to seize northern Syria entirely” as Erdogan insisted (quoted in Pamuk, 24 October, 2015).

In their statements, the Turkish officials repeated their commitment to defend the territorial integrity of Syria from the separatist threat of the PYD and YPG. The Turkish officials constructed *Rojava* either as another state or a separatist entity to which they expressed their rejection and antagonism. The Turkish MP stated that “we will never allow the formation of an artificial state in the north of Syria” (quoted in Istanbulu, September, 2016). Such anti-*Rojava* statements accompanied with the emphasis on the importance of the territorial integrity of Syria. This is discerned in the statement of Erdogan who threatened to conduct a military intervention against *Rojava* to protect the territorial integrity of Syria. Erdogan stated that “if



needed, Turkey is determined to actively intervene to protect Syria's territorial integrity" and added that "Turkey won't allow a fait accompli in Syria" (quoted in Ant & Abdu-Nasr, 2016). Likewise, The Turkish FM denounced the *Rojava* administration and considered the territorial integrity of Syria as an important matter of Turkey as he stated that "Syria's national unity and territorial integrity is fundamental for us" (quoted in Pamuk, 24 October, 2015).

The narrative interdiscursively connects the territorial integrity of Syria to the national security of Turkey, and the threat to both by the *Rojava* administration and the PYD-YPG. For example, Erdogan denounced the Kurdish administration, and said that "we will under no circumstances allow northern Syria to become a victim of their scheming. Because this constitutes a threat for us, and it is not possible for us as Turkey to say 'yes' to this threat" (quoted in Pamuk, 24 October, 2015). In another statement, Erdogan urged the US and the other countries to "work together for the protection of the territorial integrity of Syria" (quoted in BYEGM, 1 April, 2016). Erdogan referred to the PYD-YPG and stated that "I'm not in the position to allow the handing over of some parts of Syria to some terrorist organizations" (quoted in BYEGM, 1 April, 2016).

To emphasize the threat that *Rojava* constitutes to the national security of Turkey, The Turkish officials construct the *Rojava* cantons as a source of terrorism that targets Turkey. This is discerned in the usage of terms like "terror cantons" (Hurriyet Daily News, 29 December, 2016), "terror camps" (Barfi, 2016: 6; Hurriyet Daily News, 7 June, 2016; Israeli, 2013: 93), and "terror corridor" (AA, 2 September, 2016; Hurriyet Daily News, 28 April, 2017) to describe the *Rojava* cantons. Such terms are repeated in the statements of Erdogan and other Turkish officials (AA, 2 September, 2016, 9 January, 2017; Barfi, 2016: 6; BYEGM, 1 April, 2016; Hurriyet Daily News, 29 December, 2016; Istanbulu, September, 2016; Pamuk, 24

October, 2015). For example, Erdogan stated that “nobody should expect that we’ll agree to the establishment of a ‘terror corridor’ along our southern border in northern Syria” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 2 September, 2016).

The connection between the Syrian territorial integrity and the national security of Turkey in the Turkish official discourse is limited to the narratives about *Rojava* and the Kurdish self-governance. The Turkish officials did not show similar stance regarding other regions in the north of Syria alongside the Turkish border, which have been controlled and governed by Jihadist groups including ISIL, Jabhat Al-Nusrah, Ahrar Al-Sham and others. Moreover, Turkey has been in trade and military relations with these regions and groups (Bertrand, 28 July 2015; Di- Giovanni *et al.*, 2014; Graeber, 18 November, 2015; Spencer & Sanchez, 2014; Taub, 2015; Uslu, 2015: 787-788; Weiss, n.d.; Zeldin, September, 2015) (see Map 6). Uslu (2015: 787-788) described Turkey as “Jihadist Highway” through which military and other kind of support passed towards the Syrian areas controlled by ISIL and Al-Qaeda affiliated Jihadists. A journalist report by Erkus (September, 2014) provides details about the trade business between Turkey and the Syrian entities governed by ISIL and other Jihadist groups between 2013-2014. Erkus (September, 2014) argues that the 2014 ISIL exports from Turkey increased 57% of the overall Turkey exports to Syria, and that some of these items were used for the military purposes. The report claims that the remaining 43% of Turkish exports to Syria went to the areas controlled by Jabhat Al-Nusrah and other Jihadists.<sup>124</sup> Erkus (September, 2014) estimated the increase of the Turkish trade with the Jihadist areas from \$574 million in 2013 to \$903 million in the first 8 months of 2014.<sup>125</sup> The trade between Turkey and Jihadist

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<sup>124</sup> Jabhat Al-Nusrah lately changed its name to Hayat Tahrir Al sham (HTS).

<sup>125</sup> See also Di- Giovanni *et al.*, (2016), and Taub (2015) on the oil trade of ISIL through Turkey, and the involvement of Turkish officials in the oil trade.

groups was also claimed by a German court in its November 2016 hearing.<sup>126</sup> The court claimed that between 2011-2014 Turkey provided medical and logistical support to Al-Qaeda and ISIL groups who acted inside Syria (Winter, 26 November, 2016). Russian Ambassador to the UN, Vitaly Churkin also accused Turkey of supporting ISIL and stated that “the main supplier of weapons and military equipment to ISIL fighters is Turkey, which is doing so through nongovernmental organizations” (quoted in Tomkiw, 2016). Likewise, Francis Ricciardone, the former US ambassador to Turkey, stated that “the Turks frankly worked with groups for a period, including al-Nusra” (quoted in Spencer, & Sanchez, 2014).

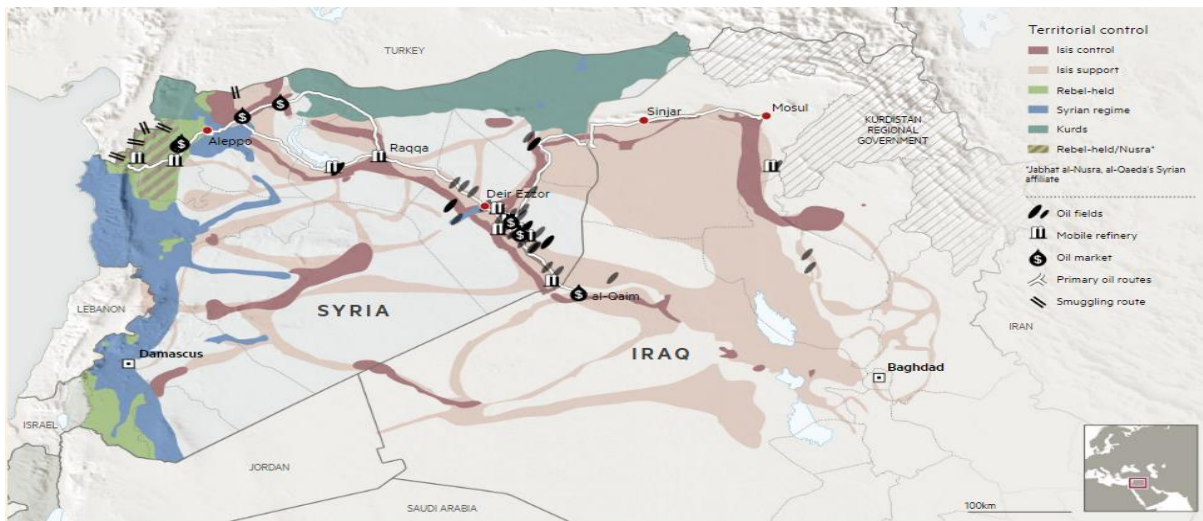
On the contrary to the claims of Turkish officials that emphasized defending the territorial integrity of Syria, the Turkish military involved directly in infringing the territorial integrity of Syria, and occupied part of the Syrian territory. In August, 2016 Turkish military and Jihadist groups of Ahrar Al-Sham, Jabhat Al-Nusrah, Sultan Murad and others who acted under the umbrella of Free Syrian Army (FSA) conducted a military intervention of the Operation of Euphrates Shield in northern Syria (Tax, 2016). The Turkish military and Jihadists expelled ISIL from the northern Aleppo areas on the Turkish border (Lund, August, 2016; Pamuk & Bektas, August, 2016). However, the operation created another region administered by these Jihadist groups, and Turkey carried on sponsoring the governance of this region by the Jihadists (see Maps 4, 6 and 7).

Turkey has also continued its support and trade relations with the region of Idlib, which is located in the north west of Syria and governed by Jabhat Al-Nusrah and other Jihadist groups (Graeber, 18 November, 2015; Stutzriem & Cornell, 2017; Tastekin, 30 July, 2017; Tax, 2016)

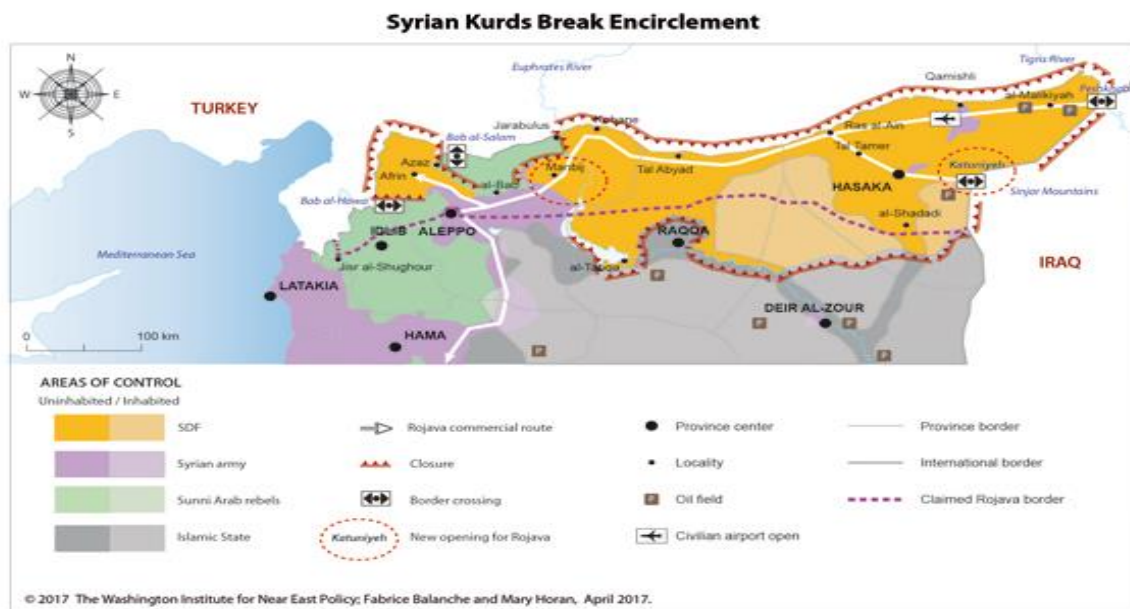
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<sup>126</sup> The tribunal was not to judge the Turkish-ISIL relations, but it was a case related to a claim against PKK supporters.

(see Maps 4, 6, and 7). Jabhat Al-Nusrah changed its name recently to Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) (Tastekin, 30 July, 2017). Brett McGurk, the US special envoy for the Anti-ISIL coalition described the Idlib region as a serious international security dilemma as he stated that “Idlib province is a serious problem. It is a haven now for al-Qaida” (McGurk, 2017).<sup>127</sup>



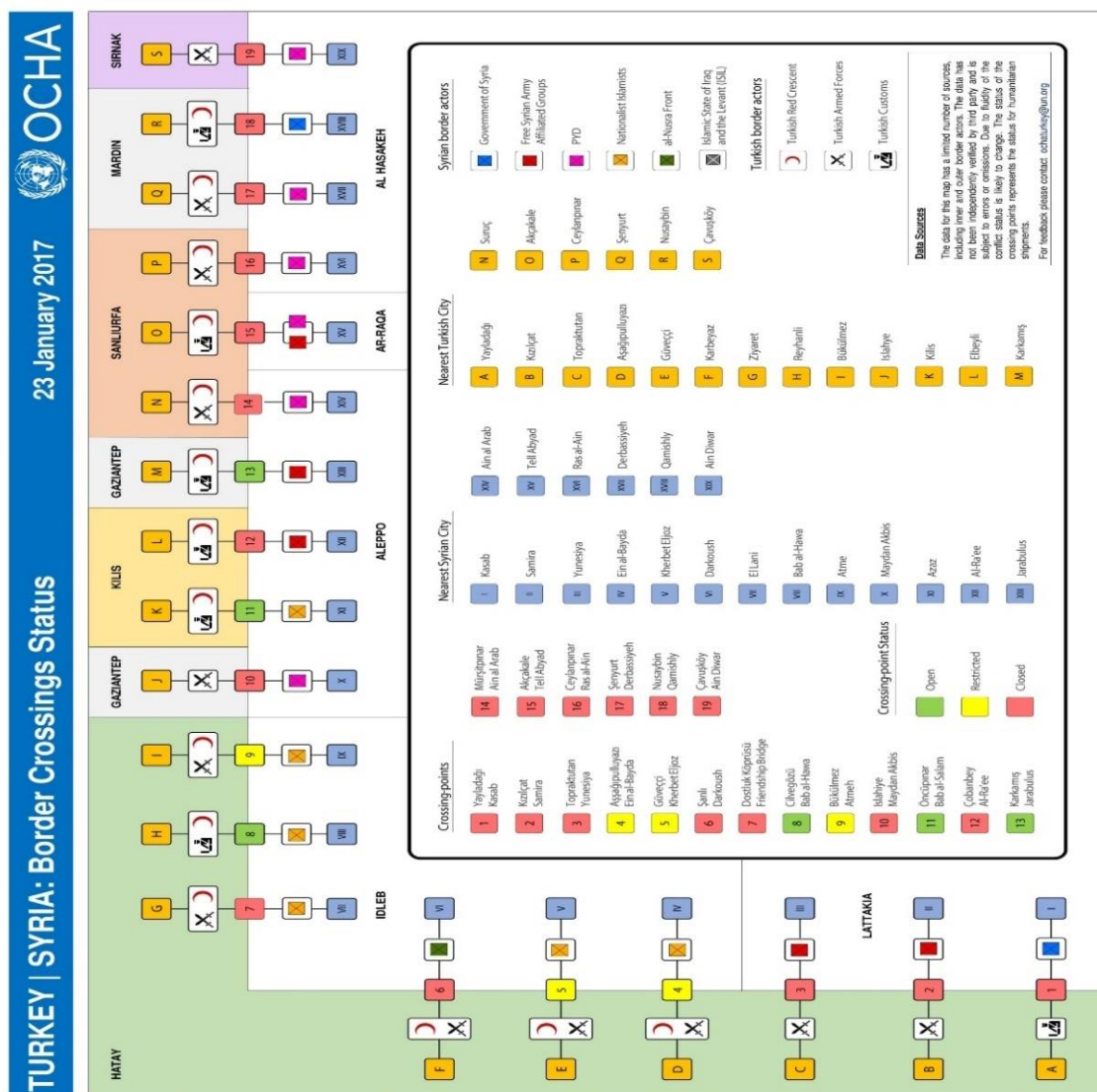
**Map 6. Syrian-Turkish border crossings of the regions controlled by ISIL and other Jihadists of FSA in 2016.** Source: Solomon *et al.*, (2016).



**Map 7. Turkey-Syria border-crossings.** The map shows both the active border crossings of Bab Al-Hawa, which is administered by Jabhat Al-Nusrah and Bab Al-Salamah, which is administered by Ahrar Al-Sham and other groups. The map also shows that the Turkish border with Rojava administration is closed. Source: Balanche (2017).

<sup>127</sup> Idlib is a Syrian province located in the north west of Syria. See Map 4.

**Table 5. Status of Turkey-Syria border-crossings.** The table shows (in green colour) the following Syrian active border crossings with Turkey: 1. Bab Al-Hawa, which is administered by Jabhat Al-Nusrah. 2. Bab Al-Salamah and, 3. Jarabulus, which are administered by Ahrar Al-Sham and Sultan Murad Jihadist groups. The table also shows (in red colour) that the Turkish-Syrian (*Rojava* cantons) border-crossings are closed. This include the following crossing centres of *Rojava*: 1. Ain Diwar, 2. Qamishly, 3. Derbesiyah, 4. Ras Al-Ayn, 5. Ain Al-Arab, and Maydan Akbis. Source: UNOCHA. (2017).



### PYD and YPG as a security threat against the international community

The construction of the PYD-YPG as a threat to the international community also involves the PKK. The construction of PYD-YPG as a threat to the other countries, or to the international community is resembled in the sentence that the PYD-YPG are a threat against 'the others'.

However, the Turkish official discourse construction of the PYD-YPG as a threat to the *others* does not match its construction of the PYD-YPG as proxies used by the same *others* against Turkey. That is, the Turkish official discourse constructs the PYD-YPG as proxies used by the US and other anti-ISIL coalition members, and in contrast, the discourse constructs the PYD-YPG as a threat to the same countries that support them. In other words, the Turkish official discourse constructs the PYD-YPG as a threat from *the others*, and at the same time as a threat to the same *others* (see Figure 6).

There are two forms for the narrative that constructs the PYD-YPG as a terrorist threat to the international community. The first form aims at building the assumption that the PYD and YPG are internationally designated terrorist organisations although they are not. CDA considers assumption as a feature that serves bias and ideological considerations (Fairclough, 1995, 2003; Locke, 2004). However, the first narrative is usually connected to the second and more dominant form of narrative, which compares the PYD-YPG and PKK to the Jihadist organizations that conducted violent attacks in several countries. In particular, it compares the PYD-YPG and PKK to ISIL.

The first form of narrative that builds the PYD-YPG as a threat to *the others* aims at building the assumption that the PYD and YPG are labelled internationally as ‘terrorists’. This is by using the terms and structures like ‘good terrorists’ as a reference to the PYD-YPG and ‘bad terrorists’ as a reference to ISIL and attributing these references to the way that the US and its Western allies view the PYD-YPG and ISIL although the US and its allies do not use such references and dichotomy to describe the PYD-YPG and ISIL. However, this dichotomy and such terms are repeated in the statements of Turkish officials. For example, Erdogan stated that "the West still has the mentality of my terrorist is good, yours is bad" (quoted in Hurriyet

Daily News, 29 October, 2015). Likewise, Cavusoglu claimed that the international community understands terrorists mistakenly as “good terrorist, bad terrorist, secular one, radical one” (quoted in BYEGM, 29 March, 2016). In an earlier statement Cavusoglu referred to the PYD and YPG and expressed the dissatisfaction of Turkey concerning the alleged international discrimination between terrorist groups and stated that “there is no ‘good’ or ‘bad’ terrorist for us” (quoted in MFA, 11 January, 2016). Likewise, Erdogan claimed that Turkey does not discriminate between a “good” and an “evil” terrorist organization, but all terrorist organizations are “evil and none of them should be allowed” (quoted in AA, 1 April, 2016). Erdogan repeatedly criticized the support of the US and its allies to the PYD-YPG against ISIL (BB, 17 May, 2017; Hurriyet Daily News, 29 December, 2016; The Guardian, 19 October, 2014). Erdogan stated that “you can't finish off Daesh with PYD/YPG, because they themselves are terrorists”, “can there be good and bad terrorists? All of them are terrorists and all of them are bad” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 23 September, 2016).

This narrative is challenged as the US and its Western allies do not consider the PYD and YPG terrorist organizations. On the contrary, the US and its Western allies consider the PYD and YPG as allies of anti-ISIL campaign. The EU countries tolerated certain levels of civic activities that aim at raising awareness and solidarity by the supporters of PYD and YPG such as demonstrations and seminars (Tastekin, 22 April, 2016). Furthermore, some EU governments and institutions conducted meetings with PYD and YPG representatives. On 8 February, 2015, the YPG and PYD representatives were received and appreciated by the French president, Francois Holland in the Elysee Palace (Tastekin, February, 2015). In addition, the *Rojava* administration in affiliation with the PYD and YPG managed to open offices in some major European capitals (Khalaf, 2016: 21; Tastekin, 22 April, 2016). Furthermore, the US did not change its supportive stance regarding the YPG although this caused tension with the

Turkish authorities. The US administration repeated many times that it did not consider the YPG as a terrorist organization. For example, the spokesperson of US department of state, John Kirby stated that “we don’t consider the YPG a terrorist organization” (Kirby, 21 September, 2015).<sup>128</sup> The US administration even prized its partnership with the YPG in the anti-ISIL military campaign. This is discerned in the relevant statements of the US department of state and US department of defence, which describe the YPG as an ‘effective’ and ‘reliable partner’ who managed to defeat ISIL in many areas in Syria (Cook, 9 May, 2016; Killea, September, 2015; Kirby, 8 February, 2016; Toner, 27 May, 2016, 15 March, 2017).<sup>129</sup>

The second and more dominant form of narrative that constructs the PYD-YPG as a threat to the international community compares the PYD, YPG and PKK to ISIL and other Jihadist organizations, and has two types of statements. These statements are by Erdogan and other Turkish officials who called or implicitly requested the international community to consider the PYD and YPG as terrorist organizations (AA, 16 February, 2016; BBC Monitoring, 23 September, 2016; BYEGM, 27 March, 2016; TCCB, 24 October, 2015).

One type of the statements of this narrative is limited to comparing the PYD, YPG and PKK to ISIL and other organizations that are internationally designated as terrorists. For example, Erdogan stated that "the PKK, the PYD, the YPG, Daesh [Islamic State], there is no difference. They are all terrorists," (quoted in Middle East Eye, 28 May, 2016).<sup>130</sup> Likewise, Cavusoglu

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<sup>128</sup> The US ambassador in Turkey, John Bass also stated that “just like [officials] in Washington have said previously, the U.S. does not regard the PYD a terrorist organization” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 24 June 2016).

<sup>129</sup> This is also repeated in the statements of US department of state. See:  
Toner, M. C. (5 August, 2015).  
Toner, M. C. (8 March, 2017).  
Toner, M. C. (16 March, 2016).  
Toner, M. C. (23 May, 2016).  
Kirby, J. (9 February, 2016).

<sup>130</sup> Erdogan used Daesh and the translator added [Islamic State] to elaborate the acronym used by Erdogan.



stated that “the PYD/YPG and DAESH are the same as the PKK” (quoted in MFA, 11 January, 2016). In other statements, Erdogan compares the PYD-YPG and PKK to ISIL and Al-Qaeda and uses terms that suggest condemnation in describing them such as “murderers” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 10 November, 2014), and as “enemies of humanity, democracy and freedom” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 27 March, 2016). Likewise, the Turkish presidency spokesman, Kalin stated that “we see no difference between DAESH, the PYD, PKK or al-Nusra Front, as all of them kill innocent people” (quoted in Daily Sabah, 13 July, 2016). Cavusoglu used ‘us’ and ‘ours’ to denote Turkey and the whole international community whose security and values are threatened by the PYD, PKK, and other Jihadist and non-Jihadist ‘terrorist’ organizations and stated that “there is no difference between these organizations. They pose a common threat to all of us and our values” (quoted in MFA, 26 April, 2016).

The other type of statements refers to the Jihadist attacks that were conducted in some Western countries and considers these attacks as part of the entity of terrorism, which also encompasses the PYD-YPG-PKK. In addition to the construction of PYD-YPG as terrorist organizations, some of the contents of these statements imply overgeneralizations and they mix between the Jihadist attacks in the Western countries and other attacks in Turkey. For example, Cavusoglu stated that “there is no difference between the terrorist attacks of New York, Orlando, Brussels, Paris or Ankara. Whether it is DAESH, the PKK/YPG or al Qaida, we have to show equal determination in fighting them” (Cavusoglu, September, 2016). Cavusoglu statement renders the responsibility of all these attacks to ‘terrorism’, which join all the groups that Turkey considers as terrorists. This construction is abstracted further in the statement of the Turkish minister of EU affairs, Volkan Bozkir who considered the Turkish label of ‘terrorist’ to be an enough evidence for blaming the PYD and PKK for attacks by other organizations, and implied that the other countries should support Turkey in its counter-terrorism policy. Bozkir stated

that “[After Brussels attacks], we have learnt that all terrorist organizations need to be put in the same category, we cannot discriminate among them. We have to work together” (quoted in AA, 23 March, 2016).

The statements of Turkish officials that blame the PYD-YPG and PKK for the international Jihadist action, are also formed as ‘warnings of imminent or foreseeable attacks’ by the PYD-YPG and PKK. The statements of Turkish officials imply that the PYD-YPG-PKK attacks would target the very countries that support the PYD and YPG and the countries that abstained from designating them as terrorist organizations. This kind of narrative is mainly discerned in the statements of Erdogan (BBC Monitoring, 27 March, 2016, 18 March, 2016; Tastekin, 22 April, 2016). For example, Erdogan stated that “I am calling on countries supporting the PYD: If you have a conflict with them, these people will come and attack you with bombs like [IS]” (quoted in Tastekin, 22 April, 2016).<sup>131</sup> In another statement Erdogan claimed that Russia and Belgium supported the PYD and PKK and warned Russia and Belgium that they would be the victims of their misunderstanding of the PYD and PKK terrorism (BBC Monitoring, 27 March, 2016). Erdogan used the metaphorical structure that “the snake you feed can bite you too” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 27 March, 2016). Describing the PYD and PKK as ‘a snake’ that ‘can bite’ invites the feeling that these organizations are not reliable and are imminent threats.

Erdogan widened the scope of the PYD-YPG-PKK threat to cover Europe and US as he claimed that the misunderstanding of the EU, Russia and US of the terrorist character of PYD and PKK will make them liable for foreseeable terrorist attacks by these organizations similar to the terrorist attacks of ISIL in Belgium. Erdogan stated:

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<sup>131</sup> The acronym of IS used by the translator. Erdogan and other Turkish officials usually use the term ‘Daesh’ instead of ISIL or IS as explained in chapter 5.

"I make the same warning to all countries that are being stubborn about [saying], 'The PYD is not a terrorist organization.' Nobody should be fooled by the fact that the suicide bombers that carried out attacks in Belgium are members of Daesh. "When a conflict of interest occurs, anybody that belongs to the separatist organization's [PKK] structure that expresses itself with different letters can conduct a similar attack in any city of Europe, America, or Russia." (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 27 March, 2016).

### **PYD and YPG as criminal organizations involved in acts of ethnic cleansing against Syrians.**

As explained earlier, the Turkish official discourse considers the PYD-YPG as part of the PKK. This implies that the Turkish official narrative, which constructs the PKK as an organization involved in international drug-trafficking and other crimes is also applied to the PYD and YPG. However, the research found no texts by the Turkish authorities, which attribute drug trafficking to the PYD and YPG. Instead, the Turkish officials attributed other criminal acts to the PYD and YPG such as child and women kidnapping for forced conscription in the YPG ranks. For example, Turkey representative to the UN claimed that PYD and PKK were involved in forced recruitment of children and women in their military ranks. This claim by the Turkish representative was posed during an international meeting which was under the title of 'Trafficking in persons in conflict situations: Forced labour, slavery and other similar practices' (MFA, 14 March, 2017). In addition, Turkey's representative compared PYD and PKK actions to these of ISIL and Jihadist groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda as he stated:

“Speakers before me recalled how terrorist organizations like DAESH, Boko Haram and El Shabab resort to human trafficking for forced labour and slavery. Similarly, it is important to emphasize that terrorist organization PKK/PYD also

widely employs methods aimed at exploiting human beings, in particular through forced recruitment of children and young women” (quoted in MFA, 14 March, 2017).

Human Rights Watch documented that the YPG joined members who were under 18 years old (HRW, 2014, July, 2015). However, the Turkish official narrative that the YPG ‘kidnapped’ children and women for ‘forced recruitment’ is not based on evidence. The YPG leadership admitted that there were cases of child recruitment on voluntary bases in June 2014 (Geneva Call, 2014; HRW, July, 2015). The YPG leadership followed this by signing the ‘Geneva Call’s Deed of Commitment’, which requires non-state actor to adhere to certain humanitarian norms (Geneva Call, 2014). One of these norms aims at protecting children from the impacts of armed conflicts, and the prohibition of the recruitment of children in the armed force (Geneva Call, 2014). As the YPG signed the Geneva Call it demobilized 149 children from its ranks and promised to stop recruiting children under 18 years (HRW, July, 2015). This was followed by the enactment of the Law of Self-Defence Duty in the Democratic Autonomous Areas by the Rojava administration. Article 3 of the law states that conscription “apply to all males aged between 18 and 30, but women can commit themselves voluntarily” (Danish Immigration Service, 2015: 25). Accordingly, although there are documented cases of child recruitment in the YPG on voluntarily bases, there is no documented case of kidnapping children and women for forced recruitment.

Nevertheless, the construction of the PYD-YPG as criminal organization has a dominant narrative, which is that they are involved in acts of ‘ethnic cleansing’ of Arabs and Turkams in northern Syria. This narrative is repeated in the statements of Erdogan and other Turkish officials (Hurriyet Daily News, 29 October, 2015, 7 June, 2016, 28 April, 2017; MFA, 21

September, 2015; Tastekin, 29 October, 2015; Uras, 2016; World Bulletin, February, 2016). For example, Erdogan stated that “the PYD is committing ethnic cleansing here (of) Arabs and Turkmen” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 29 October, 2015). Turkish deputy PM, Bulent Arinc claimed that the PYD has perpetrated ethnic cleansing in order to connect its cantons in reference to the cantons of *Rojava*. Arinc also claimed that the PYD and YPG have perpetrated their ethnic cleansing acts in collaboration with ISIL. Arinc stated:

“We are seeing signs of a work that is underway on a formula to bring together the cantons”, “This time people of the bombed places were ethnically cleansed by the PYD and YGP, as well as Daesh, these are strange relationships and alliances [...]” (quoted in AA, 16 June, 2015).

Turkey representative to the UN mission in Geneva claimed that the PYD used the pretext of fighting against ISIL to perpetrate violations of human rights and change the demography of northern Syria (UN, 21 September, 2015). The representative of Turkey criticized the August, 2015 report by UN commission of enquiry regarding Syria, which was released in September, 2015 (UN, 13 August, 2015, 21 September, 2015).<sup>132</sup> The UN report highlighted the role of YPG in resisting ISIL (UN, 13 August, 2015: 5). The UN report underlined that the “operational performance” of ISIL was weakened only when the international coalition against ISIL “conducted alongside YPG ground operations” (UN, 13 August, 2015: 5). However, the representative of Turkey disapproved the assessment of report for the role of the YPG in the fight against ISIL as he stated:

“Regarding the fight against DEASH, the report touches in a rather misleading manner upon the role of PYD. Its fight against DEASH as a tactical measure cannot hide widespread human rights violations committed by PYD. Crucially, it plays

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<sup>132</sup> The report is dated 13 August, 2015.

with local demographics, taking advantage of the situation on the ground” (quoted in MFA, 21 September, 2015; UN, 21 September, 2015).

Cavusoglu went further as he claimed that the ethnic cleansing was against those who were not ideologically loyal to the PYD-YPG. Cavusoglu stated that “PYD-YPG conduct ethnic cleansing” against groups who were not “Marxists, Leninists and atheists” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 7 June, 2016). Constructing the PYD and YPG as Marxist-Leninist and atheists is driven from the same constructions of the PKK in the Turkish official discourse, which are discussed in the previous chapter.

The UN commission of enquiry regarding Syria in its report of 10 March, 2017 denied the allegations that the YPG perpetrated ‘ethnic cleansing’ although it referred to cases of displacement of civilians. The report described the displacement of civilians from certain areas of conflict by the YPG and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) as security provisions and to clear the areas from the explosives left by ISIL. The report also referred to that the SDF permitted civilians to return to certain secured areas. However, the reports blamed the SDF for not providing adequate humanitarian aid to the displaced civilians (UN, 10 March, 2017: 19-20: 24). The report stated:

“Though allegations of “ethnic cleansing” continued to be received during the period under review, the Commission found no evidence to substantiate claims that YPG or SDF forces ever targeted Arab communities on the basis of ethnicity, nor that YPG cantonal authorities systematically sought to change the demographic composition of territories under their control through the commission of violations directed against any particular ethnic group” (UN, 10 March, 2017: 20).

Human rights organizations documented certain violations of human rights perpetrated by the YPG and *Rojava* security forces during their conflicts with ISIL, Jabhat Al-Nusrah and other armed groups. Both Amnesty International (2015) and Human Rights Watch (2014) conducted research in the areas under the control of YPG and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Both organizations admitted that the authorities of *Rojava* gave them unrestricted freedom to meet victims and to conduct interviews with those who disagree with *Rojava* administration (AI, 2015: 7; HRW, 2014: 9). Amnesty International described the displacement of civilians and demolition of houses as “war crimes”, while Human Rights Watch claimed that although the violations of YPG and *Rojava* security forces are “far less egregious and widespread, they are nonetheless serious” (AI, 2015: 6; HRW, 2014: 3).

Amnesty International (2015: 6 & 32) report accused the PYD of displacing civilians and demolishing properties in certain cases. Amnesty report depends on the claims of some displaced people (AI, 2015). However, Amnesty report indicated that the displacement also targeted civilian Kurds who lived in the areas of conflict (AI, 2015: 6 & 18). The report also referred to that the YPG militants who ordered civilians to leave their villages were Kurds and Arabs (AI, 2015: 6: 18). In addition, the report admitted that the YPG militants warned civilians to leave few days before the displacement, and that the acts of displacement did not involve armed attacks against civilians (AI, 2015: 13-22). The report also documented that before evacuating civilians, the YPG warned civilians that the areas of evacuation were either ‘military zones or not safe to stay’ (AI, 2015: 15-22 & 28). Although the YPG described the acts displacement as part of security necessity, Amnesty report considered that the displacements in some cases were unnecessary and constituted war crimes (AI, 2015).<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Michael Gunter, an American author specialized in Kurdish issues stated that “I’m very disappointed in Amnesty International. In general, it is an NGO that plays a very important role in protecting the rights of the individual against government suppression. But the Amnesty report released on Oct. 12 alleges forced PYD displacement and home demolitions, which is very partial and distorted. It does not do justice to the PYD’s efforts

There is no doubt that the YPG perpetrated violations of human rights during the conflict and in the areas under its control. However, the narrative of ‘ethnic cleansing’ does not match the findings of the research. In particular, this narrative is declined by the report of the UN commission, and was not supported by the international organizations of human rights, as explained earlier. Moreover, the narrative of ethnic cleansing has been propagandized for by the Turkish officials and the Syrian armed groups that are allied with Turkey and have been involved in armed conflicts against the YPG (Dettmer, 7 July, 2015; Loveluck & Samaan, 2015; The New Arab, 15 June, 2015; Uras, 2016).<sup>134</sup> The narrative was also propagandized for by the Turkish officials even when there were no actual acts of displacement. For example, before that the YPG and its allies enter *Tell Abyad* town, which was under the control of ISIL, Erdogan stated that “there is a feeling that Arabs and Turkmens are targeted at Tell Abyad ” (quoted in Tastekin, 2 July, 2015). On the other hand, the Turkish officials made no such statement about the larger scale attacks of ISIL and other Jihadist groups on the Syrian Kurdish populated areas and the displacement of civilian Kurds. The Turkish officials made no such statement when ISIL attacked Kobani in 2014 causing the displacement of its Kurdish population (Chulov, 2014; Carter *et al.*, 2014). This is also discerned in the case of the displacement of Kurds from the city of *Sere Kani* (in Arabic: *Ras Al-Ayn*) by Jabhat Al-Nusra and other Jihadist groups who entered and attacked the Syrian Kurdish city in 2013 directly from Turkey (Zalewski, 26 September, 2013).

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to protect not only Kurds but also Arabs against the depredations of ISIS. Of course, if you're fighting ISIS there is going to be some collateral damage, but the PYD and its YPG fighting units have gone out of their way not to kill or displace the population” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily New, 24 October, 2015).

<sup>134</sup> The narrative of ethnic cleansing was supported and propagandized for by the Syrian rebel groups allies with Turkey, particularly Jihadist groups of Ahrar Al-Sham and Jaish Al-Islam (The New Arab, 15 June, 2015).



### **Relationship between the constructions, agendas and policies of Turkish authorities**

The constructions and narratives regarding the PYD-YPG that have been discussed in this chapter serve certain implied messages that serve certain agendas and policies of the Turkish authorities. The research classifies the constructions and narratives in two categories according to the agendas and policies, which they serve. The first category includes the constructions and narratives that serve the agenda of delegitimizing the PYD -YPG, and the second category includes the constructions and narratives that serve legitimizing the policies of Turkish military against the YPG (see Figure 6). The two categories are discussed below.

#### **Delegitimizing the PYD and YPG**

The constructions of the PYD-YPG in the Turkish official texts serve inciting the other countries to label the PYD and YPG as terrorist organizations. The constructions that mostly go with this type of agendas include the PYD and YPG as a threat to the international community, and as criminal organizations involved in ethnic cleansing. However, this also involves the construction of PYD-YPG as organic parts of the PKK. The Turkish deputy PM, Lutfi Elvan demanded the international designation of the PYD-YPG as terrorist organizations (AA, 1 March, 2016). He even called the UN to designate the PYD-YPG and PKK as terrorist organizations. Elvan stated that “we called on the UN to recognize the PKK and the PYD as terrorist organizations” (quoted in AA, 1 March, 2016).<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, the narratives of the Turkish officials were not successful in convincing the international community of their claim that the PYD-YPG constitute a threat to the international community. In particular, the Turkish authorities were not able to convince the Western countries that the PYD-YPG constitute a threat against them. In contrast to the demands of the Turkish authorities to label the PYD-

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<sup>135</sup> Although the EU and US designated the PKK as terrorist organization, the UN did not designate it.

YPG as terrorist originations, the US and its Western allies continued to support the YPG in the anti-ISL campaign as explained earlier.

However, limited anti-PYD-YPG measures were taken in some EU countries, and by the international companies of media-broadcasting. One of the measures that has been practiced by certain media companies is the occasional suspension of the PYD-YPG affiliated TV station of Ronahi and the censorship and suspension of pro-PYD-YPG social-media accounts (Briel, 2017; Kurdish Question, 28 June, 2016; YPGRojava, 23 August, 2017). These measures are usually influenced by the narrative that the PYD-YPG are branches of the PKK. This was the case of the suspension of the broadcast of Ronahi TV in April, 2017 by the French satellite company of Eutelsat (Briel, 2017). The measure was taken by Eutelsat under pressure and repeated requests of the Turkish authorities who claimed that Ronahi TV served the ‘terrorist’ propaganda of the PKK who is considered as an illegal organization in the EU (Briel, 2017).<sup>136</sup> The pro-PKK TV channels that usually operate in the EU countries have underwent similar restrictions and closers due to the pressure of the Turkish authorities (Dick, 2016). In addition, some pro-PYD-YPG social-media accounts of Facebook and YouTube, which publish video and other posts about Kurds and the YPG have been censured and suspended occasionally without enough explanation from the YouTube and Facebook managements (Kurdish Question, 28 June, 2016; YPGRojava, 23 August, 2017). The managements of Facebook and YouTube have usually claim that the suspensions of such accounts were for violating their rules of publishing. However, Kurdish activists render the censorship and suspension of pro-PYD and YPG accounts to the pressure exerted by the Turkish authorities who use the claim that these accounts serve the propaganda of the PKK.

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<sup>136</sup> Ronahi TV was suspended by Eutelsat alongside two pro-PKK TVs of Med-Nuce and Sterk (Briel, 2017).

Another measure, which has been conducted in individual cases by the authorities of some EU countries is interrogating some of their citizens who joined the YPG. The cases of interrogation have been conducted by the police and counterterrorism branches of Germany, UK, and Denmark against several citizens of these countries who voluntarily joined the YPG to fight against ISIL, and in few cases these individuals faced legal prosecution (Dearden, 2016; McKay, 2017; Tuck, 2017). Such individual cases built the implication that although the Western governments support the YPG in the campaign of anti-ISL, they discourage their citizens to join the YPG. However, this policy is more related to banning citizens from travel to areas of armed conflicts and to prevent their involvement in such conflicts without being members of military missions authorised by governments. This is discerned in the statements of the Western authorities and officials who warned their citizens not to travel to Syria and not to involve in unauthorized military service there (BBC, 3 September, 2014; Tuck, 2017). For example, although UK prime-minster David Cameron admitted that there was "fundamental difference" between joining the Kurds to fight against ISIL and joining ISIL, he urged UK citizens not to travel to Iraq and Syria (quoted in BBC, 3 September, 2014). The UK Home Office considered the unauthorized involvement in armed conflicts as an offence according to criminal and anti-terror laws (BBC, 3 September, 2014).<sup>137</sup> Although such rules have been quite strict regarding those who join ISIL and other Jihadist groups, they remain loose regarding the YPG volunteers as the actions of the latter were less seen as offences, and they rarely faced legal charges (Moor, 2016).

The authorities of some Western countries have not taken such measures against their citizens who have joined the YPG. For example, the Canadian authorities has not adopted such provisions against Canadians volunteers who joined the YPG (Hipolito, 2015), Canadian

authorities advised Canadians who wanted to participate in the military campaign against ISIL to join the Canadian military, and to avoid travelling to Syria or volunteering in the YPG against ISIL (Hipolito, 2015). Nevertheless, Canadian members of YPG who returned to Canada have not faced arrest or interrogation. The research also found no case of arrest and interrogation against American volunteers in the YPG by the US authorities. This is although the US department of state discouraged American citizens from travel to Syria and considered the unauthorised involvement in an armed conflict as a criminal offence (US Department of State, March, 2017).

The narrative of the Turkish officials that constructed the PYD-YPG as criminal organizations who perpetrated ethnic cleansing against Arabs and Turkmen in Syria was also not successful to convince the international community to view the PYD-YPG as criminal groups, and accordingly, the narrative was unable to persuade the other countries to designate the PYD-YPG as terrorist organizations. As explained earlier the narrative was declined by the report of UN special commission on Syria and it was not supported by the reports of human rights organizations. The narrative even has not received credit by the Arab countries. This is although the Turkish authorities tried to incite Arab countries against the PYD and YPG through this narrative. The attempt of Turkish authorities to incite Arab countries against the PYD-YPG using this narrative is discerned in the statement of Turkish Ambassador in Bahrain, Hatun Demirer who claimed that the YPG razed the houses of Syrian Arab families, and that she was surprised for the inaction of Arab countries regarding the YPG violations (MFA, 1 February, 2016).

## **Legitimizing the military policies of Turkey against the YPG**

The Turkish military repeatedly attacked the YPG positions in Syria, and in August, 2016 the Turkish military conducted a military intervention in Syria seizing part of the Syrian territory (see Maps 4 and 13). The construction and narrative that have served the Turkish military policies in Syria include the following: The PYD-YPG as parts of the PKK, as a threat to each of the national security of Turkey and as a threat to territorial integrity of Syria, and as perpetrators of ethnic cleansing. The narratives about the threat of PYD-YPG to the national security of Turkey and the territorial integrity of Syria were repeated before and during the Turkish military intervention of Operation of Euphrates Shield in August, 2016 in Syria (Ant & Abdu-Nasr, 2016; Lund, August, 2016; Pamuk & Bektas, August, 2016). For example, Turkish PM claimed that Turkey aimed at preventing Syria from being “divided along ethnic lines” and “preserving the territorial integrity of Syria” (quoted in Lund, August, 2016). Erdogan made it clear that the operation mainly aimed at preventing the YPG from seizing the ISIL controlled territory and connecting the *Rojava* cantons (Pamuk & Bektas, August, 2016), (see Map 4).<sup>138</sup> During the military operation, Erdogan stated that “we will not allow the [Democratic Union Party] PYD/YPG to be at our borders. We will not allow the PYD to establish a state there [in Syria]. Everyone has to know that” (quoted in Daily Sabah, 13 April, 2017). Likewise, the Turkish interior minister asserted that the YPG should not take the place of retreating ISIL militants (Pamuk & Bektas, August, 2016).

The narrative of ethnic cleansing was also used by the Turkish official as an excuse for the attacks against YPG positions and before and during the Operation of Euphrates Shield. For example, following the capture of *Manbij* area, which was one of the main ISIL strongholds

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<sup>138</sup> The area under the control of Euphrates Shield Operation prevents the connection of Afrin canton of *Rojava* to the other cantons.

by the YPG, the Turkish authorities refused the YPG progress and accused the YPG of ethnic cleansing of Sunni Arabs (AFP, 29 August, 2016; Euronews, 29 August, 2016). During the YPG operation of *Manbij*, Erdogan said that it is a crime against humanity to remain silent to the ongoing ethnic cleansing by the PKK and YPG (Hurriyet Daily News, 28 April, 2017). Such statements accompanied with intensive attacks on the YPG positions by the Turkish forces and its allied Syrian Jihadist militants of FSA (AFP, 29 August, 2016). Statements of the Turkish officials also made direct connection between the Operation of Euphrates Shield and the prevention of ethnic cleansing by the PYD-YPG. Deputy chairman of the ruling AK party, Aktay claimed that a safe zone by Turkey and its allies inside Syria would prevent the ongoing ethnic cleansing by the PYD as he stated that “the safe zone would keep the refugees inside Syria and prevent ethnic cleansing there. These are the reasons why we want safe zones” (quoted in Uras, 2016).

### **The ideological considerations that influenced Turkish anti-PYD-YPG policy**

Two main ideological considerations have influenced the anti-PYD-YPG policy of Turkish authorities. The first consideration is related to the *de-facto* Syrian Kurdish autonomy as a factor that encouraged further nationalist action by the Kurds in Turkey. In particular, the Syrian Kurdish autonomy alongside other factors encouraged the Kurds in Turkey to declare their autonomy in December, 2015 (Reuters, 27 December, 2015; BBC, 27 October, 2015; Beauchamp, 2016). The declaration of autonomy by the Kurds of Turkey is explained in chapter 8. The Turkish deputy PM, Nurettin Canikli, constructed *Rojava* as a conspiracy, which aims at dividing Turkey (AA, 14 July, 2016). Several sources highlighted that the aspiration of Kurds in Turkey for the achievement of self-governance of Kurds in Syria has become a major concern for the Turkish authorities (AFP, July, 2017; Butler, February, 2016; Idiz, 2015; Jones, July, 2015; Kingsley, 2017). As highlighted earlier, the Turkish officials expressed repeatedly

that they would not allow a Kurdish governed entity in Syria (Ant & Abdu-Nasr, 2016; Istanbulu, September, 2016; Pamuk, 24 October, 2015). For example, Turkish Defence Minister Fikri Isik stated that "Turkey will prevent the unity of the PYD [Syrian Kurdish] cantons at all costs. We will continue our struggle" (quoted in Jones, March, 2017). The Turkish officials usually omit reference to the nationalist action of Kurds in Turkey. Instead, they describe it as terrorism. Accordingly, the Turkish officials construct the *Rojava* cantons as both a source of terrorism that targets Turkey and a threat to the territorial integrity of Syria as explained earlier in this chapter. The terrorism narrative that the Turkish authorities used against *Rojava* autonomy is also discussed in chapter 8.

To prevent the geographical interaction between the Kurds in *Rojava* cantons and in the Kurdish region of Turkey, the Turkish authorities adopted certain measures. One of the main measures is the closure of the crossing centres of the border between Turkey and *Rojava* cantons (Coskun & Butler, September, 2016; Letsch, November, 2013). On the other hand, the Turkish authorities kept open the crossing-centres between Turkey and the Syrian entities governed by Islamist groups of FSA as explained earlier (see Map 7, and Table 5). Turkish military also intensified its presence alongside the border. The Turkish military in many occasions used gunfire against civilians of *Rojava* cantons who tried to cross illegally the Turkish border (Adel, 2016; Ara News, March, 2017; Dearden , April, 2016; McKernan, August, 2017). In addition, the Turkish military sporadically attacked the YPG positions and Kurdish inhabited areas in Syria as explained earlier (BBC, 27 October, 2015; Coles & Davison, April, 2017; Toksabay & McDowall, October, 2016).

The second ideological consideration is related to the pro-political Islam ideology of the AKP, which contradicts with the enthusiastically-secular ideologies of PYD-YPG and *Rojava*

administration. As highlighted in chapter 4, the AKP has showed itself as the role-model of Muslim Brotherhood parties of Arab countries (Aydin-Düzgit, 2014; Gurpinar, 2015: 30-32; Yakis, 2014). In addition, the AKP authorities have the ambition to exert stronger regional role in the Arab countries through the Sunni Islamist movements. In the case of Syria, the AKP supported the Muslim Brotherhood, and Islamist armed movements of FSA to practice influence inside Syria (Mroue, 2015; Gurpinar, 2015: 30-32; Nakhoul, October, 2014; O'Bagy, 12 April, 2012: 27-28; Yakis, 2014; Zaman, 18 November, 2013).<sup>139</sup>

The AKP Syrian policy to practice such influence through its border in the north of Syrian was challenged by both the *Rojava* pro-secularism administration, and the resistance of YPG for the armed Islamist movements of FSA. The *Rojava* Charter of Social Contract (constitution) asserts secularism and separates religion from governance (Peace in Kurdistan, 2014). The charter made no reference to Islam, but it considered all religions practiced in Syria to be equal (Peace in Kurdistan, 2014). In addition, the YPG resisted and managed to defeat the Jihadist movements of ISIL, Jabhat Al-Nusrah, Ahrar Al-Sham, Ghurba'a Al-Sham and others in several conflicts starting from 2012 until the date of writing this research (Abdelaziz, 2017; Ahramonline, 2013; Global Security, 2016a; Perry, June, 2015). AKP indirectly expressed its anger for the action of PYD-YPG against its Syrian policy. Erdogan described the PYD-YPG and PKK as “atheists” who have waged war on Islam (quoted in Svirsky, 2016), and “enemies of Islam” (quoted in TCCB, 14 April, 2016). Whereas, Yasin Aktay, the spokesman of the ruling AK party claims that the YPG include in its ranks Westerners who are either “crusaders”, or “Western intelligence agents” and whose aim is to create a “secular pro-Western Kurdish statelet in the heart of Islamic lands” (quoted in Sharma & MacDonald, 2016). This is although

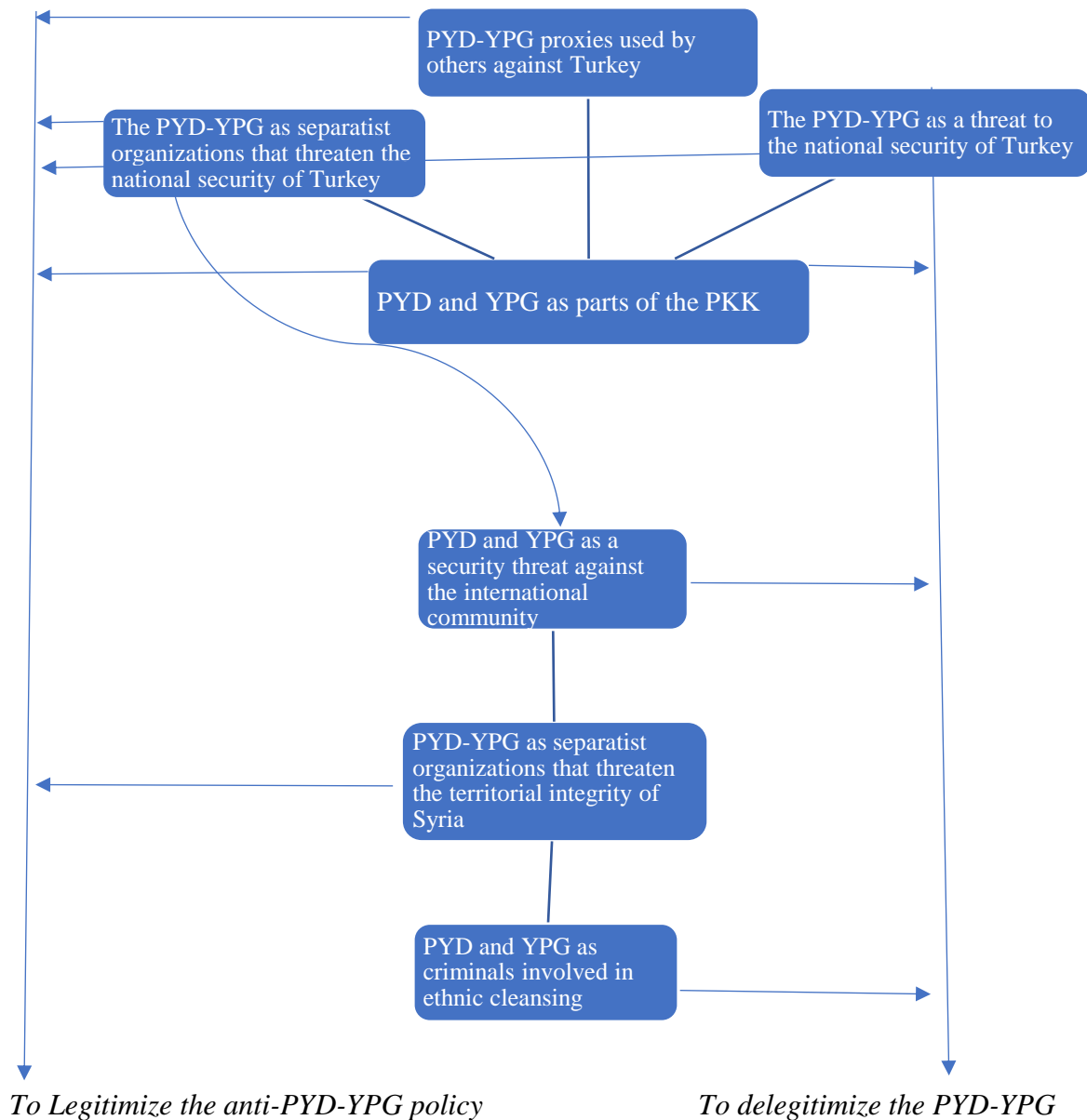
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<sup>139</sup> See also Oxford Analytica, 19 September, 2013; Stanford University, 2017.



the AKP authorities avoided to openly express that their anger was for the resistance of YPG to the Islamist groups, which hampered the AKP policy in Syria.

**Figure 6. PYD-YPG as a threat to Turkey; as proxies used by ‘the others’ (1), and as a threat to the ‘others’ (2).** The construction of PYD-YPG as parts of the PKK serve both the delegitimization and legitimization policies and agendas of the Turkish authorities.



## Conclusion

The construction of the PYD and YPG in the Turkish official texts has three dimensions (see Figure 6). The first dimension constructs the PYD-YPG as a threat to Turkey. This dimension includes the following narratives about the PYD-YPG:

- They are organic parts of the PKK.
- They are involved in attacks inside Turkey.
- They are proxies used by the other countries against Turkey.
- Their separatist action in Syria, constitute a threat against Turkey.

The second dimension constructs the PYD-YPG as a security threat against international community. In particular, the PYD-YPG are constructed as a terrorist threat against the US and European countries. The latter have actually supported the YPG in the anti-ISIL campaign.

The third dimension constructs the PYD-YPG as a threat to Syria and Syrians. This dimension has the following two main narrative:

- The PYD-YPG separatism constitutes a threat to the territorial integrity of Syria.
- The PYD-YPG are criminal groups that perpetrated ethnic cleansing against Syrians.

Thus, the Turkish official discourse constructs the PYD and YPG to be proxies used by the other countries against Turkey, and it constructs them as a threat to the same countries that have supported them. In other words, they are used by the others against Turkey, but they are also a threat against the same others. The term the '*others*' mainly implies the US and its allies in the campaign against ISIL who have supported the YPG.

The constructions and narratives regarding the PYD-YPG in the Turkish official discourse are challenged by the findings of the research. The research argues that these constructions and narratives, which are formed in the context of the Turkish official narrative of terrorism have

certain implied messages that serve certain agendas and policies of the Turkish authorities (see Figure 6). These are categorised in the constructions that serve delegitimizing the PYD-YPG and those serve legitimizing certain Turkish policies against the YPG.

Although the Turkish authorities used its constructions and narratives to legitimize the attacks of its military against *Rojava* and its military intervention in Syria, these constructions and narratives could not achieve their goal of delegitimizing the PYD-YPG internationally. This is because they are not based on concrete grounds. Nevertheless, occasional measures were taken against some Western YPG volunteers by the authorities of their countries, and against pro-PYD-YPG TV channel and internet accounts by international media companies.

The research found that the PYD-YPG have certain level of relationship with the PKK. However, the PYD-YPG are not organic parts of the PKK, and they do not act according to the instructions of the PKK against Turkey as the Turkish official discourse claims. The PYD-YPG have certain characteristics that are driven from their Syrian Kurdish identities and geopolitical interactions and goals, which are dissimilar to these of the PKK.

The research argues that the anti-PYD-YPG policy of Turkish authorities is influenced by two main ideological considerations. The first consideration is related to the influence of *Rojava* autonomy over the nationalist action of Kurds in Turkey, and their aspiration for autonomy. The second consideration is related to the pro-political Islam ambition of AKP in Syria, which have been challenged by the secular ideologies of PYD-YPG and *Rojava* who managed to resist political-Islam and Islamist armed groups in the north of Syria. However, the Turkish officials omit reference to these ideological considerations. Instead, they construct *Rojava* as a source of terrorism that targets Turkey.

## **Chapter 7:** *The approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process*

### Introduction

This chapter deals with the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process. The term approach is used to refer to the constructions and policies that Turkish authorities adopted regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question. The chapter covers the period of the peace process from September 2012 to June 2015. The chapter argues that the peace process started in the 4<sup>th</sup> congress of AKP in the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, 2012 when Erdogan called for a peaceful approach for the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. The research also argues that the peace process failed following the June, 2015 elections when the Turkish military launched a military campaign against the PKK. This is although Erdogan announced the failure of the peace process in the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2015 (DW, 28 July, 2015).

The analysis of various texts by the Turkish officials reveals that Erdogan statements regarding the peace process and Kurdish issue were the dominant.<sup>140</sup> Therefore, the data generation of the research resulted in more statements by Erdogan. The relevant statements of Erdogan are analysed in this chapter alongside the statements of other Turkish officials. Erdogan is a main funder of the AKP and he acted as its chairman when he was the prime-minster of Turkey. As stated in chapter 4, although Erdogan formally resigned the leadership of AKP when he was elected in the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, 2014 as the president of Turkey he carried out acting as the actual chairman of the AKP during his presidency.

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<sup>140</sup> See Appendix Table 6 of the list of main Turkish officials. The list is included to avoid repetition of stating their positions in the chapters of analysis.

The chapter begins with analysing the constructions of the pro-peace and non-military approach of the Turkish officials during the peace process. In the context of dealing with the language and policy of the Turkish authorities regarding the peace process, the chapter also reveals the attitude of the PKK and legal Kurdish parties of BDP and HDP regarding the peace process. One type of constructions that this chapter deals with are the constructions of the ‘*brothering*’ discourse, which were repeated in the statements of Turkish officials regarding the Kurds during the peace process. As stated in chapter 4, such constructions are more discernible in the relevant statements of Erdogan.

In the next sections, the chapter deals with the constructions of the Kurdish question and its solution in the Turkish official discourse, which dominated during the peace process. The analysis reveals the ways that the Kurdish question was constructed as problems of terrorism and underdevelopment in the Turkish official discourse. The chapter also deals with the expectations of the Turkish authorities regarding the peace process. The analysis reveals the outcomes that the Turkish authorities wanted from the peace process. The analysis deals with the constructions of the Turkish officials that called for the disarmament of the PKK, which was the main outcome that the Turkish authorities wanted from the peace process. The analysis also deals with the constructions that formed the refusal of the Turkish officials to the Kurdish demand of autonomy. In addition, the analysis deals with the term of ‘democratic reforms’, which was used by the Turkish officials to construct their response to the Kurdish demands. The analysis reveals the types of democratic reforms, which were adopted by the Turkish authorities and their limitations.

## **The initiative of peace and the non-military approach**

At the Kurdish national holiday of Newroz on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March, 2013 the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan called for ceasing the armed action of the PKK in order to engage in a peaceful approach through the peace negotiations with the Turkish authorities.<sup>141</sup> The call of Ocalan was written as a letter, which was read out by the deputy of Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), Pervin Buden. The call demanded the PKK to adopt a ceasefire and to withdraw its militants outside the territory of Turkey. The call stated:

“We have reached the point where weapons can fall silent and ideas and democratic politics will have the chance to speak”, “I say a new era is beginning. Politics gain prominence over weapons. We have now come to the stage of the withdrawal of our armed forces outside the borders...” (Ocalan, 24 March, 2013).

The PKK and BDP supported the call of Ocalan, which was also celebrated by the Kurds as the beginning of the era of peace (BBC, 21 March, 2013). On 23 March, 2013, Murat Karayilan, the executive leader of the PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire and described Ocalan’s call as “historic, correct and very important” and as “the start of a new period” (quoted in Reuters, 23 March, 2013). Later, the PKK started to withdraw the first batch of its militants from inside Turkey to its camps in the Qandil mountainous areas in Iraqi Kurdistan (BBC, 25 April, 2013, Letsch, 8 May, 213).<sup>142</sup>

The new phase of the peace negotiations was already initiated by the Turkish authorities before the call of Ocalan. As stated in chapter 4, the AKP opening approach laid the ground for the

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<sup>141</sup> Newroz or Newruz: in Kurdish and Persian means ‘the new-day’ in English, and it is an ancient holiday celebrated, mainly by Kurds, Persians and other peoples. It is also the first day of the Persian and Kurdish calendars. However, Kurds have considered Newroz as part of their national identity and struggle for the right to self-determination.

<sup>142</sup> Qandil is also transliterated as Kandel or Kandil in some sources.

peace process. Chapter 4 also referred to the secret talks between the PKK and Turkish intelligence service (MIT), which were interrupted in 2011 (Kutschera, 2012). Unlike the secret talks of Oslo, the peace process and its negotiations were declared by the AKP leadership. As stated earlier, the research considers the speech of Erdogan of the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2012 as a declaration of the peace process. In his speech, Erdogan stated that “starting today, we want to open a new page”, “we want to protect that clean page from violence and we want to make it a page of peace and brotherhood” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Likewise, the then Turkish president, Abdullah Gul who is also one of the founders of AKP made a pro-peace statement on 20 March, 2013, while Kurds were celebrating the eve of their national holiday (Newroz).<sup>143</sup> Gul stated that “the Nevruz holiday is being celebrated in a period during which positive developments are taking place and hopes for reaching a better future are refreshed” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 21 March, 2013). In an earlier statement on 11 March, 2013, Gul said that the peace efforts were supported by the people of Turkey as he stated that “a substantial majority of our people support these endeavours” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 11 March, 2013).

However, the Turkish officials did not use the term ‘peace process’. Instead, they used terms such as “resolution process”, “solution process”, “settlement process” to name the process (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 14 November, 2014; BYEGM, 31 December, 2014; Hurriyet Daily News, 9 April, 2013, 27 April, 2013; TCCB, 29 January, 2015). The Turkish authorities avoided using the term ‘peace process’ because this would imply that the process was political process between two political partners including the Turkish officials and representatives of Kurds. Although the Turkish authorities emphasized the need for a peaceful solution, they

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<sup>143</sup> See the earlier footnote about Newroz.

constructed the main goal of the peace process to be solving the terrorism problem. This is explained in this chapter and in chapter 8.

Erdogan expressed commitment to the peace process despite the actions of provocation by actors who opposed the peace process. Just two days before the call of Ocalan both the headquarter of AKP and the Turkish ministry of justice were targeted by two explosive attacks. According to the Turkish media, the attacks were by Revolutionary People's Liberation Party (DHKP-C).<sup>144</sup> However, both Erdogan and his deputy Bulent Arinc claimed that these attacks aimed at sabotaging the peace process (Hurriyet Daily News, 19 March, 2013). Erdogan stated that these attacks targeted “democracy, the resolution process, our national will, as well as our fraternity” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 19 March, 2013). In his statement, Erdogan considered the peace process as a vital project for the future of Turkey, and that it was closely connected to its democracy and national interests. Erdogan also claimed that such attacks would not force the AKP authorities to retreat from the process as he stated that “we won't be discouraged by these attacks”, “we will never give up the process and never leave it to some tactless jobbers” (quoted in AA, 20 March, 2013).

The statements of Turkish officials that dominated the era of peace process described the military approach against the PKK as counterproductive and painful option. This is discerned in the statements of Turkish president, prime-minster, and advisors of prime-minster (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012, October, 2012b, 19 December, 2014; Hurriyet Daily News, 27 February, 2013, 21 March, 2013). In an interview with *CNN-Turk* TV, Gul stated that “violence

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<sup>144</sup> For more about DHKP/C, see chapter 5. Also see: Hay, M. (2015). What we know about the left-wing militant group that took a prosecutor hostage in Turkey. *Vice*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.vice.com/read/what-we-know-about-the-left-wing-militant-group-that-took-a-prosecutor-hostage-in-turkey-402> [accessed 20 November, 2015].



is no longer beneficial”, “the pains it caused are evident” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 27 February, 2013). Likewise, Erdogan described the solution to be the peace project of AKP and insisted that the military approach against the PKK was not the right policy and described the armed confrontation as “ruthless” action because its main victims were the Turkish “soldiers and police” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Likewise, advisor of the prime-minister, Hatem Ete emphasized the importance of the peace process as he stated that “both the state and the organization understood that they are not able to achieve results with the security-based struggle method in which they had engaged for 30 years” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 19 December, 2014). Ete used ‘the organization’ to denote the PKK.

The Turkish officials also constructed this narrative in emotional contexts by using emotional terms and structures. For example, Erdogan referred to the casualties among the Turkish military and police and stated that “we do not want to see mothers and fathers with tears in their eyes”, "stop the tears of mothers and fathers” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Likewise, Turkish army chief, Necdet Ozel stated that “we do not want the mothers to cry anymore” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 1 September, 2014). Erdogan also repeated the word “children” and other words that incite emotions as he described the casualties of police and military in his statement that “nobody would like to see their children die at a young age. May God protect us from experiencing such grief. No mother, no father should ever experience the pain and agony of losing their children” (quoted in BYEGM,1 October, 2014). On the other hand, Erdogan described the non-military approach as a relief for the families of police and soldiers who were under stress and fear because of the military operations against the PKK (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012; BYEGM,1 October, 2014). In his 2013 speech at the Brookings institution in Washington, Erdogan described the previous 30 years as the source of bad news about death caused by the PKK ‘separatist terrorism’ and that after launching the

peace process there were no more cases of death as he stated that “for the last 30 years, we've always been hearing bad news every day because of separatist terrorism, but in the last 4 months, we have not had any incidents, and there has not been any loss of life” (quoted in Brookings, 17 May, 2013).

The analysis of texts that include the statements of the Turkish president, Gul and foreign minister (FM), Davutoglu, which were produced during the era of peace process, revealed that they avoided constructions that encouraged military confrontation. The analysis also found that the dominant narratives of the statements of Gul and Davutoglu during the peace process concentrated on democracy, corporation, economic development and peace (BYEGM, December, 2013, February, 2014, March, 2014; Dews, 19 November, 2013; MFA, April, 2014). For example, Gul stated that “in our country, significant steps were taken to provide for the atmosphere of peace and security, and considerable advancements were achieved in the area of democracy and economy” (quoted in BYEGM, December, 2013). Likewise, Davutoglu emphasized the importance of peace for Turkey as he stated that “without peace, stability, rule of law and good governance we cannot provide prosperity for our people” and he also stressed the relationship between development and peace as he stated that “there is no peace without sustainable development and there is no sustainable development without peace” (quoted in MFA, April, 2014). However, the constructions of pro-peace and non-military approach are inter-discursively connected to the other constructions, which are discussed in the rest of this chapter.

### **The brothering discourse**

As stated earlier, the constructions and narratives that the research named as the ‘brothering discourse’ are discerned in the texts of AKP officials. During the peace process, the

constructions of brothering discourse dominated the relevant statements of Turkish officials. In particular, they dominated major parts of Erdogan statements about the Kurds. In the statements of Turkish officials, which include the narratives of brothering discourse certain terms are repeated such as “fraternity”, “brotherhood”, “brothers”, and “embrace” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012, October, 2012b; BYEGM, 12 October, 2014, 29 October, 2014, 31 December, 2014, 23 March, 2015; Hurriyet Daily News, 22 March, 2013). For example, Davutoglu used the *brothering* structures in his statements such as “Kurdish sisters and brothers” (quoted in Bekdil, 2014), “our brothers -citizens of Kurdish origin” (BBC Monitoring, 9 October, 2014), and “my Kurdish siblings” (quoted in BYEGM, 9 October, 2014). As stated earlier in chapter 4, the brothering discourse has ideological considerations, which construct Islam and the Ottoman heritage as umbrellas that joins Turks, Kurds and others. This is discerned in the constructions made by Erdogan in his speech during the 2012 AKP congress such as “we all turn the same way when we pray”, and “we are brothers” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Erdogan also referred to Islamist historical figures who were of Kurdish origins like Saladin Ayubi as he stated that “my Kurdish brother is the descendant of Saladin Ayubi, the beloved ruler of the East and the conqueror of Jerusalem” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Likewise, Davutoglu used structures that prized the Kurdish figures of the Ottoman era as he stated that “there is no difference between Feqiye Teyran's beautiful Kurdish and Yunus Emre's pleasing Turkish for us” (quoted in BYEGM, 10 December, 2014). Both Feqiye Teyran and Yunus Emre's were famous poets during the era of Ottoman empire.

During the peace process, the constructions of brothering discourse were interdiscursively connected to those of pro-peace and non-military approach. For example, Erdogan stated that “resolution process is the biggest brotherhood project of Turkey” (quoted in BYEGM, 31

December, 2014). Accordingly, the peace process was also named by Erdogan as ‘brotherhood project’. In another statement Erdogan said that “we want to promote brotherhood in this country together with our Kurdish brothers” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Erdogan added that “our path is the path of love, fraternity, kindness, embrace and unification” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Likewise, the Turkish president, Gul referred to the peace process and stated that “I hope that this process serves as a means for the beginning of an era in which our fraternity consolidates again. Everybody in Turkey lives in peace and serenity and prosperity is sovereign” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 22 March, 2013). Similarly, the advisor of prime-minister and former minister of interior, Basir Atalay stated that “no more loss of life. Just let there be fraternity” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b).

The constructions of the brothering discourse, however, consider those who are pro-AKP as insiders and those who are not pro-AKP as outsiders. Accordingly, the brothering discourse is in relationship with the AKP constructions of the ‘*othering*’ discourse as the constructions of the brothering discourse explicitly or implicitly use the pronouns ‘they’ and ‘them’ and their associated terms and structures to denote the outsiders who are outside the group of insider that joins the AKP and its supporters, and this is discerned in using the pronouns of ‘we’ and ‘us’ and their associated terms and structures. Van Dijk (2006b) highlights the ideological function of using terms and pronounces that form a dichotomy between the ‘we’ in-group vs. the out-group or ‘they’. However, the insiders’ group has also several sub-groups. The core of the insiders’ group is the AKP and its authorities, and the others are sub-groups who have various levels of proximity to the core of the insiders’ group according to their relationship to the AKP and its ideology (see Figure 7 below). This is discerned through the study of the texts of Erdogan and AKP officials. For example, throughout his speech in the 2012 congress of AKP, Erdogan used the pronouns ‘we and us’ and their associated terms to denote the AKP

authorities and supporters, citizens of Turkey, and Muslims in general (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). On the other hand, Erdogan used the pronouns of ‘they and them’ and their associated terms and structures to denote those who oppose the AKP and its policy. The latter include Turkey’s opposition parties and groups, and governments of other countries who were at odds with the AKP policies or ideology (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). The brothering constructions are also interdiscursively connected to those of terrorism. This is discussed later in this chapter.

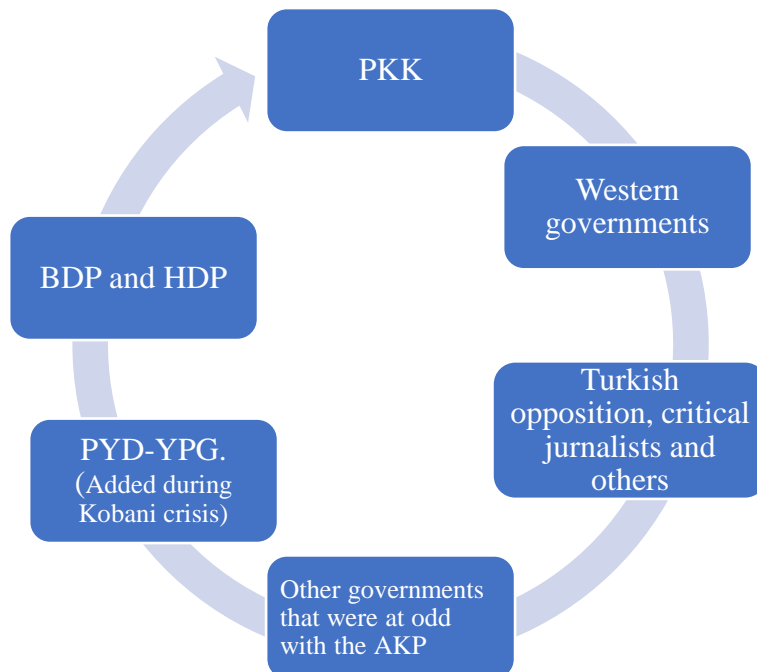
The figures below show how the AKP officials constructed the insider group and outsider group. Figure 7 shows that the inner circle of the brothering discourse joins the AKP party and authorities and is followed by the others circles according to their proximity to the ideology of the AKP. Figure 8 shows that the outsiders as the opponents of AKP or those who were at odd with the AKP ideology and policy. This include the PKK, PYD-YPG, BDP, HDP, the Turkish opposition parties, critical journalists and other individuals in addition to the governments of other countries that were at odd with the policies or ideology of AKP.<sup>145</sup> These were also constructed as ‘supporter of terrorism’. This is discussed in this chapter under the title of constructing the Kurdish question as terrorism.

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<sup>145</sup> Following the coup attempt of July 2016, the Fethullah Gulen Movement (FETO) was added to the outsiders and was labelled as a terrorist organization by the AKP authorities.



**Figure 7. The insider group ‘we’ of the brothering discourse.** This shape is approximate and depends on the analysis of the speech of Erdogan in the 2012 congress of AKP (see BBC Monitoring, October, 2012) in addition to other texts by Erdogan and AKP officials. ‘We’ has an ideological function as it indicates the in-group vs. the out-group or ‘they’, which is presented in the figure below (Van Dijk, 2006b: 126).



**Figure 8. The outsider group ‘they’ of the brothering discourse.** This figure is shaped depending on the analysis of various statements by the AKP officials.

### **Constructing the Kurdish question and its solution**

Although the Turkish authorities entered peace negotiations with the PKK, the Turkish officials denied and avoided using the term ‘Kurdish question’. This is because the Kurdish question has been considered as a taboo in the Turkish nationalist discourse, which insists on the indivisibility of Turkey and its nation as discussed earlier in this research. In other words, the statements of Turkish officials reflected the Turkish nationalist discourse, which denied the existence of a nation other than the Turkish in Turkey. In particular, the term ‘Kurdish question’ has been considered as a threat to the indivisibility of Turkey because it implies the Kurdish national demands of self-determination or self-governance. Accordingly, the Turkish official discourse denied the existence of the Kurdish question as a political question of a nation. Instead, it constructed it as certain problems connected to the Kurds who were constructed as an element of the nation of Turkey. The Turkish officials including the president, prime-minister (PM), and minister of foreign affairs (FM) usually avoided to refer or denied the existence of a Kurdish question in Turkey (Aktan, 2015; BBC Monitoring, October, 2012; Brookings, 18 November 2013; BYEGM, 23 September, 2014; Hurriyet Daily News, 22 March, 2013). However, the denial of the existence of the Kurdish question in Turkey was more emphasized by Erdogan. For example, Erdogan used the term “Kurdism” instead of ‘the Kurdish question’, which he denied as he stated that “I do not recognize the existence of a Kurdish problem. I say yes to the problems of my Kurdish brethren but no to Kurdism! I love my Kurdish brothers, but I reject Kurdism” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 7 February 2013). Interdiscursive connection between the denial of Kurdish question and brothering discourse is repeated in the statements of Erdogan (BBC Monitoring, January, 2013, October, 2012; Fairclough, 2003).

Erdogan also claimed that admitting the existence of Kurdish question is to accept separatism as he stated that “saying ‘there is a Kurdish question’ constitutes, from this point on, separatism. The Kurdish question is caused precisely by those who say that there is a Kurdish question” (quoted in Aktan, 2015).

Instead of using the term “Kurdish question”, the AKP officials usually used the term ‘Kurdish problems’ or ‘problems of the Kurds’. <sup>146</sup> The AKP manifesto states that “the event, which some of us call the Southeastern, others call the Kurdish or the Terror problem, is unfortunately a reality in Turkey” (AK Parti, n.d.). However, the usage of the term ‘problems of Kurds’ is mainly discerned in the statements of Erdogan. For example, Erdogan stated that “the AKP has taken very resolute and sincere steps for the solution of the problems of my Kurdish brothers” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Erdogan repeated this as he addressed the Kurds and stated that “let us solve these problems together. Let us solve these problems through politics without surrendering to violence” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). The Turkish official discourse usually constructed these problems as terrorism and underdevelopment. Nevertheless, the construction of the conflict and Kurdish question as a problem of terrorism was more dominant. This is discerned in the AKP manifesto that constructs the Kurdish question to be mainly a problem of terrorism, which has been in interaction with the underdevelopment of the east and south east of Turkey (AK Parti, n.d.). The Turkish official texts usually use the terms ‘east and southeast of Turkey’, and they more frequently use ‘the southeast’ a reference to the Kurdish region of Turkey. <sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> As stated in chapter 4, Erdogan used the term ‘Kurdish problem’ for the first time in 2005 as he called for the need to a peaceful approach to end the conflict (BBC Monitoring, 10 August, 2005).

<sup>147</sup> The Turkish official texts usually use the term ‘the southeast’ a reference to the Kurdish region of Turkey, and less frequently ‘east and southeast of Turkey’.



Although the AKP was the first ruling Turkish party to acknowledge discriminative policies that were adopted against the Kurds, the AKP officials usually rendered these policies to the governments of Turkey that preceded the AKP government. This is discerned in the 2013 speech of Erdogan in the Brookings institution (Brookings, 17 May, 2013). Erdogan claimed that Kurds suffered from the policies of “discrimination, denial, and assimilation”, which were adopted by the previous governments (quoted in Brookings, 17 May, 2013). Likewise, Atalay admitted the repressive policies of previous Turkish governments against Kurds, which were ruled by the Kemalist parties (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b).

The Turkish officials also claimed that the AKP conducted democratic reforms that already ended such policies of discrimination against the Kurds. For example, Erdogan stated that “the AKP has brought to an end the policies of rejection, denial, and assimilation practiced against Kurds in this country for decades” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). In another statement, Erdogan claimed that the policies of discrimination against the Kurds were ended through the “democratic reforms”, which were adopted by the AKP authorities (quoted in Brookings, 17 May, 2013). Other officials like Hatem Ete, Advisor of PM claimed that there was a “democratic progress under AKP rule”, and that this would guarantee solving the problems of Kurds, and therefore, the PKK should lay down its arms and engage in “political democratic struggle” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 19 December, 2014). The term ‘democratic reforms’ that the Turkish officials repeated during the peace process is discussed in a coming section in this chapter. However, the next section discusses the constructions of ‘terrorism and underdevelopment’, which were used instead of the term ‘Kurdish question’ during the peace process.

### **Constructing the conflict and Kurdish question as a problem of terrorism**

As explained earlier in this research, the dominant narrative of Turkish official discourse regarding the Turkish-Kurdish conflict constructs the conflict as ‘terrorism perpetrated by the PKK’. This was also the case during the peace process. Although Erdogan in his speech during the AKP congress of 2012 called for finding a solution for the conflict through peaceful dialogue, he described the conflict as terrorism by the PKK as he stated that “the violence perpetrated by the terrorist organization for 30 years has not brought anything but harm to Turkey” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Erdogan repeated this narrative in his 2013 speech in the Brookings Institution as he stated that “Turkey has suffered terrorism in the last 30 years. Separatist terrorism..” (quoted in Brookings, 17 May, 2013), and later in September, 2014 as he stated that “Turkey, a country that has fought terrorism for many years, that has paid a heavy price due to terrorism” (quoted in BYEGM, 23 September, 2014). Erdogan and other Turkish officials used constructions that support the assumption that the PKK action of terrorism were violent crimes that mainly targeted venerable civilians and civic services. For example, Erdogan stated that the PKK “slaughter Kurdish women and girls”, “expose Kurdish children to death”, “abduct Kurdish youth and children by force”, “kidnaped contractors and engineers”, and “burned down construction equipment” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012).

The narrative of Turkish officials omits the violent role of the Turkish forces and usually constructs the conflict as an action by only one actor; the PKK. Omitting the ‘negative’ role of the Turkish forces in the Turkish official narrative is an aspect that serves bias and ideological implications (see Van Dijk (2001: 107) . In addition, this narrative constructs the Turkish forces as victims of the PKK terrorism. For example, Erdogan used certain sentences to describe the action of the PKK against the Turkish forces as violet crimes, which were

perpetrated with treachery as he stated that the PKK “martyr Turkish soldiers and police, “shoot a policeman treacherously, ignominiously, and despicably from the back” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Erdogan also used certain lexicons to describe the PKK, which invite condemnation such as “murderers”, “lowlifes”, “bloodstained”, “bestial”, “treacherous”, “repressive”, “authoritarian”, and “fascistic” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Likewise, Atalay stated that the PKK militants “want more deaths, more funerals; they want society and the region to be terrorized” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b). Such lexicons and structures aim at the negative presentation of the PKK, and this serves the ideological considerations of the Turkish authorities (Van Dijk, 2006: 126).

As the Turkish officials described ‘the PKK terrorism’ as the main source of the Kurdish problem, they claimed that the main goal of the peace process was to end terrorism. Accordingly, the narrative of peace process was interdiscursively connected to that of PKK terrorism. This is discerned mainly in the statements of Erdogan (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012; Brookings, 17 May, 2013). Erdogan emphasized that terrorism was the main problem that needed a solution through non-military approach and described ending terrorism as the main subject of the peace process (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012; Brookings, 17 May, 2013). Erdogan stated that “the war against terrorism cannot be waged through only the security forces” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Erdogan even named the peace process as the “process of solving the terrorism problem”, which he considered as “a very vital, important process” (quoted in Brookings, 17 May, 2013). Describing the Kurdish problem as a problem of terrorism, which was the main subject of peace process is also discerned in the statements of PM advisors Atalay and Akdogan. For example, Atalay stated that “let us sit down and talk about terrorism, about the problem, and let us fix it together”, and he added “first and foremost to discuss the terrorism angle of the matter” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October,

2012b). In another statement Atalay repeated that “our goal is to end terrorism” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 18 December, 2012). Likewise, Akdogan, the advisor of Turkish PM for the file of peace process made similar claim and limited the goal of the peace process to ending ‘the PKK terrorism’ (Yinanç, 14 January, 2013).

During the peace process, the Turkish officials also constructed various groups and powers as ‘supporters of terrorism’. The label usually targeted those who were at odd with the AKP regardless of their dissimilar agendas and political views. The label of ‘supporter of terrorism’ mainly targeted the legal Kurdish parties of BDP and HDP. However, during the peace process, the Turkish officials also made an interdiscursive relationship between the constructions of ‘supporting of terrorism’ and the peace process as they claimed that there were groups and powers that aimed at sabotaging the peace process because they are advantaged by terrorism, and therefore, these groups and powers continued supporting terrorism. For example, Erdogan claimed that there were “lobbyists” who were “feeding on blood”, and therefore, they were uncomfortable with the peace process, and they made efforts to sabotage it by supporting terrorism (quoted in BYEGM, 1 October, 2014). Thus, Erdogan claimed that these groups and powers advantaged by the continuation of PKK terrorism in Turkey. In his speech of 30 September, 2012, Erdogan used similar narrative and identified those who got advantages from supporting the PKK terrorism as internal groups and external powers as he stated that “sadly, terrorism receives support not only from outside, from circles that are hostile to Turkey, but, I am sorry to say, domestic groups that profit from this bloody market” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). In another statement, Erdogan claimed that these groups and powers “earned big sums of money” and “gained strength from terrorism” (quoted Hurriyet Daily News, 4 May, 2013). The following paragraphs put a light on what did Erdogan meant by internal groups and external powers.

The term of ‘internal groups’ mainly referred to the Turkish Deep State, the main opposition party CHP, politicians, media agencies, and journalists who were at odd with the AKP and its Kurdish policy.<sup>148</sup> The Turkish Deep State is a clandestine network of Turkish elites who consider their grouping and activities above the law (Ganser, 2005; Kanli, 2007; Kaya, 2008; Taş, 2014). This is because they believe that their actions are dedicated for maintenance of Turkey’s ideological foundations determined by Ataturk, the founder of Turkey. Turkish officials usually used other terms to name the internal groups that support terrorism in order to sabotage the peace process. For example, Erdogan named them as “dark spots”, and “black holes” (quoted Hurriyet Daily News, 4 May, 2013). Likewise, Akdogan named them as “dark forces” (quoted in Yinanç, 14 January, 2013). However, in other statements Erdogan refers to the identity of these ‘internals’ either explicitly or implicitly. For example, Erdogan referred to the CHP as a supporter of terrorism as he started that “as you can see, the main opposition party of this country speaks with the language and tone of the terrorist organization” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). In another statement, Erdogan claimed that opposition and the Deep State apparatus were at odd with the peace process because they advantaged from terrorism (Hurriyet Daily News, 4 May, 2013). Erdogan also referred to these ‘internals’ as “certain politicians, “certain media”, and “certain circles” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Although Erdogan did not name these ‘*certain*’, and this implies that the term itself is broad and encompasses all those who were at odd with the AKP ideology and its policy including politicians, journalists, and media agencies.

The term of ‘external powers’ that were constructed as supporters of terrorism and aimed at sabotaging the peace process referred mainly to the governments of other countries who were at odd with the policies of the Turkish authorities. In particular, the governments of certain

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<sup>148</sup> For more details on the Turkish Deep State, see chapter 4.

Western countries. For example, Erdogan accused that the Western governments of conspiracy against the peace process, and he named Germany and France as he stated that "westerners do not want us to solve this problem, I say clearly, Germany does not want it, France does not want it and they do not help us on this issue"(quoted in France 24, 10 January, 2013). Likewise, Atalay accused the European countries of conspiracy against both the peace process and the development of Turkey by using the PKK as a "catspaw" against Turkey (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b). The term 'catspaw' is a metaphor, and in this case it aims at creating negative implications regarding the PKK (Bhatia, 2009; Van Dijk, 2006). Whereas, Akdogan blamed the European countries and claimed that they were not doing enough in supporting Turkey against "the terror organization who is doing very serious work in Europe" (quoted in Yinanç, 14 January, 2013). The 'very serious work' that Akdogan named was a reference to the pro-PKK demonstrations and making-awareness activities, which were conducted by the Kurdish diaspora in Europe.

However, and as stated earlier, the term 'supporter of terrorism' mainly targeted the legal Kurdish parties BDP and HDP. To emphasize that the BDP and HDP supported terrorism, Turkish officials constructed them as extensions of the PKK 'terrorist organization'. For example, the BDP was described by Erdogan as "puppet of the terrorist organization", and "extension of the terrorist organization", and that "its members of parliament only use the language of anger, violence, and discrimination" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). In another statement, Erdogan accused the HDP and BDP of direct involvement in 'terrorist' actions as he stated that they were "waiting in ambush" to return to the old days of terror and bloodshed" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 11 June, 2014b). Likewise, Atalay claimed that the BDP supported PKK terrorism as he stated that "they are doing politics in the shadow of terrorism. They embrace terrorism. They bless terrorism" (quoted in BBC Monitoring,

October, 2012b). Turkish officials also used emotional structures that invite condemnation against the BDP and HDP because they did not stand against the PKK. For example, Erdogan claimed that the PKK perpetrated crimes, while the HDP kept silent as he stated that the HDP “turn a blind eye to murders, kill and leave mothers without their kids, make children into orphans and always cultivate fear” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 11 June, 2014).

This is although the BDP and HDP were part of the peace process and their role in the peace process was admitted and acknowledged by the Turkish officials. Thus, using the label of supporter of terrorism against the BDP and HDP contradicted with that they actually involved in the peace process. The BDP and later HDP played a major role in facilitating and conveying the messages related to the peace process between each of the Turkish authorities, Ocalan, the PKK leadership in Qandil mountainous, and the Kurdish public (Akbaba, 2014; Butler, 4 April, 2013; Daily Sabah, 27 April, 2014; Kurban, 2013: 183-185; World Bulletin: 4 June, 2014). Akdogan highlighted the role of BDP regarding the peace process (Yinanç, 14 January, 2013). Likewise, Atalay referred to this role of the BDP as he stated that “we all spoke with the BDP. We said let politics fix this” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b). The HDP was established in October, 2013, and it engaged more actively in the peace process (Fildes, 2015; Gisselbrecht, 2014: 2-6; Peoples Democratic Party, n. d.). Akdogan, the then Turkish PM deputy admitted the role of HDP in the peace process as he stated that “we care about the HDP. It is the political talking partner in the process” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 23 October, 2014). Likewise, Hatem Ete stated that “Ocalan is able to talk to the organization by means of the HDP” (BBC Monitoring, 19 December, 2014). Ete used the term ‘the organization’ to denote the PKK.

Accordingly, the term ‘supporter of terrorism’, which was used by the Turkish officials against different actors during the peace process is problematic as it was not limited to those who were considered by the AKP authorities as opponents of the peace process, but it also included those who actually supported it and were part of it. The narrative that targeted the Kurdish parties who were engaged in the peace process was even more dominant in the Turkish official discourse. Using the label of supporter of terrorism against HDP is discussed with more details in chapter 8. However, all those actors who were constructed as ‘supporters of terrorism’ were also constructed as outsiders or the “others”, and this include both those who were considered as opponent of the peace process and those who supported the peace process. In other words, ‘supporters of terrorism’ including the external powers, internal groups, and legal Kurdish parties were considered as outsiders in the ‘othering discourse’ of Erdogan and AKP (see Figure 8). As explained earlier, the ideological function of the ‘othering constructions’ is underlined by the scholars of CDA (Van Dijk, 2006; Hansen, 2006; Bartilucci, 2010)

The statements of Turkish officials also interdiscursively connected the constructions of the brothering discourse to those of terrorism. This is mainly discerned in the statements of Erdogan. For example, Erdogan referred to the PKK and stated that “my Kurdish brother has nothing in common with this bloodstained terrorist organization”, “we ask our Kurdish brothers to have the courage to raise their voices against terrorism” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). In another statement that connected the brothering constructions to those of terrorism, Erdogan described the PKK as a ‘vampire’ that was loathed by Kurds whom he described as brothers as he stated that “my Kurdish brethren will cry out against these blood sucking vampires” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 11 June, 2014). Erdogan also interdiscursively connected the construction of supporter of terrorism to those of the brothering discourse. For example, Erdogan constructed the HDP as supporter of terrorism and stated that it was not



representing “my Kurdish brothers and sisters” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 10 June, 2014). In another statement, Erdogan constructed the HDP as supporter of terrorism, described the Kurds as his brothers, and he claimed that Kurds who would abandon the HDP because it supported terrorism and it was responsible for their pains as he stated:

“Don’t be deceived by their plots. They say, ‘We are the representative of Kurds.’ Go away. What service have you provided for my citizens, for my Kurdish brothers and sisters? What have you offered as a service other than tears?” (quoted in Erkuş, 2014).

### **Constructing the Kurdish question as a problem of underdevelopment that was dealt with by the AKP authorities**

As stated earlier, during peace process period, the Turkish officials also constructed the Kurdish question as a problem of underdevelopment in the southeast region of Turkey. The Kurdish region is located in the east and south east of Turkey (see Maps 2 and 3 in chapter 4).<sup>149</sup> This narrative is discerned in the statements of Erdogan and other Turkish officials who claim that the AKP policy was to end the underdevelopment of the south-east (Al-Jazeera, February, 2014; BBC Monitoring, August, 2014, October, 2012, October, 2012b, 30 November, 2014; Brookings, 17 May, 2013; Hurriyet Daily News, 1 April, 2013, 27 April, 2013). Erdogan constructed the Kurdish problem as underdevelopment problem and claimed that there were development efforts by the Turkish authorities in the south-east of Turkey. However, these efforts according to Erdogan statement were limited to both building civic service or infrastructure, which he mixed with the term “investments” (quoted in Al-Jazeera, February, 2014; BBC Monitoring, October, 2012; Brookings, 17 May, 2013). Erdogan made a connection between the peace process and investments in the south-east of Turkey as he stated

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<sup>149</sup> The majority Kurdish provinces are located in the east and south-east of Turkey (see Maps 2 and 3 in chapter 4).

that "when the chimney's of the factories start to emit smoke, when employment rises, the resolution process will be permanent" (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 27 April, 2013). Likewise, Turkish minister of finance, Mehmet Şimşek highlighted the underdevelopment of south-east and rendered it to the instability of the region, which was caused by terrorism (Hurriyet Daily News, 1 April, 2013). Şimşek also connected investment in the south-east to the peace process as he stated that "an investment flow will come to these regions with the peace process" (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 1 April, 2013).

Erdogan claimed that the AKP government already achieved big part of investments in infrastructure as he stated that "we waged our campaign in conjunction with NGO's. We invested nearly 35 quadrillion [old] Turkish lira in this region alone.<sup>150</sup> We invested in schools, hospitals, roads, power plants--you name it" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Erdogan in this statement used the number '35 quadrillion [old] Turkish lira' as the amount of money spent by the authorities in the region. This is although the old Lira that Erdogan referred to was replaced with the new Lira in 2005 (DW, 6 January, 2005; NBC News, 1 January, 2005). Each one million old Lira were converted into 1 new Lira. The old Lira was one of the lowest value currencies in the world. However, using such an enormous number of the old currency by Erdogan functions as a hyperbole that creates the sense of exclamation and aims at influencing the cognition of recipient of text in order to accept its message (Van Dijk, 2006).

The claim that the Turkish authorities conducted large-scale investments in the south-east are repeated in other statements of Erdogan (Al-Jazeera, February, 2014; Brookings, 17 May, 2013). For example, Erdogan addressed the south east of Turkey and stated that "we've made a lot of investments in these areas -- investments which had not been the case in the history of

the republic” (quoted in Brookings, 17 May, 2013). In another statement Erdogan stated that “we have provided very serious incentives for investment in that region. That region is the number one priority”, and he added that “we want to take good steps in southeastern Anatolia not just with infrastructure but superstructure investments too for reducing unemployment” (quoted in Al-Jazeera, February, 2014).

The claims of Erdogan that the AKP authorise made such large-scale investments in the south-east are inconsistent with his other statements that he made later. The latter reveal that the Turkish authorise did not conduct such investments in the south-east. For example, in a meeting with the Afghan president, Erdogan claimed that development and economic successes in Turkey depended on the public support and that these developments grew from low level (BBC Monitoring, 20 October, 2014). In order to support this argument, Erdogan claimed that the investments of the east and southeast of Turkey were mainly by the locals, and there were no such major investments by the authorities as he stated:

“We do not have the level of investment we would like in our East and Southeast”,  
“There is small-scale investment”, “these investments are being made mainly by the people of the region. Outside investment is very rare. It is the people of that region who are making these investments” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 20 October, 2014).

The claims that the Turkish authorities conducted major investments in the Kurdish region also contradict with the dominant narrative of the Turkish officials that blamed the PKK terrorism for not achieving such investments. This narrative, which established an interdiscursive relationship between the discursive constructions of underdevelopment and terrorism is discerned in the statements of Erdogan and other Turkish officials (Al-Jazeera, February, 2014; BBC Monitoring, August, 2014, October, 2012; Brookings, 17 May, 2013; Hurriyet Daily

News, 1 April, 2013). For example, Erdogan stated that “investments have not been made in this region due to the risk of terrorism. If this is eliminated, investments will be made in this region” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, August, 2014). Other Turkish officials repeated this narrative in their statements and accused the PKK of targeting the efforts of development by the government. For example, Atalay claimed that the PKK militants targeted the government projects in the region because they “do not want to see investment in the region” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b). Erdogan even claimed that the PKK terrorism blocked the development progress of whole Turkey and hampered achieving the goal of Turkey to play a global economic role and stated that “if we didn't have the problem of terrorism, Turkey would be a very different Turkey right now”, and he added that “when we overcome terrorism, which we will, Turkey will offer new horizons to the world” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 4 February 2013).

The claims of the Turkish officials that the projects of the Turkish authorities in the Kurdish region were solely dedicated for the development of the region are also contested. One of the well-known projects of Turkey is the South-eastern Anatolia Project (in Turkish: Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi, GAP), which has been carried out since the 1970s (see Map 8 below). The Turkish governments described GAP as a strategic project of developing the south-eastern region. During the peace process, the AKP authorities added another claim that the GAP project would help the peace process. This is discerned in the statement of Akdoğan who said that “the action plan of GAP Project which has a budget of 27 billion TL and the peace process will promote both the region and Turkey” (quoted in BYEGM, 9 March, 2015). However, GAP main achievements were limited to the establishment of several dams on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, which increased Turkey's capacity of hydropower and irrigation. The GAP main goal is the construction of 22 dams and 19 hydroelectric power plants on the

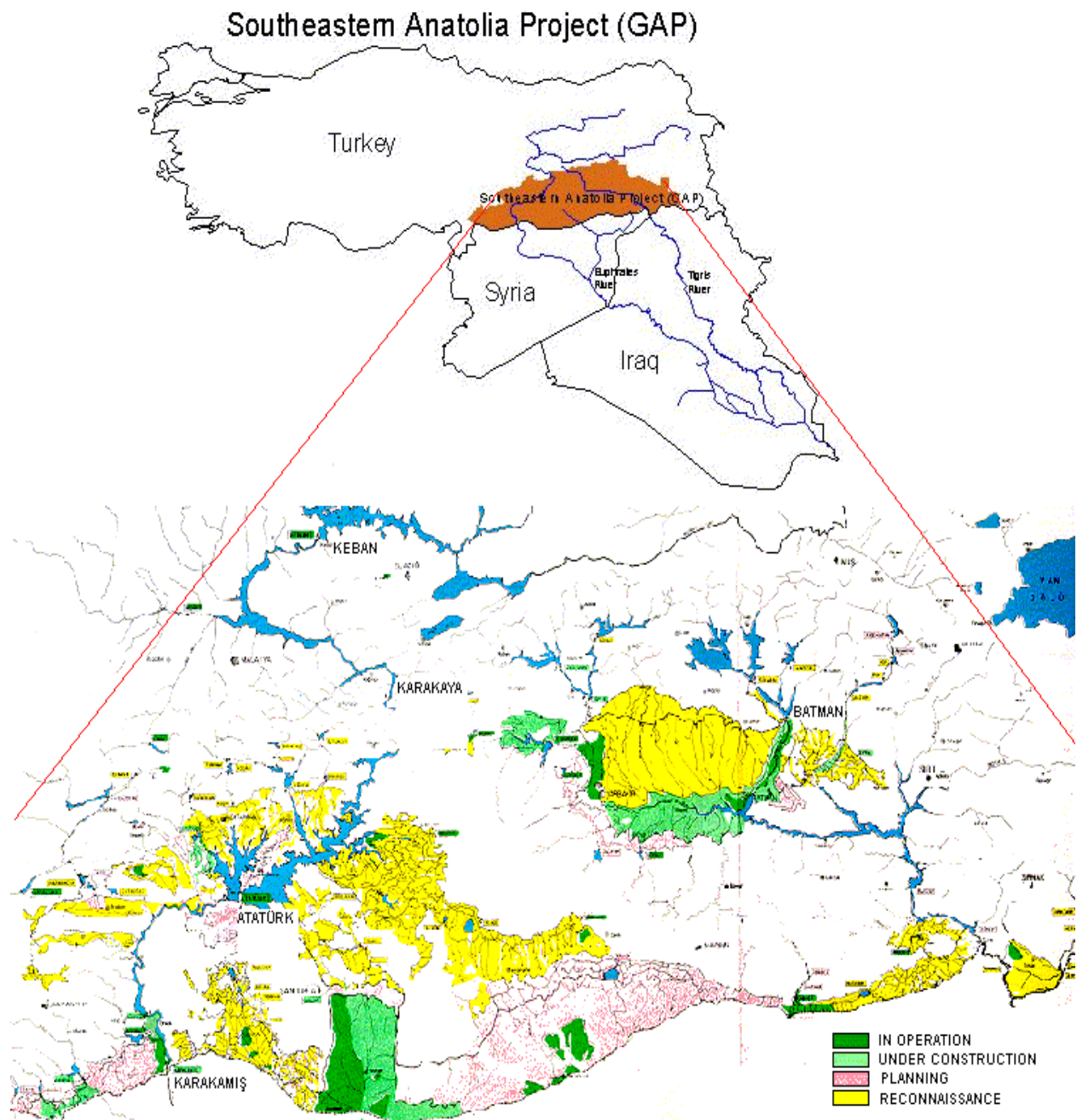
revers of Euphrates and Tigris (Tsakalidou, 2013). Furthermore, critics argue that the GAP project was used by the Turkish governments as a tool to assimilate the Kurds into the Turkish society, and they highlighted that hundreds of thousands of Kurds migrated to the majority Turkish cities because the dams destroyed their villages, which they were forced to evacuate (Jongerden, 2010; KHRP *et al.*, 2002: 17; Tsakalidou, 2013).

During the peace process and following its demise, the AKP authorities carried on the GAP project and have constructed Ilisu dam under the banner of developing the southeast region although the project was criticized by the EU parliament, environment defenders and others. The EU parliament stated that the dam “will have devastating social, environmental and political effects”, and added that “this particular region is mainly inhabited by Kurds and that the construction will have severe effects on the Kurdish population and culture” (EP, 2015).<sup>151</sup> The Ilisu Dam project was described as ‘controversial’ by the critics as it has caused the destruction of the 12.000-year-old historical settlement of Hasankeyf (in Kurdish: Heskif) in addition to about 300 other historical sites including Neolithic caves, which met 9 out of 10 UNESCO criteria for World Heritage Sites (Dernegi, 2013; Duddu, 2014; Gusten, 2013; Harte, 2014; Letsch, 29 August, 2017). The Kurds who protested the project have considered Hasankeyf as an important symbol of their ancient identity (Sweeney, September, 2017). Following the failure of the peace process, the AKP authorities forced the residents to evacuate Hasankeyf, and continued to destroy its Neolithic caves (Letsch, 29 August, 2017). The project has displaced about 80.000 residents who lost their livelihood of farming, breeding animals and tourism (Letsch, 29 August, 2017). Steve Sweeney (September, 2017) described the action of Turkish authorities as “cultural genocide” against the Kurds.

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<sup>151</sup> There is also a pending decision by the EU Court of Human Rights regarding the dam. See: ECHR. (July, 2016).

**Map 8. Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP).** Source: (Tsakalidou, 2013). The map shows that the project is located in the heart of the Kurdish region of Turkey. The map shows in different colours the constructed, under construction, and planned dams. Constructing the GAP dams has resulted in evacuating large number of Kurdish settlements. Many of the Kurdish settlement are located near the rivers and areas of the dams. The map also shows that the dams would create a barrier between the Kurdish region of Turkey and the Kurdish regions of Syria and Iraq.



### **The outcomes that the Turkish authorities expected from the peace process**

The Turkish authorities considered the disarmament of the PKK as the most important outcome that they wanted from the process. On the other hand, the Turkish authorities rejected the Kurdish demand of autonomy. Instead, they used the term ‘democratic reforms’ as a concept to respond to the Kurdish demands.

### **Disarmament of the PKK**

The Turkish officials considered the disarmament of the PKK as a priority and the main condition for the continuation of the peace process. Gul stated that “it’s obvious that there are sincere efforts and intentions [on our side]. Now the other side should show sincerity too, by laying down arms” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 11 March, 2013). According to Gul, the ‘sincerity’ of the Turkish authorities was already demonstrated by entering the peace process, but the ‘sincerity’ of the PKK would be demonstrated if it laid down its arm. This is although the process was in its early stage and the Turkish authorities had not responded to the Kurdish demands. Erdogan also made similar calls for the PKK to lay down its arms (AA, 23 February, 2013; BBC Monitoring, 17 February, 2013; Trend News, 18 November, 2013). Erdogan stated that “we are calling on you [PKK] to bury arms, to lay down weapons. We have been sincerely working to maintain peace and brotherhood” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 17 February, 2013). In another statement Erdogan called the PKK and said:

“There is only one thing to be done: You will [lay down] your weapons. You will conduct your political acts at Parliament. If you have an idea or a thought to say, you will express it. If you do that, you will find an interlocutor” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 9 March, 2013).

Constructing the disarmament of the PKK as a priority for Turkish authorities is also discerned in the statements of other Turkish officials from the beginning of the peace process until its

failure. This is discerned in several statements of Davutoglu, and the advisors of PM, Atalay, Akdogan, and Ete (BBC Monitoring, July, 2014, October, 2012b, 19 December, 2014; Daily Sabah, 8 September, 2014; Yinanç, 14 January, 2013). For example, while presenting his government program at the Turkish Parliament, Davutoglu stated that "as Turkey's 62nd cabinet, the targets of the new roadmap are ending terrorism, disarmament, and bringing PKK members into society and participation in democratic policy" (quoted in Daily Sabah, 8 September, 2014). Likewise, Atalay stated that "the goal is this: disarmament. There is nothing else to discuss. the whole point of them will be disarmament" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b). Similarly, Ete emphasized that disarmament was the main subject of negotiations with the PKK as he stated that "the topics that the government is taking up and will take up with Ocalan are limited to the clarification of the disarmament process of an organization, which has decided to lay down arms" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 19 December, 2014).<sup>152</sup>

Although the PKK declared a ceasefire and began to withdraw its militant from Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan, the Turkish officials claimed that such steps were not enough, and that the PKK should disarm (BBC, 21 March, 2013; Letsch, 8 May, 2013). Murat Karayilan, the PKK executive leader announced the beginning of the withdrawal of PKK militants by the end of April, 2013 and this was followed by the withdrawal of first group of PKK militants from Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan (quoted in BBC, 25 April, 2013; Letsch, 8 May, 2013). However, the Turkish authorities devalued the step. Erdogan claimed that those who withdrew were only 20% of the militants and were mostly 'invalids, children, and old people' (Perrier, September, 2013). The Turkish officials claimed that withdrawal was not enough and that only disarmament could convince the Turkish authorities to conduct concrete steps in the peace

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<sup>152</sup> See also the statement of Davutoglu (AA, 2 March, 2015)



process. Erdogan stated that "from the moment that the arms are laid down, the peace and welfare will develop much better" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 1 March, 2015). This attitude of the Turkish authorities that devalued the withdrawal and emphasized on the disarmament is discerned in the statements of Turkish officials even before the withdrawal of the PKK militants in April 2013. This is although the withdrawal was considered by the Turkish authorities and PKK as one stage of the peace process. For example, in January, 2013 and before announcing the withdrawal, Akdogan stated that "a serious step is to retreat behind borders. Disarmament carries a meaning. We are not talking about laying down arms and taking them up again when they wish. We are talking about the elimination of arms" (quoted in Yinanç, 14 January, 2013).

### **Rejecting Kurdish autonomy**

The PKK has called for "Democratic Autonomy" as a solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey (FT, 22 August, 2013; TATORT Kurdistan, 2013; Uzun, 2014: 22-23 & 19-23). As discussed in chapter 5, the notion of democratic autonomy is formed according to Ocalan's doctrine of 'Democratic Nation', which demands the decentralization of state and the establishment of a new political and administrative system that empowers the status of various ethnic, religious and other identities instead of a single nationalist identity that has been imposed in countries like Turkey (Ocalan, 2016, 2011). Accordingly, the notion of democratic autonomy supports the political representation of not only the Kurds but also the minorities who live in the majority Kurdish region of Turkey (TATORT Kurdistan, 2013). At the beginning of the peace negotiations, the representatives of Kurds did not highlight autonomy because of the sensitivities of subject and its rejection by the Turkish public (Hurriyet Daily

News, 10 December, 2014).<sup>153</sup> However, it was expected that the PKK would voice it as the main Kurdish demand if the negotiations progressed staidly. In 2011 the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) that joined the BDP and other Kurdish parties in Turkey had symbolically called for ‘democratic autonomy’ in the Kurdish region of Turkey, and this call was supported by the PKK. The call included that “we organize communes in the villages, and councils in the cities, and in that way try to organize democratic self-management” (quoted in TATORT Kurdistan, 2013: 29). However, the Kurdish demand of democratic autonomy as the solution for their question in Turkey was unilaterally put in practice in 2015 when the DTK declared it (ANF, 27 December, 2015; BBC, 29 December, 2015). The declaration was violently rejected by the Turkish authorities (Reuters, 27 December, 2015). This is discussed in the next chapter in more details.

During the peace process, the Turkish authorities rejected any kind of autonomy for the Kurds and stressed on maintaining the indivisibility of Turkey. For example, Erdogan underscored the territorial integrity and national unity of Turkey and refused autonomy for Kurds whom he described as an element out of 36 other elements of the nation of Turkey (Al-Jazeera, February, 2014). Erdogan stated that “we have no interest in distributing autonomy in Turkey. We would not allow such a thing in any case. Because Turkey with its 780.000 square Km territory is a whole, but there are 36 different ethnic elements in Turkey” (quoted in Al-Jazeera, February, 2014). Likewise, Davutoglu denounced the demand of autonomy and implied that such a demand would lead to “dissolution” and implied the Kurds to be ‘a member’ of Turkey’s nation as he stated that “for us the resolution process is not a dissolution process, on the contrary it is a cohesive process for all the members of nation” (quoted in BYEGM, 10 December, 2014).

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<sup>153</sup> Democratic autonomy was included in the “draft negotiation framework”, which was proposed by Ocalan and supported by the PKK and HDP (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 10 December, 2014).

Hatem Ete was clearer as he ruled out autonomy to be part of the negotiations of the peace process as he stated that “autonomy is not discussed with Ocalan today and it will not be discussed with him tomorrow” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 19 December, 2014). Likewise, Akdogan refused the notion of autonomy and described it as an “extreme point”, and he called the Kurds to adopt instead a “more moderate point”, which would guarantee their “rational” rights as citizens of Turkey (quoted in Yinanç, 14 January, 2013).

Erdogan also interdiscursively connected the constructions of brothering discourse to the constructions of anti-autonomy (see Fairclough, 2003). For example, Erdogan stated that “I said ‘one people’ against those who want to split us apart because that’s our belief. I love my Kurdish brother, my Arab brother and my Turkish brother in the same way. I don’t discriminate” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 9 March, 2013). In other statements, Erdogan used Islamist constructions to denounce autonomy. For example, Erdogan refused autonomy as a solution for the Kurdish question and stated that “these peoples are each other’s brothers, and we are the sons of this motherland”, “therefore, the Kurd is my brother and the Turk is my brother” and added that “this is because Allah created us like this” (quoted in Al-Jazeera, February, 2014).<sup>154</sup>

The Turkish officials constructed the peace process as a project that would emphasize the indivisibility of Turkey. That is, it was constructed as a process that aimed at preserving Turkey’s national unity and territorial integrity. For example, Gul constructed the peace process as a project that would serve Turkey’s “national unity and integrity as well as its unitary structure” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 11 March, 2013). However, this narrative is mainly discerned in Erdogan’s statements who named the peace process as “the national unity and

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<sup>154</sup> Allah is the God of Muslims.

brotherhood project”, and “national unity and fraternity project” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012, 3 November, 2014, 1 January, 2015; BYEGM, 28 February, 2015). Likewise, Atalay claimed that Turkey and its nation would empower as the result of the peace process (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b). Similar claim is repeated in the texts of interview of deputy chairman of AKP, Mehmet Sahin (BBC Monitoring, April, 2013).

During the peace process period Erdogan emphasized the notion of the indivisibility of Turkey. Erdogan repeated his maxim “one nation’, ‘one flag’ ‘one homeland,’ ‘one state” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, January, 2013; Hurriyet Daily News, 28 December, 2012; TCCB, 29 January, 2015). This maxim of Erdogan is also referred to in chapter 5. Erdogan also used the same terms in different forms such as “we have gathered under a single flag”, “we are a single motherland and we are the citizens of the republic of Turkey. We are a single motherland and a single country “(quoted in Al-Jazeera, February, 2014).

Other terms of Turkish nationalist discourse that serve the notion of the indivisibility of Turkey are repeated in the statements of Turkish officials about the peace process. For example, the terms of “the nation”, “the people”, “this nation”, “this country”, “this homeland”, “my country”, “my nation”, and “my state”, which indicate the unity of Turkey’s territory and its single national identity are repeated in the statements Erdogan and other officials about the peace process and the Kurdish problem (quoted in BBC Monitoring, January, 2013, April, 2013, October, 2012, October, 2012b). In addition, the term ‘citizens’, which emphasized the attachment of Kurds to Turkey was widely used by the Turkish officials (see: BBC Monitoring, October, 2012, October, 2012b, 9 October, 2014; Brookings, 18 November 2013; Yinanç, 14 January, 2013). For example, while referring to the peace process, Erdogan stated that “we will

advance on our path to embrace all citizens with this project of peace" (quoted in BYEGM, 31 December, 2014).

### **The democratic reforms**

The Turkish officials usually framed the demands of Kurds in the loose term ‘democratic reforms’. Constructing terms like democracy, and democratic reforms to be as the main commitment of the Turkish authorities towards the Kurds is discerned in the statements of Turkish president, PM, FM, and advisors of PM (Al-Jazeera, February, 2014; BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b, 19 December, 2014; Brookings, 17 May, 2013, 18 November 2013; BYEGM, December, 2013; Pen International, 13 November 2012; Yinanç, 14 January, 2013). Davutoglu described the peace process as “democratization and reconciliation process” (quoted in BYEGM, 19 October, 2014).

The Turkish official also claimed that the democratic reforms would end the terrorism of PKK. Accordingly, they interdiscursively connected the constructions of democratic reforms to those of terrorism. Gul claimed that the best way to combat and isolate terrorism is to continue the democratic reforms (Pen International, 13 November 2012). Gul made an interdiscursive relationship between the constructions of democracy, terrorism and the peace process as he stated that “terrorist groups are uneasy about democratic reforms in Turkey, and that they increase terrorist acts to undermine this process” (quoted in Pen International, 13 November 2012). Likewise, Davutoglu stated that "the peace process prioritizes the democratic politics. When the democratic politics is adopted, there is no room for guns, violence or terror acts” (quoted in BYEGM, 16 February, 2015). Erdogan made a similar claim as he described the peace process as “democratization process”, which would overthrow “all the excuses and pretexts that terror had in hand” (quoted in Brookings, 17 May 2013).

During the peace process, the Turkish authorities adopted modest reforms which served democracy and human rights in general. One of the reforms, which was part of ‘the fourth reform package’ adopted in April 2013 by the Turkish parliament eased the pressure over the freedom of expression by narrowing the scope of the charge of “terror propaganda” (HRW, 19 December, 2014; Hurriyet Daily News, 11 April, 2013). The latter is punished according to both the Turkish anti-terror law and penal code. However, the reform package lifted the ban on the journalists and media agencies to quote and publish the statements of ‘terrorist organizations’ including the PKK (HRW, 19 December, 2014). The reform package was also a response to the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which stood against the repeatedly used charge of ‘terror propaganda’ that the ECHR considered as a violation against the freedom of expression (example, see ECHR, 2013: 28-29). Nevertheless, Amnesty International report (30 April, 2013) argues that these reforms adopted by the Turkish authorities fell short on the freedom of expression. Amnesty report argues that the amendment about the charge of terror propaganda included vague terms as it stated that the charge would be used only against statements that included “coercion, violence or threats” (quoted in AI, 30 April, 2013). The latter terms were considered by Amnesty as to be too broad and subject to biased interpretations. Andrew Gardner, Amnesty International’s researcher on Turkey criticized the limitations of the amendment and stated that “Turkey has a history of broad and vague laws which have been applied in violation of the right to freedom of expression. Turkey’s lawmakers should have put an end to this” (quoted in AI, 30 April, 2013).

The Turkish authorities also adopted certain laws to legally frame the peace process and to authorise the government to conduct certain steps in relation to the process. However, the laws were vague and the protection that the legal frame provided was limited to the Turkish officials

and excluded the Kurdish politicians and activists who were involved in the peace process.<sup>155</sup> In April 2014, the Turkish authorities amended the law of the National Intelligence Organisation (MIT). The amendment authorised the MIT to contact “any entity threatening national security” including “terrorist organizations” (BPC, April, 2014: 20). Accordingly, the law legalized the MIT negotiations with Ocalan and the PKK leadership. This was followed by a broader law named ‘the Law on Ending Terror and Strengthening Social Integration’, which was adopted by the Turkish parliament on 10 July, 2014 (Zeldin, 15 August, 2014). In addition to authorizing the Turkish governmental institutions and officials to contact the PKK, the law also offered limited amnesty to the PKK members who would give up their arms and surrender to the Turkish authorities (Zeldin, 15 August, 2014). However, the law was unclear as it did not refer to the particular Kurdish issues that the government would deal with and omitted any reference to the party that would represent the Kurds in the negotiations either the PKK or the then legal Kurdish party BDP. Instead, the law used vague and broad terms to address the steps that the Turkish government supposed to take in the peace process as it stated that the government would deal with “political, legal, socio-economic, psychological, cultural, human rights, security, and disarmament fields and on related issues” (quoted in Zeldin, 15 August, 2014).

The main democratic reforms, which touched the Kurdish identity during the peace process were limited to removing the ban on practicing and teaching Kurdish language and using the Kurdish names of the villages and geographical locations, which were Turkified (Hurriyet Daily News, 2 March, 2014).<sup>156</sup> However, the Turkish officials usually described the right to use the Kurdish language as a major issue in the peace process and Kurdish problem, and

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<sup>155</sup> See also IHD. (5 May, 2014).

<sup>156</sup> Turkified means their names were change by the Turkish authorities from Kurdish to Turkish names.

claimed that the AKP authorities already secured this right. For example, in his speech in the parliament, Erdogan considered the right to practice the mother tongue as the principal indicator of cultural rights of Kurds, and as a main response by the Turkish authorities to the Kurdish expectations from the peace process (BYEGM, 1 October, 2014). Erdogan even claimed that the Turkish authorities permitted the practice of Kurdish language even before adopting the reforms that admitted using the Kurdish language by the Turkish parliament as he stated that “the AKP removed the hurdles preventing mothers from speaking in Kurdish to their children. The AKP cleared the way for the teaching of the Kurdish language” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012). Likewise, Atalay claimed that the AKP government was the first that made the Kurds practice their language without restrictions. Atalay stated that “these citizens were at one time unable to speak in their mother tongue, unable to make music in their mother tongue. Now look at where the state is at. It is now saying, if you want your mother language I shall teach you” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, October, 2012b).

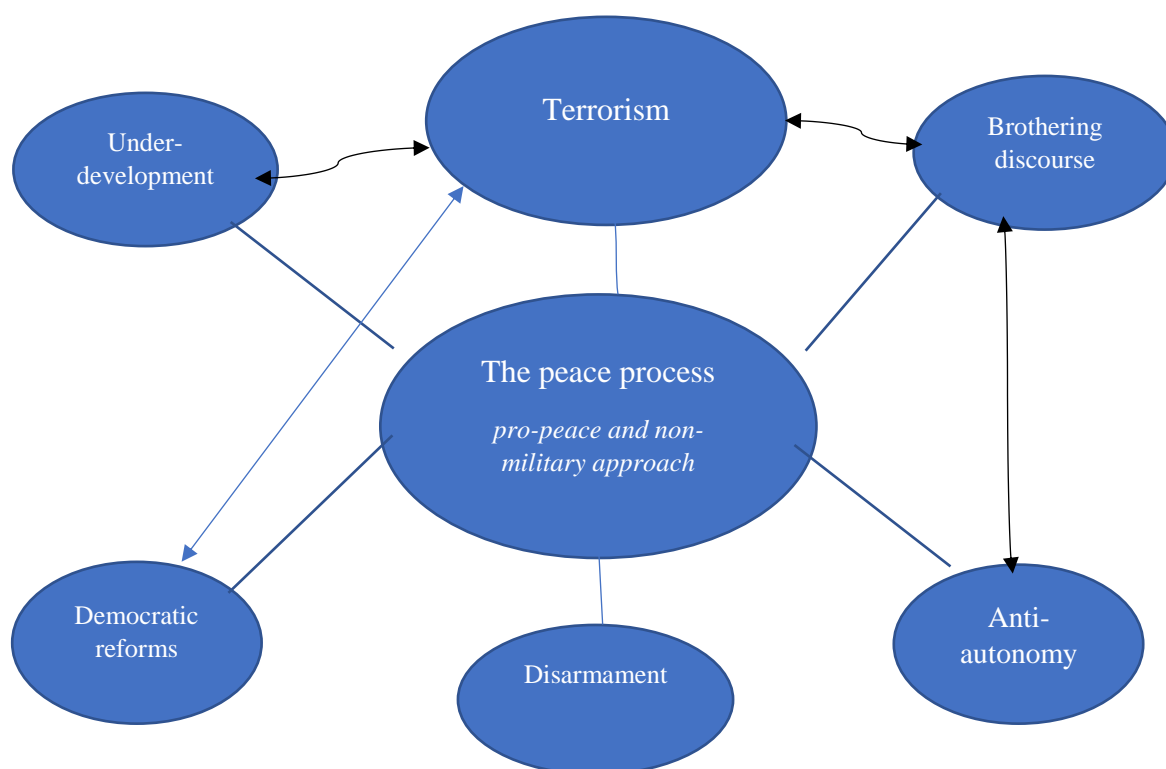
These statements, nevertheless, do not reflect the actual level of reforms adopted regarding the Kurdish language. It was only in March 2014 when the Turkish parliament adopted the bill of 'democracy package', which lifted the ban on teaching and broadcasting in Kurdish language (Hurriyet Daily News, 2 March, 2014; Taşpinar & Tol, 22 January, 2014). However, the law limited the permission of teaching Kurdish to private schools and did not support teaching the Kurdish language in the public schools (HRW, 19 December, 2014; Taşpinar & Tol, 22 January, 2014: 5). Although the AKP manifesto supported the right of Kurds to use their mother tongue, it emphasized the status of the Turkish language as the official language of Turkey (AK Parti, n.d.).



The reforms adopted by the Turkish authorities were short of dealing with another major obstacle of the peace process. This was the high threshold of 10% of the total votes in elections, which has been the condition to enter the parliament as a political party (HRW, 19 December, 2014; Taşpınar, & Tol, 22 January, 2014; Tremblay, 29 March, 2014). This high threshold was a major barrier that prevented the Kurdish political parties from entering the Turkish parliament (Taşpınar, & Tol, 22 January, 2014).<sup>157</sup> Although the reforms related to the Kurds needed voting in the Turkish parliament, there was no Kurdish political party representing the Kurds in the parliament. The BDP and HDP deputies in the parliament were elected to the parliament as independent individuals because their parties were not able to pass the high threshold of 10% to enter the parliament as political parties. However, the HDP managed to pass the 10% in the elections of June 2015. This success was quite late as the research considers the era that followed the announcement of the results of June 2015 elections as the beginning of the failure of peace process. This is discussed in chapter 8.

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<sup>157</sup> The HDP was the only pro-Kurdish party in the history of Turkey to enter the Turkish as it succeeded in passing 10% threshold in the 2015 elections (Letsch & Traynor, 7 June, 2015).



**Figure 9. The interdiscursive relationship between the major constructions of chapter 7.** The constructions of the peace process function as a node that was connected to all the constructions. Constructions of terrorism comes next in the number of connections to other constructions. This figure depends on the analysis of the Turkish officials' statements and other texts that the chapter dealt with. CDA highlights the importance of revealing the aspects of interdiscursivity in the text (Fairclough, 2003).

## Conclusion

During the peace process the Turkish authorities adopted a non-military approach regarding the Kurdish question. The Turkish officials' constructions of pro-peace and non-military approach are discerned throughout the chapter and they are interdiscursively connected to the other constructions that are discussed in the chapter.

Constructions of the brothering discourse are also noticeable in the statements of Turkish officials during the peace process. In particular, they are noticeable in the statements of

Erdogan. These constructions usually aimed at building the assumption that Kurds were in positive relationship with the AKP authorities depending on its Islamist background. However, the discourse creates a dichotomy between the insider group, which includes those who were closer to the AKP and its ideology and the outsiders' group, which includes those who were at odds with the AKP. The latter were political parties, individuals, groups and governments. In other words, like the othering discourse, the brothering discourse usually uses 'we and us' and their associated terms and structures to refer to the insiders and 'they and them' and their associated terms and structures to refer to the outsiders.

Although the AKP was the first ruling party of Turkey that acknowledged the discrimination against the Kurds, the AKP authorities rendered the discriminative policies against the Kurds to the previous governments that ruled Turkey before the AKP. The Turkish official discourse denied the existence of the Kurdish question, and the Turkish officials avoided using the term 'Kurdish question'. Instead, they named the question as 'problems of Kurds', which were constructed mainly as the problem of terrorism and the problem of underdevelopment.

Terrorism was the dominant construction in describing the conflict and Kurdish question, and the discursive constructions of terrorism interdiscursively connected to the majority of the other constructions that are discussed in this chapter. Although the Turkish authorities were engaged in peace negotiations with the PKK, the Turkish officials continued to describe the PKK as a terrorist organization and the conflict as terrorism. This is discerned in the statements of the Turkish officials, which reflected the policies of the Turkish authorities. The Turkish officials usually omitted in their statements references to the violent role of the Turkish forces in the conflict. Instead, they constructed the conflict as an action of terrorism conducted by only one actor; the PKK. Accordingly, the Turkish authorities considered terrorism to be the main

problem that the peace process aimed at dealing with. In addition to the dominant description of the PKK as terrorist organization, the label of ‘supporter of terrorism’ was used against other groups, powers, and individuals. These included legal Kurdish parties of BDP and HDP, Turkish opposition parties, external powers, other groups and individuals who were at odd with the AKP policy. The constructions of terrorism are also inter-discursively connected to those of the brothering discourse in the statements of Turkish officials that construct Kurds as insider ‘brothers’, while they construct the PKK, BDP and HDP as outsiders. Such statements usually use the terms of ‘the terrorist organization’ to refer to the PKK and ‘the supporters of the terrorist organization’ or ‘supporters of terrorism’ to refer to the BDP and HDP.

The Turkish officials also constructed the Kurdish question as a problem of underdevelopment that the south-east of Turkey underwent. The Turkish officials claimed that the Turkish authorities have dealt with the underdevelopment of the south-east through major investments. This is although such claim is inconsistent with the other dominant narrative of the Turkish officials that the Turkish authorities were unable to conduct investments in the south-east because of the terrorism of the PKK. The Turkish officials also described the GAP project as a major investment that would support the peace process, and the Turkish authorities carried on implementing the project of Ilisu dam. This is although the project was criticized by the EU parliament, environmentalists and others as it has led to displacement of the inhabitant Kurds, and the destruction of their historical sites and culture.

The statements of the Turkish officials considered the disarmament of the PKK as both the main subject of peace process and the main goal to be achieved. The disarmament of the PKK was called for by the Turkish officials even during the early stage of the peace process. In the other side, the Turkish officials refused the Kurdish demand of autonomy and emphasized on

the indivisibility of Turkey's nation and territory. The Turkish officials usually used the term 'democratic reforms' to denote the response of the Turkish authorities to the political demands of the Kurds. However, the main reform that touched the Kurdish identity was the right to practice the Kurdish language as the mother tongue. The Turkish authorities also adopted modest legal reforms that supported human rights in general. This in addition to certain laws that provided the protection to its officials who were involved in the peace negotiations and other relevant acts related to the peace process. However, this protection was limited to the Turkish officials and excluded the Kurdish parties and activists who were involved in the process.

**Chapter 8:** *The impacts of the events and agendas of October, 2014-April, 2017 on the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the peace process and the Kurdish question*

Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process. This chapter deals with the impacts of certain events and agendas on the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the peace process and Kurdish question. These events and agendas are related to the period between October, 2014-April, 2017. The chapter concentrates on the AKP agendas that led to the failure of the peace process and changed its approach regarding the Kurdish question. The chapter also highlights the impacts of the pro-military and repressive measures approach of the AKP on human rights. As stated earlier, the research argues that the peace process failed following the elections of June 2015.

However, the first section of the chapter deals with the Kobani crisis, which caused a lack of confidence and a certain degree of stalemate in the peace process. This section discusses the constructions that the Turkish authorities used to describe both the events related to Kobani and the involved actors. Then the section reveals the security measures that were taken by the Turkish authorities in the Kurdish region during the crisis, and the laws that were adopted following the crisis. The analysis concentrates on the narratives that the Turkish officials used to describe such measures and laws.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> To avoid repetition of stating the positions of Turkish officials who have statements in the chapters of analysis, the research provided a list including their names and positions in Appendix Table 6.

Then the analysis deals with the influence of the elections and voting agendas of AKP authorities on the peace process and their approach regarding the Kurdish question. These agendas are analysed in the context of relevant events. Accordingly, the analysis deals with these agendas in two stage. The first stage is about the agenda and events of pre-June 2015 elections, and the second stage is about these following the June 2015 elections. However, the post-June 2015 stage is longer as it extends to 2017. This as the researcher argues that the post-June 2015 approach was not limited to the agenda of the November 2015 snap elections that followed the June elections, but it also extended to serve the agenda of April, 2017 referendum to change the constitution.

In the first stage, the analysis deals with the relationship between the June 2015 elections agenda and the pro-peace statements of the Turkish officials following the Kobani crisis. The analysis also discusses the Dolmabahce agreement of peace between the Turkish authorities and the representatives of Kurds. The analysis concentrates on the disarmament of the PKK as the main outcome that the AKP authorities wanted from the Dolmabahce agreement. The analysis also discusses the importance of the agreement and its limitations.

In the second stage, the analysis reveals the impacts of the post-June 2015 elections and voting agendas of the AKP on the peace process and the Kurdish question. The analysis highlights the dramatic change of the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question. In particular, the analysis deals with the narratives of the Turkish authorities regarding the abandonment of the peace process and the adoption of a military campaign against the PKK. The chapter also reveals the impacts of the campaign on human rights.

The analysis deals with the anti-HDP approach that the Turkish authorities adopted following the June 2015 elections. In particular, the analysis highlights the relationship between the agenda of the AKP regarding the snap elections of November, 2015 and its anti-HDP approach. The analysis concentrates on the constructions of the HDP as supporter of PKK terrorism, and the repressive measures that the HDP faced.

The chapter also deals with the constructions and policy of the Turkish following the December, 2015 declaration of autonomy by Kurds in Turkey. The chapter discusses the relationship between the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the autonomy of Kurds in Turkey and the referendum agenda of the AKP. The chapter reveals the violations against human rights perpetrated by the Turkish authorities and the way they used the narrative of terrorism against the HDP deputies, Kurdish mayors, journalists and other activists.

The chapter, finally, discusses the rhetoric and military action of the Turkish authorities regarding the Syrian Kurdish autonomy of Rojava. This section concentrates on the way the Turkish authorities used the narrative of terrorism to construct both the Syrian Kurdish autonomy and the attacks of the Turkish military against Rojava cantons.

### **The Kobani crisis and its impacts on the peace process**

The Kobani crisis was the beginning of the change in the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question. The language and policy of the Turkish authorities declined towards adopting repressive policies against the Kurds. This is although the Turkish authorities expressed their commitment to the peace process. However, the repressive approach of the Turkish authorities left negative impacts on the peace process.



## Background

Following the capture of Mosul in Iraq in June 2014 by ISIL, it conducted major attacks against the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Syria (Chulov, June, 2014; Knights, June, 2014; Pollack, August, 2014). In August 2014, ISIL conducted a major attack on the Kurdish inhabited areas of Iraq conquering the Yezidi Kurdish region of Sinjar (in Kurdish: *Şingal*), and other areas (Masters, August, 2014). Simultaneously, ISIL invaded the Syrian Kurdish semi-autonomous canton of Kobani, which is adjacent to the Turkish border (Belfast Telegraph, 29 July 2014; Letsch, 22 September, 2014). However, ISIL invasion faced the resistance of Kurds in Iraq and Syria. Following the ISIL invasion of Sinjar, the PKK and YPG managed to open a corridor to save Yezidi Kurds who were trapped in the mountainous areas of Sinjar (Acik, 22 October, 2014; Salih & Civiroglu, 2014). The corridor extended from Sinjar mountain to the Kurdish controlled areas inside Syria. In addition, the PKK joined the Iraqi Kurdish forces of Peshmerga in the anti-ISIL resistance in Erbil and Kerkuk provinces. The participation of the PKK and YPG in the anti-ISIL resistance and the coverage of international media of the conflict made the Turkish government worried about the international involvement in the resistance, which could end in rewarding the PKK with a certain degree of international legitimacy, and potential international involvement in the Kurdish question (Bagci & Gullu, 2016; Barkey, October, 2014; NBC, August, 2014; Solomon & Dombey, 15 August, 2014).<sup>159</sup>

ISIL managed to conquer the entire canton of Kobani in October, 2014, except the city of Kobani where the YPG kept resisting the invasion (see Map 9) (Collar, October, 2014).<sup>160</sup> ISIL

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<sup>159</sup> Bagci & Gullu (2016) stated that the PKK resistance of ISIL turned it into the “Oscar Schindler of Middle East”. Oscar Schindler was member of the Nazi regime, but he managed to rescue hundreds of Jews from death. See: *Holocaust Encyclopaedia*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.usmmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005787> [accessed: 20 October, 2016].

<sup>160</sup> The Kurdish resistance continued until January 2015 when ISIL was defeated and Kobani was liberated (BBC, 25 June, 2015).

considered the battle of Kobani as a symbolic battle for which it devoted a large number of its fighters, and therefore, the US administration concentrated on the battle of Kobani (Misztal & Michek, 2014). The US military supported the YPG resistance by conducting air-strikes against ISIL. During the early stage of the Kobani resistance, the US administration avoided acknowledging that its military was coordinating with the YPG. This is because the US administration avoided irritating the Turkish authorities who were at odd with such kind of cooperation between its NATO ally the US and the YPG whom it considered as the Syrian branch of the PKK. However, the cooperation between the US-led coalition against ISIL and the YPG continued to grow during the Kobani resistance and afterwards (Barfi, October, 2015; Chan, October, 2014).

### **Rhetoric of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kobani resistance**

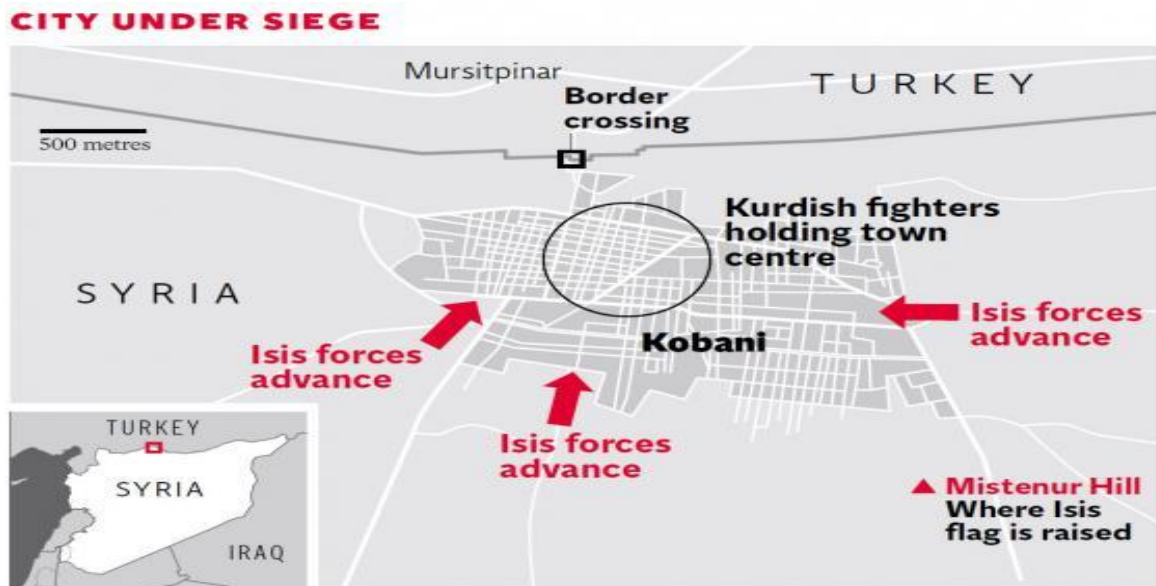
Worry and suspicion regarding the US and Western support of the YPG resistance against ISIL dominated the language of Turkish officials. The Turkish officials claimed that the US arms provided to the YPG would end in the hand of the PKK (Cerny, October, 2014; Sherlock, 16 October, 2014). Erdogan denounced the US support to the YPG and considered it as a direct support to the PKK as he stated that "I have already said the aid you deliver to the PYD and the PKK is unacceptable as far as we are concerned" (quoted in Al-Akhbar, October, 2014). Erdogan also accused the Western countries who supported the Kobani resistance of dishonesty and adopting double standards, which targeted Islam and Muslims. Erdogan stated that "it is not fair to remain silent to the killing of 300 thousand people in Syria but rise up against the incidents in Kobane" (quoted in BYEGM, 31 October, 2014). Erdogan connected the Western support of Kurds in their anti-ISIL resistance to the "Islamophobia and racism", which were "on the rise" in the Western countries (quoted in BYEGM, 31 October, 2014). Erdogan claimed that the Western powers were keen to fight ISIL, but they were not willing to do so against the

PKK although the PKK had conducted terrorism in Turkey for 32 years. Erdogan claimed that the main motivation of this kind of discrimination by the Western powers was that ISIL had the term of Islam in its name, unlike the PKK. Erdogan stated:

“The world is setting up a coalition to struggle against the terrorist organization ISIL now, but how about the terrorist activities of PKK which have been going on for 32 years in my country? Why hasn’t the world reacted against this terrorist organization which has extension even in some European countries. Why haven’t these countries brought up a struggle against this organization? The answer is simple: this terrorist organization does not have a word, Islam, in front of its name” (quoted in BYEGM, 29 September, 2014).

During the Kobani crisis the Turkish officials started to frequently use the term ‘terrorism, terrorist, and terror’ against the PYD-YPG and constructed them as organic part of the PKK. Erdogan stated that “the PYD is for us, equal to the PKK. It is a terror organization” (quoted in Bajekal, 2014). Likewise, the advisor of PM, Hatem Ete claimed that the PKK used Kobani as an excuse to keep its arm and to act under the name of PYD (BBC Monitoring, 19 December, 2014). The Turkish authorities also used the anti-PKK narrative of terrorism as an excuse for their refusal of using the Turkish border by the US to provide weapons to the YPG. Erdogan stated that "we cannot say yes to this", “for us, the PYD is at the moment the same thing as the PKK. It too is a terrorist organization” (quoted in Dow Jones, 19 October, 2014). However, the construction of the PYD-YPG in the Turkish official narrative of terrorism was more dominant following the failure of the peace process. Chapter 6 concentrates on the constructions and narratives used against the PYD-YPG in the context of the dominant Turkish official narrative of terrorism.

**Map 9. ISIL siege of Kobani in October, 2014.** Source: (Cockburn, 7 October 2014).



### **Pro-Kobani protests and the response of Turkish authorities**

Although the Kurdish armed resistance against ISIL was outside Turkey, the pro-Kobani protests made the crisis infiltrate inside Turkey. As the Turkish authorities refused to let the support for the Kobani resistance to cross its border, pro-Kobani Kurdish protests erupted in Turkey in the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, 2014 (Letsch & Traynor, 8 October, 2014). Demonstrators accused the AKP authorities of collaboration with ISIL against the Syrian Kurds, and demanded the Turkish authorities to open a corridor on the border in order to provide support to the Kobani resistance (BBC, 7 October, 2014).<sup>161</sup> Adem Uzun who was a member of Kurdish team to the 2009 Oslo negotiations of peace accused the Turkish authorities of supporting ISIL against the Syrian Kurds, and he considered this as a threat against the peace process (Yildiz, September, 2014). On the other hand, the Turkish authorities considered the pro-Kobani calls and protests as a pretext used by forces who plotted to harm Turkey. For example, in his speech of 12 October, 2014, Erdogan stated that “Kobane is used as an excuse, the real purpose is

different”, and he claimed that the protests targeted the “unity in Turkey” (quoted in BYEGM, 12 October, 2014). This claim of Erdogan targeted various groups and individuals who were at odd with the AKP policy including the PKK, BDP, HDP, the main Turkish opposition party of CHP, and “the international media” and the users of social media whom Erdogan described as the “dark forces on the internet” (quoted in BYEGM, 12 October, 2014).<sup>162</sup>

Turkish officials described the protests and demonstrations that supported Kobani resistance as acts of ‘vandalism’, and ‘violence’ that threatened the public order, and that there was a need to adopt security measures by the authorities. This is discerned in the statements of Erdogan, Davutoglu, Akdogan, and Hatem Ete (BBC Monitoring, 30 November, 2014, 19 December, 2014; Butler, & Hogg, 8 October, 2014; BYEGM, 9 October, 2014, 12 October, 2014). In his speech following the protests Erdogan used the constructions of the othering discourse as he considered the protesters as ‘outsiders’ (BYEGM, 12 October, 2014). Erdogan claimed that the BDP received “orders from the terrorist organization” to conduct the protests, and he repeatedly used ‘they’ as a reference to the ‘outsider’ protestors who perpetrated acts of “violence, vandalism, and looting”, and he also used the term “traitors” to describe the protesters (quoted in BYEGM, 12 October, 2014). On the other hand, Erdogan constructed the AKP authorities and its supporters as the ‘insiders’ group by using the pronoun ‘we’ and described them as “the nation and country” who supported the peace process (quoted in BYEGM, 12 October, 2014). Davutoglu described the protests as “highly intensive acts of violence”, and “vandalism” which took place “after the call of BDP” who used “the incidents in Kobani as an excuse” to “create chaos in Turkey” (quoted in BYEGM, 9 October, 2014). Likewise, Akdogan described the protests as “the vandalism that took place after the Kobani” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 30 November, 2014). Moreover, Hatem Ete accused the

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<sup>162</sup> The Republican People's Party (in Turkish: *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP)

leadership of HDP of involvement in violence as he claimed that during the protests the HDP chairman was “in favour of the use of Molotov cocktail” against the Turkish security forces (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 19 December, 2014).

Constructing the protests as ‘vandalism’ was used as an excuse to adopt security measures by the Turkish authorities in the Kurdish provinces of Turkey. For example, Davutoglu named the protesters “vandals”, and he warned them that the government would take security measures against them to restore “legal order” (quoted in BYEGM, 9 October, 2014). Likewise, Efsan Ala, the Turkish interior-minister, warned the protestors that they “should withdraw from the streets”, otherwise, they would face "unpredictable" measures because they were "betraying their own country” (quoted in BBC, 8 October, 2014). Furthermore, deputy PM, Arinc, revealed that the Turkish authorities had a plan to adopt a legislation, which would give the security forces more power against "vandalism" (quoted in OxResearch, 14 October, 2014).

The Turkish officials also constructed the security measures as a necessity for the peace process. Erdogan and Davutoglu described the security measures as a necessity to maintain the public order and the peace process (BYEGM, 9 October, 2014, 12 October, 2014, 19 October, 2014). Akdogan who was a principal figure in the negotiations of peace process also expressed support to the security measures in the Kurdish region. Akdogan claimed that the measures were necessary to end the violence that was instructed by the PKK who used Kobani as an excuse for inciting such violence (BBC Monitoring, 23 October, 2014). Furthermore, Akdogan considered the security measures as a necessity to maintain the public order, and that the public order was “the prerequisite” to progress in the peace process (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 23 October, 2014).

The repressive measures that were adopted by the Turkish authorities, however, led to violations of human rights and left impacts on the peace process. The Turkish authorities imposed curfews in six provinces in the Kurdish region of Turkey (Butler & Hogg, 8 October, 2014; Cockburn, 9 October 2014). In addition, about 50 people were killed, and many others were wounded during the pro-Kobani protests (AI, 8 October, 2014; HRW, 2014b, 11 December, 2014). The cases of these acts of killing were left without proper investigation by the Turkish authorities, according to the report of Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2014b, 19 December, 2014). Furthermore, Diyarbakir mayor and BDP member, Gulden Kisanak accused the Turkish government of using Islamist militants of Huda Party, Turkish Hizbullah, and other paramilitary forces against the protestors (Daloglu, 8 October, 2014).

In addition to the use of force against the protestors, the Turkish warplanes bombarded the PKK positions in the mountains. The bombardment was the first since the start of peace talks (BBC, 14 October, 2014; Letsch, 14 October, 2014; Zalewski, 14 October, 2014). The PKK leadership reacted to the military action of the Turkish military, and its executive leader Cemil Bayik announced that the PKK would send back all its fighter who were pulled out of Turkey as part of the peace process (Zalewski, 14 October, 2014). Cengiz Candar, a columnist who is specialized in the Kurdish issues stated that the pro-military measures of the Turkish authorities and the reaction of the PKK would lead to a “political stalemate” for the peace process (quoted in Zalewski, 14 October, 2014).

### **Security laws and the rhetoric of legalizing the repression**

The Kobani crisis left impacts on the legal system and the status of democracy and human rights in Turkey. In December 2014, the Turkish parliament adopted a law proposed by the AKP, which increased the power of police, and accordingly, the new law reversed relevant

democratic reforms that were adopted earlier (HRW, 11 December, 2014). This was followed by another security law, which empowered the police with further authorities at the expense of the courts and the rights of individuals (AI, 27 March, 2015). This law is known as ‘the security bill’. The law permitted the police of using firearm against demonstrators in certain cases, and of searching, arresting and detaining individuals without court order (AI, 27 March, 2015; HRW, 11 December, 2014).<sup>163</sup> The law also allowed governors to instruct the police in dealing with certain cases. On the other hand, elected mayors were stripped from authority to refuse the instructions of governors or to question the action of the police (Alyanak, 14 March, 2015). The new law also increased the penalties against individuals who participated in demonstrations that accompanied with “violent” acts or “propaganda” (quoted in HRW, 11 December, 2014). Repressing demonstrations and considering ‘propaganda’ during the demonstrations as a reason for prosecuting demonstrators left serious impacts on the freedom of expression.

The Turkish authorities described the security law to be a necessity for maintaining the public order and to deal with terrorism. Davutoglu claimed that the law was a requirement to maintain the public order (BYEGM, 16 February, 2015). As the AKP deputies proposed the security bill to the parliament, they attached with it a section called “General Reasoning” (quoted in Alyanak, 14 March, 2015). The latter considers adopting the bill as a necessity to deter transforming the protests to propaganda platforms for ‘the terrorist organizations’ because this would threaten the public order and safety of the public (Alyanak, 14 March, 2015).

The HDP denounced the security bill and claimed that the bill would be used against the Kurds and to impose Erdogan dictatorship. On the other hand, the Turkish authorities refused the

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<sup>163</sup> See also Alyanak (14 March, 2015), and Zeldin (September, 2015).



claims of HDP. The HDP co-chair, Demirtas claimed that the bill aimed at silencing the dissidents, and that this would serve Erdogan's aspiration to gain more power and to maintain his position. Demirtas stated that the real aim of the security bill was "not to maintain national security, but rather to protect the palace" in reference to Erdogan's presidential palace (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 3 February, 2015). However, Davutoglu refused HDP claims and considered the bill as a necessity to maintain the public order (BYEGM, 16 February, 2015). He also claimed that instead of questioning the bill, the HDP itself should be questioned because it incited violence during the pro-Kobani demonstration. Davutoglu also claimed that the bill did not contradict with the commitment of the Turkish authorities to the peace process. Davutoglu stated that "we will do everything that our country needs. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey will pass this bill tomorrow and the peace process will also proceed" (quoted in BYEGM, 16 February 2015).

The law was also criticized by international human rights organizations. Human Rights Watch criticized the law when it was proposed as a bill and after passing it by the parliament (HRW, 19 December, 2014). In three of its reports Human Rights Watch considered the law as a decline towards violence and violations of human rights, which would mainly target opposition groups because the law legalises the use of force and repression by the Turkish authorities (HRW; 19 December, 2014, 11 December, 2014, October, 2014). Likewise, Amnesty International (27 March, 2015) criticized the law and described it as a "draconian" law because it gave the police "broad and dangerous new powers". Andrew Gardner, Turkey's researcher at Amnesty International connected the law to the AKP policy regarding the coming elections, and he described it as a tool to oppress the opposition as he stated:<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> See also Hogg & Solaker (2015).

“The timing of the bill, so close to key parliamentary elections, provides the authorities with new powers to suppress dissent. Signing this bill into law will give a green light to widespread abuses against those who exercise their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly” (quoted in AI, 27 March, 2015).

### **The peace process and the elections and voting agendas of the AKP**

The AKP agendas of elections and voting had major influence over the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the peace process and the Kurdish question. This is mainly discerned in two main stages including the following: Firstly, the stage of pre-June 2015 elections. This extends from the end of 2014 to the date of elections on 7 June 2015. Secondly, the stage of post-June 2015 elections. The research argues that during the campaign for the June 2015 elections, the peace process was used as a tool to gain more votes in the elections. This is although the research considers the period between Kobani crisis and June 2015 elections as the period in which the peace process underwent a lack of confidence and a certain degree of stalemate. During the campaign for the June, 2015 elections, Demirtas claimed that the AKP authorities tried to use the peace process to gain more votes as he stated that the AKP sought turning “the desire for peace into votes” (quoted in Coskun & Solaker, April, 2015). However, following the June 2015 elections, the AKP authorities abandoned the peace process and dramatically changed their approach regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question. The new approach of the Turkish authorities following the demise of the peace process was pro-military and security measures. The change in the discursive constructions of the Turkish authorities following the event of June 2015 elections matches the perspectives of Foucault and CDA scholars that that changes in discourse depend on contingent historical events (Foucault (1972, 1984; Wodak, 1996, 2001b). The two stages of pre-June 2015 and post-June 2015 elections are discussed in the coming sections.

### **The stage of pre-June 2015 elections**

Although the Turkish authorities continued their repressive policies against the Kurds following the Kobani crisis, their rhetoric of supporting the peace process surfaced again during the campaign of June 2015 elections (BYEGM, 12 February 2015, 16 February, 2015, 18 February 2015, 23 March, 2015). For example, Erdogan emphasized his refusal of armed violence and highlighted the importance of the peace process, which he named as “settlement process”, as he stated that “we are seeking peace and welfare with the settlement process” that he considered “of vital importance” (quoted in BYEGM, 18 February 2015). In another statement Erdogan claimed that the “fight against terrorism cannot be solely conducted via security measures” (quoted in BYEGM, 12 February 2015). Erdogan highlighted the importance of peaceful efforts to solve terrorism problem. Likewise, Davutoglu emphasized the importance of maintaining the peace process (BYEGM, 16 February, 2015). However, Davutoglu also stressed the necessity of keeping the security measures in order to protect the public order as he stated that “we will ensure both the public order and the peace process with determination” (quoted in BYEGM, 16 February, 2015).

The AKP leadership used the peace process as a tool to gain votes in the June 2015 elections. Several sources argue that a major goal of Erdogan and the AKP was to win the votes of Kurds (Barchard, March, 2015; Butler, March, 2015; Ozpek, March, 2015; Werz, *et al.*, 2015). However, such sources overlooked that the disarmament of the PKK would be the victory that the AKP and Erdogan sought to achieve through the peace process, and such a victory would encourage Turks who are the majority in Turkey to vote for the AKP. In order to persuade the PKK to start disarmament before the June 2015 elections, the AKP authorities announced on 28 February, 2015 the Dolmabahce agreement of peace with the representatives of Kurds, which was the first and only peace accord between the Turkish authorities and the Kurds.

## **Dolmabahce agreement of peace**

Dolmabahce agreement was jointly announced by the Turkish officials and the HDP representatives (Bayramoğlu, 2015).<sup>165</sup> Although it was the only written agreement of peace between the Turkish authorities and the representatives of Kurds, it came about 4 month after the Kobani events, which left impacts on the confidence of Kurds in the peace process. The agreement consisted of 10 vague articles (see the articles in the footnote, as stated in Bayramoğlu, 2015: 5; Çiçek & Coşkun, 2016: 9-10).<sup>166</sup> In addition to the 10 articles, the HDP delegation also read out Ocalan's message to the PKK for launching a congress to end the armed struggle (Al-Jazeera, 28 February, 2015).<sup>167</sup>

The most important aspect of the agreement is that it demonstrated the HDP as the party that represented the Kurds in the peace process. As it is discerned in the statements of Turkish officials that were discussed in the previous chapter, it was a taboo in the Turkish official discourse to accept a Kurdish party as a political partner in the peace process. Although the

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<sup>165</sup> The Dolmabahce meeting was announced in the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, 2015 in the office of the Prime Minister in Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul. The meeting was attended by three HDP deputies including Sırrı Süreyya Önder, İdris Baluken and Pervin Buldan, and three Turkish officials including Turkish deputy PM, Yalçın Akdoğan and Turkish minister of interior Efgân Ala, and Security undersecretary Muammer Dervişoğlu (Bayramoğlu, 2015).

<sup>166</sup> The 10 Articles of the Dolmabahce agreement see (Bayramoğlu, 2015: 5; Çiçek & Coşkun, 2016: 9-10). The 10 Articles are the following: "1. Definition of democratic politics and content 2. Definition of national and local dimensions of democratic resolution 3. Legal and democratic safeguards for free citizenship 4. Headings for relations between democratic politics and the state and society and for its institutionalisation 5. The socio-economic dimensions of the process of resolution 6. The addressing of the relationship between democracy and security in the process of resolution in a manner that will protect public order and freedoms 7. Legal solutions and safeguards for problems of women, and cultural and ecological problems 8. The development of a pluralist democratic understanding recognising the concept of identity and its definition 9. The democratic definition of a democratic republic, joint homeland and people, and the introduction of legal and constitutional safeguards within a pluralist, democratic system 10. A new constitution to aim to internalise all these democratic transformations" (quoted in Bayramoğlu, 2015: 5).

<sup>167</sup> Member of the HDP delegation to Dolmabahce meeting, Sirri Sureyya Onder read out Ocalan message to the PKK in which he called for a congress to end the armed struggle. In the message Ocalan stated that "I invite the PKK to attend an extraordinary congress in the spring months in order to make the strategic and historic decision to abandon the armed struggle," (quoted in Al-Jazeera, 28 February, 2015).

Turkish officials described the representatives of Kurds as the party that should respond to the Turkish demands of ending terrorism, they usually avoided to describe the peace process as a political process between two political parties. Instead, the Turkish officials described the Turkish authorities as the only political party in the peace process, and the only party that was entitled to find the solution for the Kurdish problem through ‘democratic reforms’. This reflected the general Turkish approach which considered the peace process as a project of ending terrorism as discussed in chapter 7. However, the Dolmabahce agreement was a deviation from the general Turkish approach as it admitted the representatives of Kurds as the political partner in the agreement for the first time, and this was an acceptance by the Turkish authorities for the political characteristics of the peace process and its subjects.

Erdogan, nevertheless, showed a vague rhetoric of dissatisfaction regarding the Dolmabahce agreement (Kirac, 29 March, 2015). Erdogan described it to be improper for the Turkish officials to conduct such a meeting with the Kurdish deputies of HDP as he stated that “I did not find the meeting that was held there to be right. I did not think the picture of the deputy prime minister side-by-side with a parliamentary faction was appropriate” (quoted in the Guardian, March, 2015). Erdogan expressed such dissatisfaction although he was well-aware of the agreement. Later, former deputy PM, Arinc revealed that Erdogan unlike what he stated, was closely following up the Dolmabahce agreement (BBC Monitoring, 8 February, 2016). Arinc stated that Erdogan “kept a close eye on the process” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 8 February, 2016). However, Erdogan’s negative statements about the agreement aimed at securing the votes of nationalist Turks in the elections by showing indirect respect to their attitude, which considered any political concessions to the Kurds as a threat to the indivisibility of Turkey.

The AKP officials used the Dolmabahce agreement as a tool to persuade the PKK to start disarmament. Following the agreement, Erdogan and other AKP officials kept highlighting the disarmament of the PKK as the main goal of the peace process and as the prerequisite for any step in the process by the Turkish authorities. For example, following the agreement, Erdogan stated that “the democratic initiative and the national unity and fraternity project are interpreted by laying down the arm of PKK”, and he added that “everything eventually depends on laying down the arms” (quoted in BYEGM, 28 February, 2015).<sup>168</sup> Likewise, Akdogan who was the main representative of the Turkish authorities in the Dolmabahce agreement stated that "there is no room for weapons in the presence of democracy. If there are weapons, then there is no belief in democracy" (quoted in BYEGM, 11 March, 2015). Although Davutoglu showed acceptance for the articles of the agreement, he considered laying down the PKK arm as the pre-condition for adopting the content of the agreement as he stated:

“These 10 articles include the developmental and political aspects of the resolution process. There is nothing in it that would be absurd to be discussed. For us, the resolution process is functioning. Laying down the arms would pave the way for democratic politics” (quoted in BYEGM, 3 March, 2015).

The PKK, however, was unwilling to lay down its arms or to call for a congress to end the armed struggle before taking certain steps by the Turkish authorities to guarantee the implementation of the agreement. Thus, the PKK leadership used the same strategy that the AKP authorities adopted as it considered addressing the 10 articles as pre-conditions for the disarmament. Leadership member of the PKK, Jamil Bayik (Cemil Bayik: in Turkish) stated that “we have set out 10 conditions for laying down arms. If the government is willing to go

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<sup>168</sup> Following the agreement, Erdogan also stated that “you will first lay down your arms; and if there is anything you will say, you will come and say it on the political platform within constitutional and democratic boundaries” (quoted in BYEGM, 23 March, 2015).

through those conditions, we are ready to end armed resistance” (quoted in E-Kurd, 1 April, 2015).

The Dolmabahce agreement was unable to regain confidence in the peace process because the agreement was implicated with vagueness and the AKP authorities were unwilling to set up another peace meeting to clarify this vagueness by illustrating the practical demands of each side. Although the agreement has 10 articles, it looks like a preamble of agreement and does not look as an agreement that can be practically applied. The vague and broad articles and concepts of the agreement made it a subject to different interpretations by both parties of the agreement, and this surfaced soon following the announcement of the agreement as it is explained above. This required that the Turkish authorities and the representatives of Kurds to agree on certain interpretation and practical steps, and this would be possible by conducting further meetings to discuss the agreement. However, the Turkish authorities showed unwillingness to conduct any further meeting as Erdogan was worried about the potential loss of the votes of Turkish nationalists in the coming elections (Tastekin, 6 May, 2015). This is because such meetings would require the authorities to directly negotiate the political demands of Kurds, and to make certain practical steps to address these demands. Moreover, Erdogan’s negative remarks about the agreement made the PKK leadership more suspicious about the intentions of the Turkish authorities regarding the agreement. Therefore, the agreement remained inapplicable, and was not able to make the peace process progress towards its goals.

### **The stage of post-June 2015 elections**

The results of June 2015 elections were not as Erdogan and the AKP wished for, and the AKP heavily lost its voting position in the majority Kurdish provinces for the HDP (Tisdall, 7 June, 2015). As explained earlier, Erdogan and the AKP wanted to change the system of Turkey from

parliamentary to presidency, and this needed to change the constitutions. However, the AKP was not able to secure the parliamentary majority, which would enable it to call for referendum to change the constitution. In order for the AKP to call for a referendum to change the constitution, it would need the support of 330 out of 550 members of the Turkish parliament (Letsch & Traynor, 7 June, 2015; Tisdall, 7 June, 2015).<sup>169</sup> The AKP even lost the simple majority that would enable it to form the government (Letsch & Traynor, 7 June, 2015). The AKP got 41% of the vote, which was 8% less than what it got in the previous elections. Since 2002 this was the first time for the AKP to lose the majority in the elections (Nardelli, 8 June, 2015; Zanotti, 2015). On the other hand, the HDP managed to win the majority of votes in the Kurdish region. The HDP won over 13 % of the overall votes of the elections, and this made it possible for a pro-Kurdish party to officially enter the parliament for the first time in the history of Turkey (Nardelli *et al.*, 2015). As explained earlier, the Turkish constitution stipulated that in order for a political party to enter the parliament it should gain 10% of the votes in the elections (Letsch & Traynor, 7 June, 2015; Tisdall, 7 June, 2015). Accordingly, the HDP was able to secure 80 seats in the Turkish parliament (Nardelli *et al.*, 2015). The results of the June elections made Erdogan to call in August, 2015 for snap elections, which were conducted in November 2015 (Peker, August, 2015). However, following the June 2015 elections the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurds and peace process changed and this is explained in the coming sections.

### **Abandoning the peace process and adopting military and security measures**

After less than one month of the June 2015 elections, Erdogan denied the Dolmabahce agreement as he stated that “I do not recognize the phrase ‘Dolmabahçe Agreement.’ There cannot be an agreement with a political party that is being supported by a terrorist organization”

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<sup>169</sup> See also Nardelli, *et al.*, (2015).



(quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 20 July, 2015). This statement implies that in addition to the denial of the Dolmabahce agreement, Erdogan retrieved the same taboo of not accepting the representatives of Kurds as a partner in the peace process. That is, Erdogan denied that HDP to be a political partner in the peace process. Instead, Erdogan claimed that the Turkish parliament should be the place where to take the decisions related to the peace process. Erdogan stated that “if there is a step to take for the future of our country, this should be made in parliament” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 20 July, 2015). Accordingly, Erdogan re-emphasized the AKP to be the only political party that had the right to propose and decide in the peace process. This is because the AKP had the majority in the parliament and was the only capable party to suggest and pass bills related to the Kurds and the peace process. Pervin Buldan, the deputy of HDP criticized Erdogan statement and his denial of the agreement as she stated that "I consider Mr President's statement as unfortunate” and she rendered the denial of the agreement by Erdogan to the failure of AKP to gain the desired majority in the elections (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 20 July, 2015).

The AKP authorities followed this by the abandonment of the entire peace process and resumed the military action against the PKK. Erdogan announced on 28 July, 2015 the end of the peace process as he stated that "it is not possible for us to continue the peace process with those who threaten our national unity and brotherhood” (quoted in DW, 28 July, 2015). Thus, in addition to the abandonment of the peace process, Erdogan constructed the HDP to be a threat to the ‘national unity’ of Turkey. Akdogan also blamed the HDP for the failure of peace process and stated that the HDP “had been “used” to finish off the solution process” (quoted in AA, 27 July, 2015). On the other hand, Demirtas claimed that Erdogan ended the peace process because he understood that the peace process would not enable him to gain the votes, which he needed to convert Turkey from parliamentary into presidential system (Göksel, 2015). However, the

announcement of Erdogan that ended the peace process was also a declaration of war and repressive campaign against the Kurds. As Erdogan announced abandoning the peace process, he also emphasized that the Turkish authorities would resume its military campaign against the PKK as he stated that "no steps back will be taken in our fight against terrorism" (quoted in Karadeniz, 28 July, 2015). Erdogan followed his announcement of ending the peace process by a statement in which he emphasized the denial of the Kurdish question as he stated that "there is no such thing as the Kurdish issue" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 29 July, 2015). The following sections discuss the narratives of the Turkish officials to legitimize their new military campaign.

### **Narratives of the Turkish officials regarding the military campaign**

Turkish officials produced statements, which preferred military confrontation against the PKK. Several narratives by the Turkish officials, which favoured the military action surfaced following the announcement of ending of the peace process. Erdogan described the military action as the only option to deal with the PKK and stated that "we will maintain our struggle and speak the language they understand" (quoted in TCCB, 17 August, 2015). Erdogan even described the military action against the PKK as a "struggle" by the "good" against the "evil" (quoted in TCCB, 17 August, 2015). Akdogan who was the main coordinator of Turkish authorities to the peace negotiations changed his position to defend the military action against the PKK (Hurriyet Daily News, 9 September, 2015). Akdogan described the military campaign as a necessity to deter the terror of the PKK whom he constructed as a group of murderers that targeted the entire population of Turkey as he stated that "this is not a war, this is slaughtering of our people by a terrorist organization" (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 9 September, 2015). Likewise, Davutoglu who used religious constructions to show Islam as an identity that

gathered AKP authorities and the Kurds, described the military action as an action demanded by the pious Muslim Kurds who suffered from the repression of the PKK as he stated:

“During the Eid prayer at Ulucami Mosque in Diyarbakir Province, several thousand people walked passed me and shook my hand. Tens of them leaned forward and whispered into my ear, " May God be pleased May God protect the state and the nation. Continue what you are doing. May God help you." This is the atmosphere. The people are suffering because of PKK's oppression” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 28 September, 2015).

The Turkish officials also constructed the military action and security measures as a necessity for peace and democracy in Turkey. For example, Erdogan stated that "fighting terrorism is the main requirement of democracy and law, because these two cannot coexist with terrorism" (BBC Monitoring, 12 August, 2015). Likewise, Davutoglu said that “we are conducting this operation to ensure peace. We need to restore tranquillity in our country” (quoted in BYEGM, 30 August, 2015). Davutoglu even named the military campaign as “the peace and democracy operation” as he stated that “terrorism's Back Broken: Significant progress was made in the peace and democracy operation we launched on 23 July” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 28 September, 2015).

### **Connecting the anti-PKK campaign to the anti-ISIL international campaign**

The dominant narrative regarding the military action against the PKK was to construct it as part of a wider operation against terrorism. In particular, the military campaign against the PKK was constructed as it was connected to the international campaign against ISIL (Coskun & Afanasieva, 24 July, 2015; Hafizoglu, 2015, Jul 28; Letsch, 29 July, 2015). This narrative also involved the PYD and YPG as explained in chapter 6. The Turkish official repeatedly

stated that there was no difference between the PKK, PYD-YPG and ISIL (BBC Monitoring, 12 August, 2015; Candrowicz & Weise, 2015; Peker, 14 October, 2015; TCCB, 14 October, 2015). While talking about the military action against the PKK, Erdogan stated that "we do not make any distinction between terrorist organizations; they are terror organizations for us regardless of their name, purpose, symbol or discourse" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 12 August, 2015). In another statement, Erdogan said that "let me say this clearly; to Turkey, there is no difference between PKK and its extensions PYD-YPG and DHKPC and Daesh. They are all terrorist organizations, targeting our existence and future" (quoted in TCCB, 14 October, 2015). Likewise, Turkish FM Cavusoglu stated that "there is no difference between PKK and Daesh [Isis]" (quoted in Candrowicz & Weise, 2015).

The Turkish officials also claimed that the PKK and PYD-YPG coordinated with ISIL and other actors to target Turkey. This is although the PKK and the YPG were in war with ISIL (Graeber, 18 November, 2015; Popp, & Reuter, 2015). In addition, and as discussed in chapter 6, the PYD is a Syrian Kurdish party, and the military operations of its armed wing; the YPG were limited to fighting ISIL in Syria. The narrative of Turkish officials is discerned in the statement of Davutoglu who said that "three terrorist organizations Daesh, the PKK and the DHKP-C have started simultaneous attacks on Turkey" (quoted in AA, 27 July, 2015). The Turkish officials even accused the PKK, YPG-PYD of collaboration with ISIL in the explosive attacks of Suruc and Ankara in Turkey, although these attacks targeted the HDP and pro-Kurdish activists (BYEGM, 10 August, 2015; Peker, 2015, Oct 14).

The narrative of the Turkish authorities, which described the operation against the PKK to be in connection with the anti-ISIL campaign is contested. Several sources demonstrated that the Turkish attacks were largely against the PKK (Barnard, 28 July, 2015; Candrowicz & Weise,

2015; Graeber, 18 November, 2015; Popp & Reuter, 2015). This was also highlighted by the US special envoy to the coalition against ISIL, Brett McGurk who stated that “Turkey has done only a couple of airstrikes against Daesh and has done a number of attacks against the PKK” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 17 August, 2015). Metin Gurcan, a retired Turkish military officer revealed that the Turkish authorities’ goal of this narrative was to legitimize the war on the PKK (Peker, 14 October, 2015).

Others sources challenged the narrative of Turkish authorities and argue that the Turkish authorities had certain agenda behind its new military campaign against the PKK (Barnard, 28 July, 2015; Candrowicz & Weise, 2015; Graeber, 18 November, 2015; Peker, 14 October, 2015; Popp & Reuter, 2015). Graeber (18 November, 2015) renders the new campaign against the PKK to the concerns of Turkish authorities regarding the growth of YPG’s power in Syria, and he argues that there was no room to accept the claim of the Turkish authorities, which grouped the PKK and YPG with ISIL, and he accused the Turkish authorities of supporting ISIL and other Jihadist groups. Likewise, Popp and Reuter (2015) argue that the AKP authorities had tolerated ISIL activities across the Turkish border, but resorted to the international campaign against ISIL in order to attack the PKK and to stop the expansion of YPG control in Syria. Popp and Reuter (2015) also argue that the new pro-military approach of the AKP authorities was an appeal to win the votes of Turkish nationalists in the coming elections.

Critics highlighted that the elections’ agenda of the AKP had a major influence over its new military approach. Aaron Stein, a researcher at Atlantic Council think-tank argue that this approach served certain agenda and was used “for domestic political consumption and tied to a political strategy designed to lessen the appeal of the HDP” (quoted in Peker, 14 October,

2015). Likewise, the former judge at the European Court of Human Right, Riza Turmen denounced comparing the PKK to ISIL and claimed that elections agenda of Erdogan were behind abandoning the peace process and adopting the military approach against the PKK as he stated that “this is politics under the cloak and guise of fighting terrorists. Erdogan wishes to have early elections and such a nationalist movement would help AKP to increase their votes” (quoted in Candrowicz & Weise, 2015). Eric Edelman, a former US ambassador to Turkey made similar argument during a panel discussion on Turkey-US relations as he talked about the failure of the peace process and argued the Erdogan’s military campaign against the PKK was an appeal to win the votes of Turkish nationalists in the coming elections (C-SPAN, March 26, 2018). Edelman stated that Erdogan “had lost the elections essentially in June 2015 in the sense that for the first time AKP did not have a majority. He had a Kurdish party in the parliament he lost votes to the HDP, which he had to steal back” (quoted in C-SPAN, 26 March, 2018: Minute 53-55).<sup>170</sup>

### **The US and NATO position regarding the Turkish military campaign against the PKK**

The US administration and the NATO secretary expressed approval for the Turkish military action against the PKK, although they called Turkey to return to the peace negotiations (Beck, July 2015). This is because the PKK was effective on-ground force against ISIL in Iraq, and NATO allies worried that the Turkish campaign against the PKK could distract the efforts against ISIL (Barnes, *et al.*, 2015, Jul 28; Graeber, 18 November, 2015). NATO secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg expressed NATO support to Turkey campaign against the PKK as he stated that "following developments very closely and we stand in strong solidarity with our ally Turkey" (quoted in DW, 28 July, 2015). Likewise, Brett McGurk, the U.S. special envoy in the

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<sup>170</sup> Guelists are followers of the Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen who were accused later of the coup-attempt of July, 2016. As explained in chapter 5, the Turkish authorities use FETO as an acronym for Fethullah Gulen organization. FETO is designated by the Turkish authorities as a terrorist organization.

campaign against ISIL stated that “we have strongly condemned the PKK’s terrorist attacks in Turkey and we fully respect our ally Turkey’s right to self-defence” (quoted in Sly, 25 July 2015). However, McGurk also called for resuming the peace negotiations as he stated that “we also urge de-escalation and that both sides remain committed to the peaceful 'solution process'" (quoted in Albayrak, 2015, Jul 26). Several reports argue that the US allowed Turkey to bombard the PKK in the mountainous areas of Iraqi Kurdistan as Turkey allowed the US to use the Turkish military airports and bases in the anti-ISIL campaign (Almukhtar & Wallace, 2015; BBC Monitoring, 17 August, 2015; Popp, & Reuter, 2015; Sly, 25 July 2015).

### **Impacts of the military campaign**

In addition to the bombardment of PKK positions by the Turkish warplanes, the Turkish military and security forces imposed curfews in several Kurdish provinces (ABC, 13 September, 2015; AI, 11 September, 2015; BBC, 9 September, 2015; TIHV, December, 2015) (see Map 10, below). The Turkish military also imposed other special military measures in the Kurdish region and considered many areas as military zones (Bayramoğlu, 2015: 38; BBC, 9 September, 2015; OSCE, 2015: 8).

The Turkish authorities claimed that the military and security operations did not target civilians. Davutoglu claimed that the Turkish military and security forces never targeted civilians, but the PKK did. This is to create the assumption that all civilian casualties were targeted by the PKK. Davutoglu stated that “thank God, to date, there are no civilian casualties apart from the ones [who died] in the PKK attacks” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 28 September, 2015). In another statement Davutoglu emphasized that “we have given instructions to take every measure for not allowing even a single civilian to be killed [during the military operations], neither in Turkey nor in Iraq,” (quoted in AA, 24 August, 2015).

This claim of the Turkish authorities is contested by the human rights reports, which reveal that flagrant violations against civilians were perpetrated by the Turkish forces. Human Rights Watch in its reports about the events of 2015 in the Kurdish region of Turkey accuses the Turkish authorities of “violations of the right to life, arrests of non-violent protesters and activists on terrorism charges, and ill-treatment of detainees” (HRW, 2016). Benjamin Ward, deputy director of Europe and Central Asia division at Human Rights Watch stated that “it’s deeply worrying that police in Turkey’s southeast seem to be returning to abusive tactics in response to the security threats” (quoted in HRW, September, 2015). Likewise, Nils Muižnieks, Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe referred to violations against human rights, which were perpetrated under the excuse of “anti-terror operations” by the Turkish authorities during the curfews that were imposed in the Kurdish region, and he highlighted “the disproportionate use of force by security forces against civilians” (Commissioner for Human Rights, September, 2015). Amnesty International (AI, 11 September, 2015) report also highlights the violations against civilians during the curfew in the Kurdish city of Cizre and it states that “residents including children and elderly people have been killed and injured by live ammunition” (AI, 11 September, 2015).

The bombardment of Turkish warplanes on Qandil mountainous area of Iraqi Kurdistan also left casualties among civilian Iraqi Kurds and caused destruction of their houses and properties. In its report about the bombardment of Qandil area, Amnesty International states that “evidence gathered during a visit by Amnesty International to the village of Zergele three days after the airstrikes suggests all those killed and injured in the attack were not affiliated with the PKK” (AI, 11 August, 2015). In addition, Lama Fakih, senior advisor at Amnesty International who headed the delegation of Amnesty to the Qandil area stated:



“The recent attacks in Kandil maimed, killed, and displaced residents, destroying homes and terrifying locals in an area where no military targets appeared to be present”, “the apparent absence of a military target within the vicinity of the airstrikes suggests that these strikes are unlawful whether or not there is an armed conflict between the Turkish authorities and the PKK. The Turkish government has displayed a flagrant disregard for the lives of local residents and failed to take necessary precautions to minimize harm to them, or to discriminate between them and PKK fighters” (quoted in AI, 11 August, 2015).



**Map 10. Map of curfews in the Kurdish region of Turkey.** The provinces, which were under curfews from August, 20015 to December, 2015 are in red colour (Source: TIHV, December, 2015).

### Anti-HDP approach

Following June 2015 elections, the Turkish officials made many statements against the HDP constructing it as a collaborator with the terrorist organization; the PKK. The construction of the Kurdish legal parties of BDP and HDP as supporters of PKK terrorism in the Turkish official discourse is also discussed in chapters 5 and 7. However, following the elections of June 2015, this narrative against the HDP was more dominant. Erdogan named the HDP as

“the extension” of the PKK in the parliament (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 20 July, 2015). In another statement, Erdogan reproduced statements, which blamed the HDP for the violence during the pro-Kobani protests of October, 2014 because it was the HDP who "made the call [for people to take to the streets]" as he claimed (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 20 July, 2015). Erdogan also threatened the HDP to “pay a heavy price” because it was supported by “the terrorist organization” (quoted in BYEGM, 14 August 2015). Likewise, Akdogan stated that “the HDP is acting like an open supporter, extension and political branch of the terrorist organization” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 9 September, 2015).

The Turkish officials denounced and threatened the HDP for not adopting the same position of AKP and other Turkish parties against the PKK. Erdogan addressed the HDP without using its name and stated that "I repeat my call to the party that has difficulty in distancing itself from the terrorist PKK: Make your choice. Do you side with democracy or terrorism?" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 10 September, 2015). Other Turkish officials made similar statements against the HDP when it refused to sign a declaration condemning the PKK and legitimizing the military and security operations in the Kurdish region, which was signed by the Turkish parties in the parliament. The Turkish officials considered the HDP unwillingness to sign the declaration as collaboration with the terrorists. Davutoglu stated that "HDP avoided to sign a joint declaration. Can we be sure that those who did not even condemn [the attacks] are fighting against terrorism?" (quoted in AA, 27 July, 2015). Likewise, Akdogan accused the HDP of indirectly supporting the PKK because it could not “say a word against terror” and “terrorists” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 9 September, 2015).

This is although the HDP condemned violations by both the PKK and Turkish authorities and called them to return to the peace process. The co-chair of HDP, Demirtas stated that “this country’s children are losing their lives. Our young people are dying. Soldiers, police,

guerrillas, civilians: all of them are people of this society, our brothers” (quoted in AA, 27 July, 2015). Demirtas repeatedly called the Turkish government and PKK to adopt ceasefire (ABC, 13 September, 2015; Asia News Monitor, 11 August, 2015; Göksel, 2015). Demirtas also called the Turkish government and PKK to resume the peace negotiations as he stated: “both Ankara and Qandil must take a position that responds to the people's expectation with a clear, concrete project”, "even if the peace (talks) table has been upturned it is in our power to put it up again" (quoted in ABC, 13 September, 2015).<sup>171</sup>

The rhetoric of blaming the HDP for the action of the PKK incited violence by mobs against the HDP. Following the dissemination of news about the casualties among the Turkish forces, nationalist Turks attacked HDP headquarter in Ankara, which was set on fire, and they also attacked HDP offices in other cities (AI, 22 September, 2015; BBC, 9 September, 2015). Amnesty international condemned the attacks against the HDP, which it described as “violent attacks by mobs” and called the Turkish authorities "to carry out prompt, thorough and impartial investigations” in the attacks (AI, 22 September, 2015). Likewise, Human Rights Watch condemned the attacks on the HDP offices and highlighted that these attacks occurred during the campaigns for June and November 2015 elections as its stated that “hundreds of attacks on HDP offices took place in the run-up to both elections” (HRW, 2016).

The HDP leadership considered the attacks against its offices as part of an anti-HDP campaign by the AKP authorities. Demirtas claimed that 130 buildings of HDP were attacked, and he claimed that the attacks were part of a "campaign of lynching" by the AKP against the HDP (Today's Zaman, 9 September, 2015). Likewise, HDP deputy Garo Paylan accused the Turkish authorities of tacitly supporting the attacks and stated that the police were "just watching”

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<sup>171</sup> Qandil is reference to the headquarter of PKK leadership in the Qandil mountains in Iraqi Kurdistan.

(quoted in BBC, 8 September, 2015). Demirtas stressed that the HDP had nothing to do with the armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish government, and he accused the AKP authorities of pushing Turkey to a civil war (BBC, 9 September, 2015). Demirtas stated that “the decision [to start a war] belongs to the president and the prime minister” (quoted in Today’s Zaman, 9 September, 2015).

### **The relationship between the anti-HDP approach and the AKP’s elections agenda**

The HDP leadership rendered the repressive approach of AKP authorities against the HDP to the elections’ agenda of the AKP. Demirtas stated that "we have committed no unforgivable crimes. Our only crime was winning 13 percent of vote" (quoted in Karadeniz, 28 July, 2015). The HDP and several Kurdish NGOs issued a joint declaration accusing Erdogan and AKP of choosing a repressive approach because they were not able to win the majority that they sought in the elections (Albayrak, 26 July, 2015). The declaration stated that "they are deliberately creating a security crisis to continue to stay in power and to play a saviour" (quoted in Albayrak, 26 July, 2015). Co-chair of HDP referred to Erdogan and the AKP and stated that "those who call us traitors, terrorists, separatists have themselves thrown the country into the fire" (quoted in Barnes, *et al.*, 2015, Jul 28).

The relationship between the elections and the anti-HDP approach was also argued by international observers. Turkey’s rapporteur in the European parliament, Kati Piri highlighted that the issue was related to the elections results as she stated that "dangerous rhetoric’s in Turkey against HDP, which won 6 million votes in last elections. Time to face that reality" (quoted in Karadeniz, 28 July, 2015). Likewise, Nigar Göksel, senior analyst at International Crisis Group connected this anti-HDP approach to the elections agenda of the AKP, and she argued that the goal of Erdogan and the AKP was to “attract nationalist votes” (Göksel, 2015).

Göksel highlighted that HDP deputies were sued for “inciting violence and carrying out terrorist propaganda”, and that they faced such charges only two days following the 28 July, 2015 call of Erdogan to strip their parliamentary immunity (Göksel, 2015). It is also relevant to notice that Erdogan call for stripping the immunity of HDP deputies was the same day in which Erdogan announced the end of peace process, and it was only few days after launching the military campaign against the PKK on 23 July, 2015 (Coskun & Afanasieva, 24 July, 2015; Karadeniz, 28 July, 2015). This is although the immunity of the HDP deputies was stripped later in May, 2016 by the Turkish parliament (OHCHR, 2017: 21). The Bipartisan Policy Centre, a U.S. think tank also made similar argument, which connected this approach of the AKP authorities to the elections. In its September report the centre described the campaign against the HDP by the AKP authorities as “a smear campaign” (Bipartisan Policy Centre, September, 2015: 3), and that the pro-military rhetoric of AKP was a “transparent attempt to rally the Turkish nationalist vote” (Bipartisan Policy Centre, October, 2015: 9). The report of September, 2015 stated that “bolstering nationalist rhetoric and undermining the HDP and the Kurds seems to have become the AKP’s path to a second-round electoral victory” (Bipartisan Policy Center, September, 2015: 15).

Erdogan also used his rhetoric, which connected the HDP to terrorism as a tool to support the AKP during the November, 2015 elections’ campaign, and his support of the AKP was a violation to the Turkish constitution (Göksel, 2015; Tisdall, 7 June, 2015). For example, the AKP launched a demonstration and named it “anti-terrorism rally” in which Erdogan loathed the HDP as supporter of PKK terrorism and called to vote for the AKP in the coming elections (Coskun & Toksabay, 21 September, 2015). However, Erdogan’s support of AKP in the elections campaign was a breach of the principle of impartiality in the Turkish constitution, which stipulates that the president not to play a partisan role (Göksel, 2015; Tisdall, 7 June,

2015). Article 101 of the constitution of Turkey states that “if the President-elect is a member of a party, his/her relationship with his party shall be severed and his/her membership of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey shall cease” (The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, n.d.).

### **Influence of the repressive policy on the snap elections of 1 November, 2015**

The elections of 1 November, 2015 resulted in the winning of AKP with the majority, while the HDP barely managed to cross the 10 % threshold to enter the parliament. The AKP gained 49.9 % of the overall votes, and accordingly the AKP won 316 out of 550 of the seats of the Turkish parliament (BBC, 2 November, 2015; Henley, *et al.*, 2 November, 2015). The CHP got 25.4, and the MHP got 11.9 % of the votes (BBC, 2 November, 2015). The votes that AKP gained in the Kurdish region were considerably higher than those of the previous elections. According to a report by the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), which is a Turkish think-tank “the top four cities that AK Party increased its votes were cities of Eastern or Southeastern Turkey, Iğdir (20 percent), Sanliurfa (17 percent), Bingol (17 percent) and Kilis (16 percent)” (Kanat , 2 November, 2015). The AKP officials showed satisfaction of the results. Erdogan hailed the results and stated that the electorate had "given proof of their strong desire for the unity and integrity" (quoted in BBC, 2 November, 2015), while Davutoglu expressed his celebration using the religious term “Elhamdulillah”, which means thanks to Allah (quoted in Henley, *et al.*, 2 November, 2015).

The HDP and Kurds, on the other hand, protested the results of the elections. As the results were announced, people in the main Kurdish city of Diyarbakir protested and accused the Turkish authorities of stealing their votes (Henley, *et al.*, 2 November, 2015). Demirtas stated that the elections were not "a fair or equal" (quoted in BBC, 2 November, 2015). The HDP

leadership also appealed to the Turkish Supreme Election Board (YSK) in order to cancel the November, 2015 elections results and claimed that the results were “illegitimate” because the elections process was short of “free and equal voting” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 16 November, 2015). Nevertheless, the appeal was refused by YSK (MacDonald, 2015). In its appeal, the HDP leadership referred to the role that Erdogan played in campaigning for the AKP and against the HDP, which was not allowed to a president to play (Hurriyet Daily News, 16 November, 2015).<sup>172</sup> The HDP appeal also claimed that the AKP authorities adopted certain security measures in the south-eastern provinces in order to make it difficult for the voters to give free votes, and to make it easier for fraud in the elections in some areas where the authorities imposed certain security measures. The HDP appeal also referred to the attacks against its offices. The HDP appeal stated:

“Voters were scared and terrorized and prevented from going to vote”,  
“additionally, governors, sub-governors, gendarmerie commanders and police chiefs who work under the government/the Interior Ministry tried to manipulate and influence provincial and district ballot box committees with false information and exerted a series of efforts for merging of ballot boxes” (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 16 November, 2015).

The claims that the elections of November, 2015 were not successful in the south-east is supported by the report of Organisation for the Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that observed the Turkish election. In its report, OSCE demonstrated that elections in the south-east of Turkey were not free and the contestants were not able to campaign freely (OSCE, 2015: 1-2). The report considered the curfews and special security zones, which were imposed by the Turkish authorities in certain areas in the south-east “as politically motivated and beyond the

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<sup>172</sup> Several journalist reports support this claim. See Arango & Yeginsu, November, 2015; De-Bellaigue, December, 2015; Jones, 30 October, 2015; and Paul & Seyrek, October, 2015.

legal framework” (OSCE, 2015: 8). The report counted 129 attacks against HDP offices between 6 September and 9 October, 2015. The report also highlighted that during the elections campaign, the authorities imposed restrictions on the freedom of expression and the media outlets by using Anti-Terrorism law to charge journalists (OSCE, 2015: 9-10).<sup>173</sup>

### **Declaring the Kurdish autonomy and the response of Turkish authorities**

On 27 December, 2015 the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), which joined several Kurdish NGOs and political parties including the HDP, BDP and KCK, declared autonomy of the Kurdish region in Turkey (Reuters, 27 December, 2015). DTK declaration titled “Declaration of Political Resolution Regarding Self-rule” (ANF, 27 December, 2015). The declaration supported a type of autonomy that emphasized on the principles of democracy and local governance of the Kurdish provinces as part of Turkey and considered autonomy as a democratic practice that could be applied in all provinces of Turkey (ANF, 27 December, 2015; BBC, 29 December, 2015). Co-chair of HDP, Figen Yuksekdag stated that “autonomy is a right. Not only for Cizre, Silopi and Nusaybin, but it is also a right for Istanbul, Rize, Mersin and Ankara too. We will go on defending this demand” (Hurriyet Daily News, 29 December, 2015).<sup>174</sup> Cizre, Silopi and Nusaybin are three Kurdish cities, while the other cities that she referred to are majority Turkish cities.

The Turkish authorities denounced this declaration and refused any autonomy for Kurds considering it as separation. Erdogan stated that “now they are talking about separating our land in this country. With God’s permission, we will never allow a surgery on the unity of our

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<sup>173</sup> The report stated: “At the end of July, violence escalated in the southeast part of the country, where a significant part of the Kurdish population lives. During the campaign, offices of the HDP were targeted, a high number of HDP members were taken into custody, HDP affiliated mayors were suspended, and its campaign leaflets were confiscated” (OSCE, 2015: 8).

<sup>174</sup> See the 14 points of declaration in ANF. (27 December, 2015) and in Biehl, J. (February, 2016).



country” (quoted in Reuters, 27 December, 2015). Erdogan considered autonomy as the establishment of a separate state as he stated that “how dare you talk about establishing a state in the southeast and the east within Turkey's existing unitary structure?” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, December, 2015). Erdogan also considered the declaration of autonomy as a crime of “treason”, which violated “the indivisible integrity” of Turkey (quoted in BBC, 29 December, 2015). Likewise, Davutoglu described autonomy and self-governance as "illegal structures" (BBC Monitoring, January, 2016b). In addition, both Erdogan and Davutoglu threatened the Kurdish politicians who called for autonomy that they would face punishment (BBC Monitoring, December, 2015, January, 2016b).

The dominant narrative of Turkish officials constructed the declaration of autonomy as an action of supporting terrorism, and those who were involved in it as ‘supporters of terrorism’ (BBC, 29 December, 2015; BBC Monitoring, January, 2016, January, 2016d; Trend News, 31 December, 2015). For example, Davutoglu described the declaration as "terrorist ideology" which was spread through "polemics, lies and black propaganda" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, January, 2016b). Davutoglu stated that "no group can have a right and priority to commit a crime and support terrorism explicitly”, Davutoglu added that "HDP should decide if it is a political party or an extension of the terror organization?" (quoted in Trend News, 31 December, 2015). In another statement, Davutoglu described the mayoral administrations of the Kurdish region to be “logistical centres for the terrorist organization [PKK]”, and he threatened the Kurdish mayors that they “will definitely pay the price for all of this treason and wrong practices" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, January, 2016C).

The Turkish authorities intensified their military and security operations against the Kurdish provinces that declared autonomy, and they constructed these operations as a continuation of

the campaign against terrorism. Davutoglu stated that "our priority now is to clear all the neighbourhoods and streets of all our cities of the terrorist organization [PKK] and its terror activities" (quoted in Trend News, 31 December, 2015). In another statement, Davutoglu described the action of Kurdish youth who held arms and built barriers to prevent the Turkish military from entering their cities and districts as terrorism (AA, 6 January, 2016). Davutoglu also threatened everyone who provided any kind of support to these youths and claimed that their actions "encourage terror" (quoted in AA, 6 January, 2016).

### **Anti-autonomy approach and the AKP agenda of April, 2017 referendum**

As the AKP won the majority in the November, 2015 elections, Erdogan and the AKP leadership worked on paving the ground for the referendum to change the constitution, and accordingly the political system of Turkey from parliamentary to presidential. The AKP leadership found that the anti-Kurdish rhetoric and policy is serving their agenda of winning the support of nationalist Turks. Accordingly, Erdogan and the AKP leadership found the Kurdish declaration of 'democratic autonomy' which came after the November elections as an opportunity to practice more repression and to show themselves as the guards of Turkish indivisibility in order to maintain the support of Turkish nationalists. Therefore, the AKP authorities dramatically raised their anti-autonomy rhetoric and exerted repressive policy against the Kurds. This led to a higher level of violence and further deterioration of human rights.

The statements of Turkish officials also interdiscursively connected their constructions of anti-autonomy to the constructions that supported the change of the constitution for the advantage of a presidential system for Turkey. For example, in a statement that targeted the HDP and autonomy, Erdogan propagandized for the presidential system, which he described as "authentic presidential system framed by Turkish customs and traditions" (quoted in BBC

Monitoring, January, 2016d). Likewise, Davutoglu in a statement that mainly targeted the PKK, HDP and Kurdish autonomy, propagandized for changing the constitution for the advantage of establishing a presidential system as he stated that "let's draft such a constitution that will not be bound by the current conjuncture", and added that "the right thing to do is to shift the political system to presidency" (quoted in Trend News, 31 December, 2015).

The refusal of Kurdish autonomy and the repressive approach of AKP against the Kurds reflected positively on the AKP referendum agenda as the referendum proposal was passed in the parliament in February, 2017 after gaining the support of the ultra-nationalist Turkish party of MHP, and later in April, 2017 it gained the desired public votes (Bipartisan Policy Center, May, 2017: 11-12; CEFTUS, November, 2016; Hurriyet Daily News, 17 February, 2017). Leader of the MHP, Devlet Bahçeli vowed that his party would vote "yes" in the referendum. Bahçeli claimed that voting 'yes' for the presidential system would protect the indivisibility of Turkey including the "people, the state, the republic, the future of Turkishness, and Turkey", and he added that "yes" vote would be a blow to the terrorist organizations of FETO, the PKK and DHKP-C, and the "crusaders", and that the 'yes' vote would be a lesson to the CHP who remained "silent to the so-called Kurdistan dreams" (quoted in Hurriyet Daily News, 7 March, 2017).

### **Impacts of the military and security operations against the Kurdish autonomy**

The Turkish military and security forces conducted large-scale operations in the Kurdish region. The bombardment of Turkish heavy weapons caused extensive damage in the Kurdish region, and hundreds of thousands of civilians were forcibly displaced. The operation involved thousands of troops of combat-ready infantry and heavy weapons including artillery, warplanes, and armoured vehicles, and the operation targeted at least 30 urban areas and

unknown number of rural areas of the Kurdish region (OHCHR, 2017: 5). The Office of UN High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), and Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented demolition of entire neighbourhoods in the Kurdish cities of Diyarbakır, Nusaybin, Cizre, Sirnak and Yüksekova (HRW, 2017; OHCHR, 2017: 9). The report of OHCHR stated that the demolition caused “a permanent change in the population, patterns of ownership and architectural character of entire cities” (OHCHR, 2017: 9).<sup>175</sup> The report also quoted Diyarbakır’s municipality office that “70 percent of buildings in the eastern part of Sur neighbourhood were destroyed by shelling” (OHCHR, 2017: 11). The reports of OHCHR and HRW included satellite images for the demolished areas. The reports compare images taken before the military campaign to these taken after the campaign (see Appendix Satellite Images 1-8). The report of OHCHR also estimated that between 335 thousand and half a million of civilian Kurds were forcibly displaced by the Turkish forces (OHCHR, 2017: 5). Amnesty international (2018) report estimated the number of those forcibly displaced to be 500.000, while Human Rights Watch estimated the number to be over 400.000 (AI, 2018; HRW, 2017).

The reports of OHCHR, HRW and Amnesty International accused the Turkish authorities of perpetrating flagrant violations of human rights against Kurds in the southeast under the banner of fighting against terrorism (AI, 2018; HRW, July, 2016, 2017; OHCHR, 2017). The reports highlighted that the Turkish forces imposed around-the-clock curfews in the targeted Kurdish areas (HRW, July, 2016; OHCHR, 2017: 5-6). The OHCHR and HRW claimed that the Turkish authorities also did not allow the UN and international organizations of human rights to access those areas in order investigate violations (HRW, July, 2016; OHCHR, 2017:6). Emma Sinclair-Webb, senior Turkey researcher at Human Rights Watch stated that “the Turkish

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<sup>175</sup> Photo of Turkish military celebrating in the destroyed Nusaybin city Centre. Source: Ayasun, A. (2017). *The Globe Post*. Available at: <https://www.theglobepost.com/2017/03/11/un-turkish-military-kills-hundreds-of-kurdish-civilians/> [accessed: 22 May, 2017].

government's effective blockade of areas of the southeast fuels concerns of a major cover-up", and she added "credible accounts of Turkish security forces deliberately killing civilians, including children, when they were carrying white flags or trapped in basements should be ringing loud alarm bells" (quoted in HRW, July, 2016).<sup>176</sup> The Turkish ministry of defence stated that 10,657 "terrorists were neutralized" from 23 July 2015 to 11 June 2017 (OHCHR, 2018: 25). The OHCHR requested from the Turkish authorities to provide clarification for the term 'neutralized' and more details about the number of victims. Furthermore, OHCHR stated in its 2017 report:

"Apart from unlawful deaths and the excessive use of force (such as shelling densely populated areas with heavy artillery and tanks), OHCHR has also documented numerous cases of enforced disappearances; torture; destruction of housing and cultural heritage; incitement to hatred; prevention of access to emergency medical care, food, water and livelihoods; violence against women; and severe curtailment of the rights to freedom of opinion and expression as well as interference with the right to participate in public life" (OHCHR, 2017: 5).

### **The repressive measures against Kurdish deputies, mayors, and others**

Following the declaration of autonomy, the Turkish authorities targeted the HDP deputies in the parliament and the Kurdish mayors and officials of municipalities. However, the Turkish officials usually used the narrative of terrorism against them, and they faced terrorism related charges. For example, Erdogan constructed those who supported autonomy as they supported the PKK terrorism, and therefore, they should face terrorism related charges as he stated that "the titles of lawmaker, mayor and party leader cannot and should not save anyone from paying the price before the law if he has stood by the terrorist organization" (quoted in BBC

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<sup>176</sup> See also HRW. (22 December, 2015).

Monitoring, January, 2016d). As he did when he ended the peace process, Erdogan also called the parliament and judiciary to strip the immunities of the HDP co-chair Demirtas and Yuksekdag, and to make them liable to terrorism related charges as he stated that "both parliament and the judiciary should take action against those who act as though they are members of a terrorist organization" (quoted in BBC Monitoring, January, 2016).

The immunity of many HDP deputies was stripped and they faced terrorism related charges. In May 2016, the Turkish parliament adopted a law which stripped parliamentary immunity of 138 deputies in the parliament (OHCHR, 2017: 21). These deputies were mainly critical to Erdogan and his approach that favours military and security measures. However, the law mainly targeted the HDP deputies as it stripped the immunity of 50 out of its 59 members in the parliament and made them liable to prosecution and detention (AI, 2018; HRW, 2017: 9, 2018; OHCHR, 2017). The law was proposed by the AKP parliamentarian group claiming that the HDP was acting in affiliation with the terrorist organization; the PKK (OHCHR, 2017: 21). As the parliament adopted the law, the Turkish authorities commenced the prosecution of the HDP deputies including Yuksekdag and Demirtas, and the deputies faced terrorism related charges (AI, 2018; HRW, 2018). As the immunity of HDP deputies was stripped, Erdogan stated that "in this historic vote, my nation doesn't want to see guilty lawmakers in this parliament -- especially those that the separatist terrorist organization supports" (quoted in Dow Jones, 21 May, 2016).

The elected Kurdish mayors and their deputies were also stripped of their posts, detained and faced terrorism related charges. Furthermore, the Turkish authorities appointed pro-AKP trustees in their positions (AI, 2018; HRW, 2018; OHCHR, 2018: 26). According to the last report of OHCHR, the Turkish authorities detained 87 out of 105 mayor and deputy mayors in

the south-east of Turkey including 35 women and 52 men (OHCHR, 2018: 26). The mayors faced several terrorism related charges including “membership in a terrorist organization”, “making terrorist propaganda”, “acting as a human shield”, and “providing logistical support to a terrorist organization” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, January, 2016C). In addition, the mayors faced the charge of “disrupting the unity and territorial integrity of the state”, which Erdogan described as a “constitutional crime” (quote in BBC Monitoring, January, 2016). By the end of 2017, the Turkish authorities appointed 94 pro-AKP trustees in the municipalities of the south-east, and all the appointed trustees were men (OHCHR, 2018: 26). Erdogan claimed that the removal of mayors and appointing of trustees in their place was legitimate decision as he stated that “they ask how come the elected can be removed from their positions. Certainly, they can be. To be elected doesn’t give anyone the right to act endlessly against the state and the nation” (quoted in Bizarre Turkey, 13 September, 2016).

Thousands of Kurdish activists, journalists, writers, and others were also detained and faced terrorism related charges (AI, 6 July, 2017, 2018; Freedom House, 2016, 2016b, 2017; HRW, 2017: 7; OHCHR, 2017: 20). About 8,711 members and supporters of HDP were detained and faced terrorism related charges (OHCHR, 2017: 22). Human Rights Watch named Turkey as “the world leader” in jailing journalists, and that pro-Kurdish journalists constituted the majority of detained journalists in Turkey (HRW, 2018: 2). Report of OHCHR stated that “as of the end of December 2016, most of the independent and Kurdish language media outlets were shut down, including JINHA one of the few world’s news agencies run entirely by women” (OHCHR, 2017: 20). Arrested Kurdish journalists mainly faced terrorism related charges of ‘membership of terrorist organization and spreading propaganda of a terrorist organization; the PKK’ (Freedom House, 2016; AI, 6 July, 2017, 2018).

Journalists of non-Kurdish media who disseminated information about the violations against Kurds in Turkey also faced the charge of ‘spreading propaganda of a terrorist organization; the PKK’. This was the case of Deniz Yücel, correspondent for the German *Die Welt* newspaper, and Ayla Albayrak, journalist of *Wall Street Journal* (AI, 2018). In addition, those who showed solidarity with the arrested Kurdish journalists and their papers usually faced similar charges (HRW, 2017: 7). This was the case of dozens of public figures and human rights defenders who showed solidarity with the pro-Kurdish daily *Özgür Gündem*, which was closed down by the authorities and its journalist team were arrested to face terrorism related charges (HRW, 20 June, 2016, 2017: 7, 2018: 3). The list of those who faced such charges because they showed solidarity with the arrested journalists included, among others, famous figures like the novelists Necmiye Alpay and Aslı Erdoğan, and the representative of the Reporters Without Borders in Turkey, Erol Önderoğlu, and the professor at Istanbul University and chair of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, Şebnem Korur (HRW, 20 June, 2016, 2017: 7).

Many of the pro-peace academics were also dismissed from their institutions and faced terrorism related charges because they denounced the military campaign and called for reviving the peace process. In January 2016, more than 1100 academics signed a petition criticizing the military operation in the south-east and called for the return to the peace process (AI, 6 July, 2017; HRW, 2017). The signatories named themselves as “Academics for Peace” and included Turkish and Kurdish academics (Academics for Peace, 10 January, 2016). The petition was also supported by famous scholars from different countries like Noam Chomsky, Judith Butler, Immanuel Wallerstein, Slavoj Žižek, David Harvey and Etienne Balibar (Baser *et al.*, 2017: 392). However, the signatories were targeted by Erdoğan who described them as ‘supporters of terrorism’ and called for making them liable to criminal investigation (AI, 6 July, 2017; HRW, 2017). Erdoğan stated that “those so-called intellectuals” are the “fifth columns” of



foreign powers, sympathising with terrorists and bent on undermining Turkey’s national security” (quoted in Weaver, 15 January, 2016). Many of the signatories were dismissed by their academic institutions, and faced charges related to making propaganda for a terrorist organization; the PKK’ (AI, 6 July, 2017; Baser *et al.*, 2017: 175; HRW, 2017).

### **Constructing the Syrian Kurdish autonomy as a source of terrorism**

The Turkish officials usually avoided reference to the influence of the nationalist sentiments of the Syrian Kurdish autonomy of *Rojava* on Kurds in Turkey and their declaration of autonomy, and although such influence has been the actual concern of the Turkish authorities regarding the Syrian Kurdish autonomy (BBC, 27 October, 2015; Beauchamp, 2016; Egret & Anderson, 2016; Ekim, 2015; Hall, 1 February, 2014; Park, 2016). In particular, the principles of autonomy of *Rojava* stemmed from the same theoretical perspectives of Ocalan of ‘Democratic Nation’, which constituted the foundations of the declared ‘democratic autonomy’ of the Kurds in Turkey (Ocalan, 2016, 2011). Eliza Egret and Tom Anderson (2016: 46) quoted the chair of DTK who stated that the autonomous system that they declared for the Kurds in Turkey is similar to that of *Rojava* as both stemmed “from the same perspective” and added that “we are trying to build this system but in *Rojava* they have already built it”.

Instead of referring to the nationalist influence of Syrian Kurdish autonomy over Kurds in Turkey, The Turkish official discourse denounced the Kurdish autonomy in Syria and constructed it as a source of terrorism which targeted Turkey. Thus, *Rojava* autonomy and the autonomy of Kurds in Turkey were similarly constructed as sources of terrorism. As discussed in chapter 6, the Turkish officials usually used structures such as “terror corridor”, and “terror cantons” to describe the *Rojava* cantons (quoted in AA, 2 September, 2016; Hurriyet Daily News, 29 December, 2016, 28 April, 2017). For example, Erdogan stated that “we are not

going to let the PYD terrorist organization form a corridor there”, “we are opposed to the PYD terrorist organization forming a corridor” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 3 February, 2016). In a meeting with the US president Obama, Erdogan demanded the US to cut ties with the YPG and to label it as a terrorist organization because the YPG as he claimed was part of the PKK and incited terrorism inside Turkey (Landler, 2016). Erdogan stated that “our hope is never to see a belt of terrorism, a corridor of terrorism emerging in or around our region” (quoted in Landler, 2016).

During the campaign against the Kurdish autonomy in Turkey, the Turkish military bombarded the semi-autonomous cantons of Rojava (Dow Jones, 17 March, 2016; Rollo, 28 December, 2015). Although the Turkish military attacked the Syrian Kurdish forces of YPG before the announcement of autonomy in Turkey, such attacks were intensified during the Turkish campaign against the Kurdish autonomy in Turkey (BBC, 27 October, 2015; Istanbulu, September, 2016 Said, 17 March, 2016). The Turkish officials threatened to conduct more attacks against Rojava and the YPG and described this as a matter of Turkish national security and counterterrorism policy. For example, Erdogan stated that “Turkey has every right to conduct operations in Syria and the places where terror organizations are nested with regards to the struggle against the threats that Turkey faces” (quoted in BBC Monitoring, 21 February, 2016). Likewise, Davutoglu constructed the military action against the YPG as part of the counterterrorism campaign against the PKK as he stated that “when there is any threat to Turkey, we will take in Syria the measures that we took in Iraq and in Qandil and will not hesitate to implement the necessary measures” (quoted in the Guardian, 13 February, 2016).<sup>177</sup> This is although the Turkish authorities could not produce concrete evidence that the Syrian

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<sup>177</sup> Qandil is the mountainous area of Iraqi Kurdistan where the PKK headquarter is located.

Kurdish cantons and the YPG had involved in armed violence inside Turkey as explained in chapter 6 (see also Zaman, 18 February, 2016).

The actual aim of the attacks of the Turkish military were to hamper the advance of the YPG and to prevent it from connecting the *Rojava* cantons. As the YPG was advancing in an attempt to connect the canton of Afrin to the rest of Rojava through the towns of Azaz and Jarabulus in the north of Syria, they were shelled by the Turkish military (BBC, 15 February, 2016; Coskun & Butler, 13 February, 2016; The Guardian, 13 February, 2016). Davutoglu threatened that the Turkish military would conduct further attacks if the YPG did not stop advancing towards Azaz city as he stated that "if they approach again, they will see the harshest reaction. We will not allow Azaz to fall" (quoted in BBC, 15 February, 2016). Although the US administration called the Turkish authorities to stop the attacks against the YPG, the Turkish military repeatedly attacked the Syrian Kurdish cantons even after crushing the Kurdish autonomy in Turkey (Coles & Davison, April, 2017; Nissenbaum, 13 February, 2016; Toksabay & McDowall, October, 2016).

The Turkish military conducted two major invasions against the Syrian Kurdish autonomous cantons of Rojava. The first invasion of the Turkish military was in August, 2016 and was named the Euphrates Shield Operation. This operation mainly aimed at preventing the connection between the canton of Afrin and the rest of Rojava. This is explained in chapter 6. The second invasion was between January-March, 2018 and targeted Afrin canton itself. In January, 2018 the Turkish military and Islamist factions of FSA conducted a military operation named 'Operation Olive Branch' against Afrin and managed to conquer the canton in March,

2018 and they forcibly displaced a large number of its Kurdish population (BBC, 25 January, 2018; Chulov & Shaheen, 2018; OCHA, 2018; Rasmussen & Aydin, 18 March, 2018).<sup>178 179</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The analysis reveals that before its failure, the peace process underwent a certain degree of stalemate and lack of confidence caused by the Kobani crisis and the ensuing repressive measures adopted by the Turkish authorities. This is although the Turkish officials continued to express their commitment to the peace process during and following the crisis. In addition, they announced alongside the representatives of Kurds the peace agreement of Dolmabahce. The importance of the agreement is that it implied the representatives of Kurds as political partners of the peace process for the first time. However, the agreement was vague and not enough to regain confidence in the peace process. The Turkish authorities who were concentrating on disarming the PKK as their main goal and as a prerequisite for adopting the agreement were not ready to conduct further meetings to make the agreement function.

The analysis highlights that approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question was influenced by the elections and voting agendas of the AKP. The chapter reveals that during the campaign for the June 2015 elections, the AKP authorities used the peace process as a tool to gain more votes. However, this did not function as the authorities were unable to disarm the PKK. As the AKP was unable to win the majority, which it hoped for in the June 2015 elections, the AKP authorities abandoned the peace process and adopted a pro-military approach to gain the votes of nationalist Turks in the next snap elections of November, 2015. This approach reflected positively on the AKP votes as it managed to gain the desired majority in the elections.

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<sup>178</sup> See Koker, I. (2018). Reality check: How many attacks did Turkey face from Afrin? *BBC News*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-43262839> [accessed: 22 March, 2018].

<sup>179</sup> See Maps 4 and 13.

The AKP continued its repressive approach, and the repression peaked following the declaration of autonomy in December, 2015 by the representatives of Kurds in Turkey. The repressive approach of the AKP encouraged the nationalist Turks to support the April, 2017 referendum of changing the constitution which was called for by Erdogan and the AKP.

The analysis highlights that the Turkish official narrative of terrorism was dominant in framing both the events and policies of 2014-2017, which this chapter deals with. However, this narrative was more dominant following the demise of the peace process. This is mainly discerned in the constructions of the Turkish authorities regarding each of the military campaign against the PKK, their repressive approach against the HDP and other Kurdish groups and activists, and their anti-autonomy campaign. This was not limited to the Kurds inside Turkey, but it also impacted Kurds outside Turkey. In particular, it targeted the PYD-YPG and Rojava autonomy. The Turkish officials omitted reference to the nationalist relationship between the Rojava autonomy and the declaration of autonomy by Kurds in Turkey. Instead, they constructed Rojava as an action of terrorism by the PKK and as a sources of PKK terrorism, which required counter-terrorism measures.

The analysis reveals that the military and security operations of the Turkish authorities resulted in flagrant violations of human rights. In addition, the parliamentary immunity of 50 out of 59 HDP deputies was stripped, and they faced terrorism related charges. Likewise, the elected mayors of the Kurdish municipalities were stripped of their posts, detained and faced terrorism related charges. Furthermore, thousands of HDP members, journalists and other activists were detained and faced terrorism related charges.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

This concluding chapter discusses the main arguments of the research and highlights its contribution to the literature. This is organised according to the following four main sections: The first section deals with the location of this research in the academic literature and its significance. This section begins with discussing the gaps in the literature. Next, the section highlights the contribution of the research in bridging these gaps. The second section deals with the response to the research questions. This section discusses the major findings of the analysis and gathers its main arguments, which constitute the responses to the research questions. The third section deals with the major features of the analysed texts in the light of the concepts of CDA. The last section deals with the recommendations of the researcher for the future academic studies. These recommendations are based on the perspectives that the researcher developed while conducting this research.

### **Location of the research in the literature and its significance**

#### *Gaps of the literature*

The mainstream studies on terrorism usually construct it as an objective phenomenon, and they are usually limited to exploring the causes and effects of terrorism and the strategies of counter terrorism. The mainstream studies are usually influenced by the view of governments as they consider the armed violence of certain non-state actors as ‘terrorism’, while they exclude from such description the violence of repressive state apparatus. This is although there is no universal consensus over the definition of terrorism. In addition, the armed non-state actors that are designated by the governments as terrorist organizations are dissimilar in their characteristics, motivations and methods of action. These main inconsistencies in the mainstream studies are highlighted in the critical studies on terrorism (CST). Nevertheless, the approach of CST

remains actor-centered like that of the mainstream studies as these studies concentrate on comparing the action of state to those of non-state actors.

The discursive studies of terrorism demonstrate that the concept of terrorism is a linguistic construction, and therefore, it is subjectively influenced by the interpretations of the researcher. Accordingly, the discursive studies question the concept of terrorism itself. However, the majority of the discursive researches give more space to the study of the American narrative of 'War on Terror' which influenced the formation of contemporary discourses of terrorism. Accordingly, the discursive studies lack comprehensive researches on the characteristics of various case studies.

The mainstream studies on the Turkish-Kurdish conflict construct it as terrorism, which is perpetrated by one party; the PKK. Likewise, the studies on the PYD-YPG and Syrian Kurdish autonomy of Rojava, which favor the Turkish official view, construct the PYD-YPG and Rojava in the context of the Turkish official narrative of terrorism. The latter considers the PYD-YPG as part of the PKK, and as a security threat against Turkey. Thus, the mainstream work dislocates the Turkish-Kurdish conflict from its political and historical context, and therefore, it is short of discussing the origins of the Kurdish question. Several critical studies highlight the political and historical context of the conflict and the origins of the Kurdish question. However, there is no sufficient academic work on the discursive construction of the PKK and the Kurdish question in the Turkish official discourse. Although the Turkish official position regarding the PYD-YPG and Syrian Kurdish autonomy is a growing matter since the Kobani events of 2014, the literature review found no academic research on the construction of the PYD-YPG in the Turkish official discourse.

### *Contribution of the research to the literature*

The above discussed deficiencies in the literature encouraged the researcher to conduct this research, which focuses on Turkish official discourse regarding the PKK and PYD-YPG, and the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question in Turkey. Thus, this research is a contribution in bridging the identified gaps in the literature on terrorism in general and in the studies on the Turkish official discourse regarding the PKK and PYD-YPG, in particular. The research is a step forward in the discursive studies of terrorism as it is the first research that joins the construction of the PKK and PYD-YPG in the Turkish official discourse and the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question.

This research adopts critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a philosophical and analytical approach. This is although the perspective of the research is not in conformity with that of CDA as it does not agree CDA that agency can manipulate the entire entity of discourse. The research demonstrated that the role of agency is limited to the formation of the discursive constructions and practices. In the case of this research, agency is represented in the Turkish authorities who construct the PKK and the other Kurdish movements and their action in the context of the Turkish official narrative of terrorism. The research demonstrated that the Turkish official narrative of terrorism and its affiliated constructions have certain implied messages and serve certain agendas of the Turkish authorities. Revealing the implied message and agenda of discursive texts is the main commitment of CDA, as explained in chapter 3.

The research provides a historical background for the Kurdish question and Turkish-Kurdish conflict. The historical background highlights that following the demise of Ottoman and Safavid empires the Kurdish homeland 'Kurdistan' was divided and annexed to the then established nation-states of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria. The historical background also



highlights that Kurds were deprived from the right to self-determination, and it refers to the Kurdish rebellions, and the way they were suppressed.

The historical background discusses the repressive policies of the Turkish governments and their denial of the Kurdish identity, which led to the emergence of the PKK rebellion. It also reveals that the Turkish official discourse constructed the PKK militants as ‘‘bandits’ at the beginning of their rebellion, and then it constructed them as ‘terrorists’ when this construction was widely used by the US and the NATO members against certain movements. In addition, it highlights the impacts of the conflict and counter-terrorism measures on human rights in the Kurdish region of Turkey.

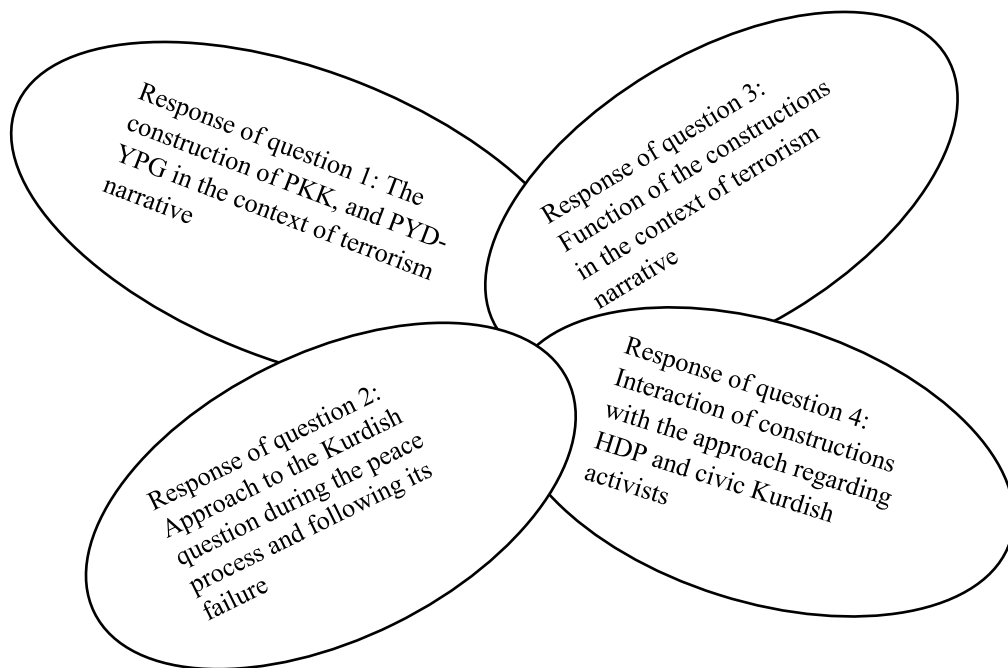
The historical background discusses the ideology of AKP and concentrates on its Kurdish opening approach. The background highlights that the Islamist ideology of the AKP that aimed at showing Turkey as a role model for the Arab countries following the Arab spring. The research argues that the Kurdish opening approach was a turning point in the history of Turkish-Kurdish relationship. The approach offered a limited recognition for the Kurdish identity, but it paved the ground for the later peace process, which began in September 2012. The Kurdish opening was accompanied with concealed peace talks with the PKK leadership between the years 2008-2011. The chapter highlights the relationship between the AKP opening approach regarding the Kurds and its agenda of both limiting the role of Turkish military and gaining the Kurdish support in the elections and changing the constitution.

### **The response to the research questions**

The responses to the four research questions are summarized in Appendix Table 7. However, these responses are interconnected (see Figure 10 below). Chapter 5 and 6 constitute main parts of the responses to the first and third questions of the research as they deal with the

constructions and narratives regarding the PKK, and PYD-YPG in the context of the Turkish official narrative of terrorism. Chapter 7 and 8 constitute the response to the second and fourth questions as they deal with the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure, and they reveal the way the Turkish authorities dealt with the HDP and civic Kurdish activists. However, chapter 7 and 8 also contribute to the responses of the first and third questions as these two chapters highlight the influence of the narrative of terrorism on the policy of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question. Chapter 8 also reveals the relationship between certain agendas of the AKP on the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question. This makes the main arguments of chapters 7 and 8 interconnected to these of chapter 5 and 6.

**Figure 10. The interconnection of the research responses.**



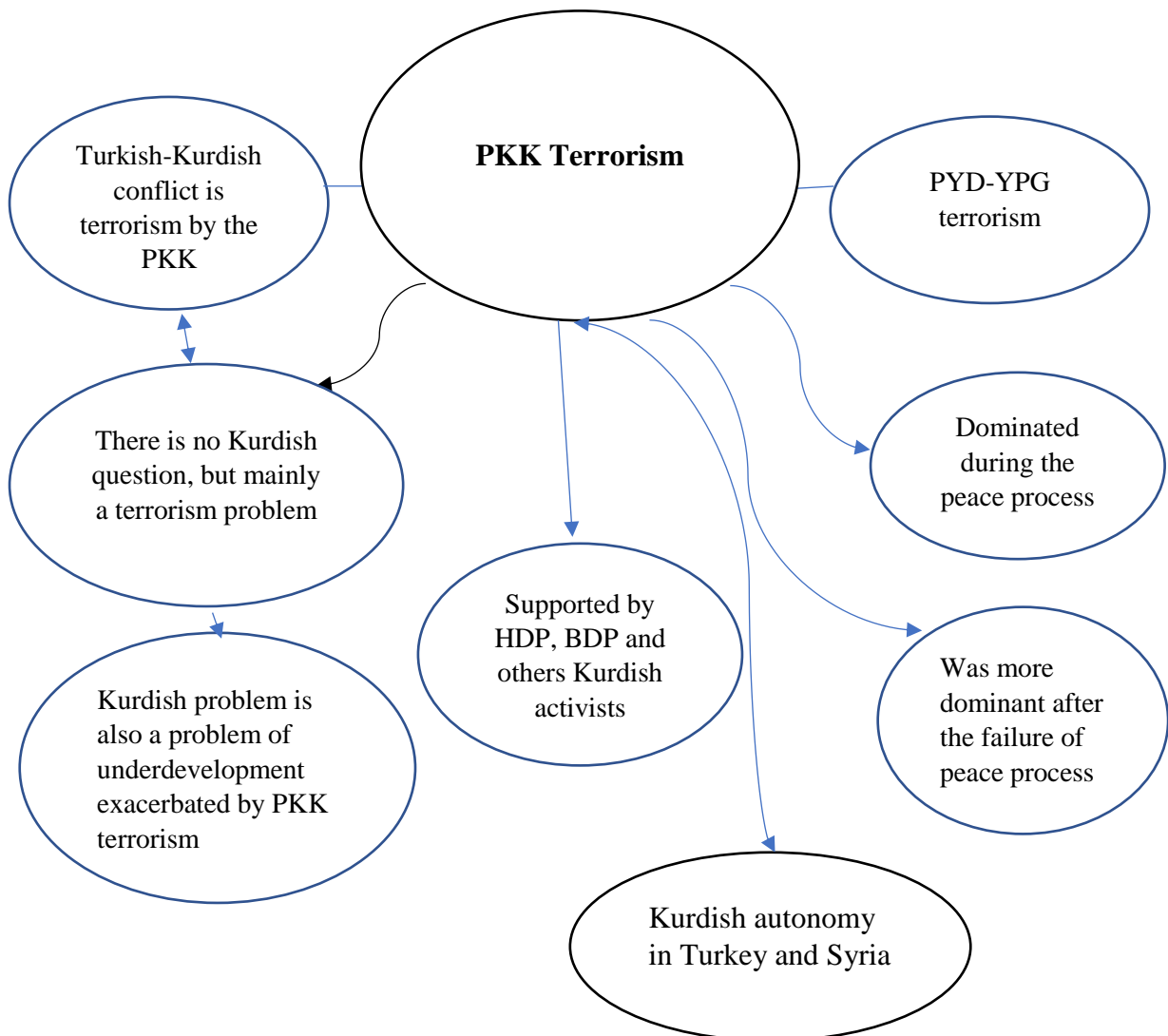
### **The Kurdish nationalist activism as separatist-terrorism**

The Turkish definition of terrorism is not limited to violent actions, but it also includes various non-violent acts. This is applied against wide-range pro-Kurdish activities, which could be interpreted as acts that aim at “damaging the indivisible unity of the State with its territory and nation” as stated in the Turkish law of Fight Against Terrorism (quoted in Legislationline, 2016). The principle of the indivisibility of Turkey is highly preserved in the Turkish constitution, and it denotes ‘the territorial integrity of Turkey and its national Turkish identity’. The actions that the Turkish authorities consider to be against the principle of ‘indivisibility’ are described as ‘separatism’. Accordingly, separatism is not limited to the actions that target the territorial integrity of Turkey but also the actions that target its national ‘Turkish’ identity. Separatism is considered in the Turkish official discourse as a form of terrorism, which is named as ‘separatist-terrorism’. Thus, the Turkish official narrative of terrorism interdiscursively connects three discursive constructions including the constitutional principle of indivisibility, separatism, and terrorism. As it is elaborated in this research, the Kurdish aspiration of self-rule or ‘separatism’ is the main concern of the Turkish authorities since the establishment of Turkey as a nation state and even before that as it was a concern for the authorities of the Ottoman empire (see chapter 4). However, before using the terms ‘terrorism’ to denote the Kurdish separatism, the Turkish official discourse constructed the Kurdish rebellions or separatist attempts as actions of ‘banditry’ and the Kurdish rebels as ‘brigands and bandits’ (see chapter 4).

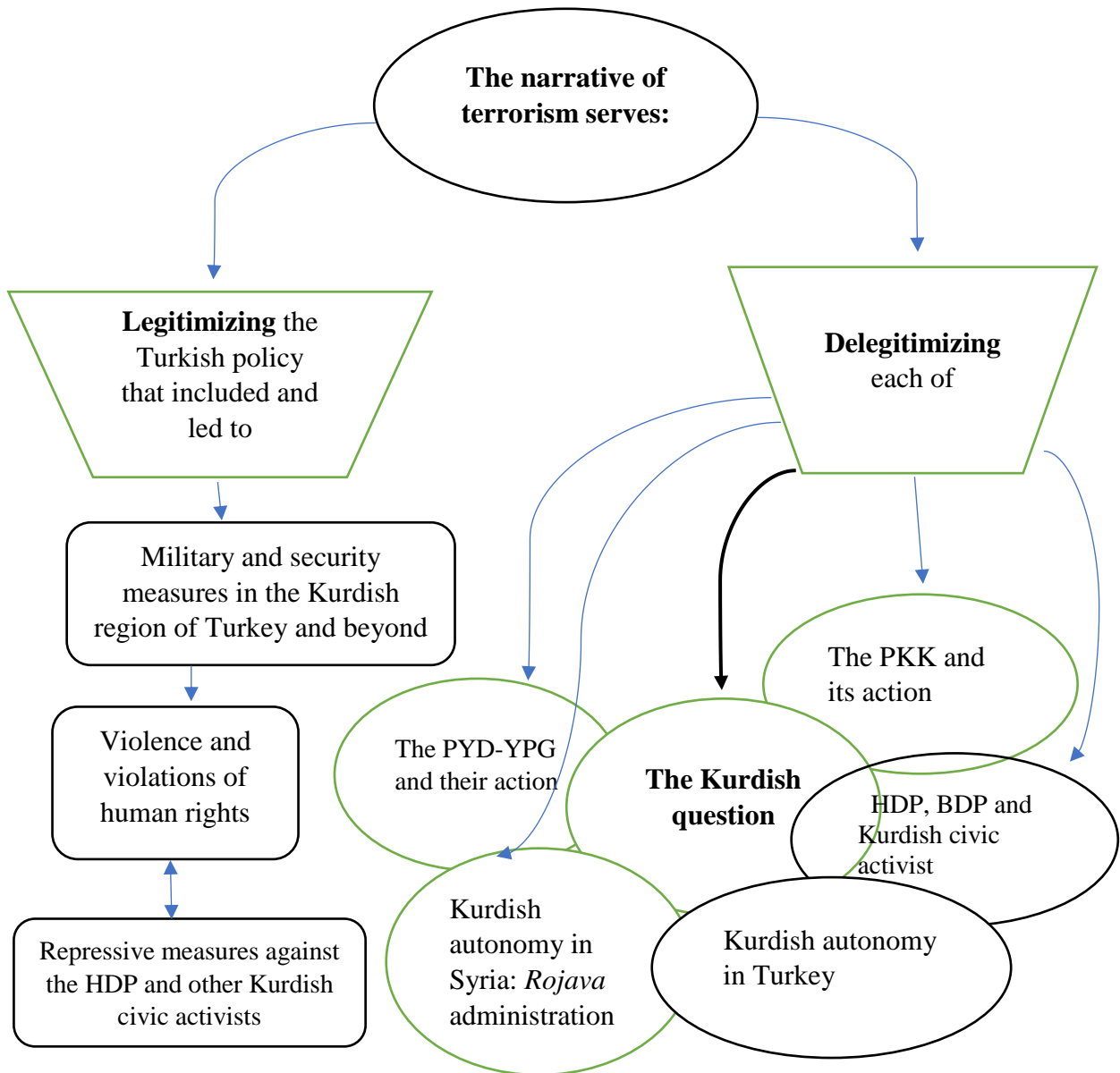
The inclusion of various actions that share the characteristic of Kurdish nationalism in the Turkish official narrative of terrorism made this narrative transcend the PKK to include other Kurdish movements and individuals. This narrative has impacted on the legal Kurdish parties (HDP and BDP) and the civic Kurdish activists in Turkey who are usually constructed as

‘supporters of terrorism’. The Turkish narrative of terrorism also goes beyond the Turkish border to include the Syrian Kurdish PYD and YPG. The narrative even shaped the way the Turkish official discourse constructed the Kurdish question and the way the Turkish authorities visualized the solution to this question (see Figure 11). The researcher argues that there are two principal aims behind the constructions that are used against the PKK and the other Kurdish movements in the Turkish official narrative of terrorism. These are characterised in both the de-legitimization of the PKK and other Kurdish movements and the legitimization of the policy of the Turkish authorities regarding these movements, and regarding the Kurdish question (see Figure 12).

**Figure 11. Influence of the Turkish official narrative of ‘PKK terrorism’ on framing the Kurdish movements and the Kurdish question.**



**Figure 12. Function of the Turkish official narrative of terrorism regarding the PKK and other Kurdish movements.** This figure shows the main themes of the response to the third questions of research.



### **Construction of the PKK, PYD and YPG in the Turkish official discourse**

The first question of the research is ‘How has the Turkish official discourse constructed the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Democratic Union Party (PYD), and the People's Protection Units (YPG)?’ To respond this question, the analysis revealed certain constructions and narratives regarding the PKK, PYD, and YPG in the context of the dominant Turkish official narrative of terrorism.<sup>180</sup> The analysis critically challenged these constructions and narratives, and discovered that these constructions and narratives have certain functions, and this constituted the response to the third question of the research, which is ‘How did such constructions function in producing particular meanings for events or legitimatising particular actors or policies?’ Both of these questions are mainly responded in chapters 5 and 6 (see Figure 12 above, and Appendix Table 8). As stated earlier, chapter 7 and 8 also contribute in the response to these questions. Chapter 7 and 8 demonstrated that the narrative of terrorism framed the Kurdish question and its solution. In addition, they demonstrated that this narrative functions in legitimizing the Turkish policy regarding the PKK and the other Kurdish movements in particular, and regarding the Kurdish question in general (see Appendix Table 7).

### **The construction of the PKK in the Turkish official discourse**

Although the Turkish official discourse made references regarding the PKK more than the other organizations that are designated as terrorist by the Turkish authorities, it omits the full name of the Kurdistan Workers Party, and this is due to certain ideological considerations. The main

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<sup>180</sup> The research uses both terms ‘construction and narrative’. Both terms have the same semantic indication in the research. However, the research uses both terms to tackle the grammatical indication of each term. The term ‘construction’ usually indicates ‘nominal sentences’ while the term ‘narrative’ usually indicates ‘verbal sentences’.

ideological consideration is related to the term ‘Kurdistan’, which is considered as a taboo in the Turkish nationalist discourse and its usage is punished by the Turkish law.

The analysis highlighted five constructions and narratives regarding the PKK that are framed in the context of the Turkish official narrative of terrorism. These include the following:

a). The PKK is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organization. This construction has two implications. First, it creates the assumption that the PKK doctrine is anti-capitalism like the doctrine of the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist movements that have been designated as terrorist organizations by the US and its allies. This assumption aims at maintaining both the negative attitude of the Western governments regarding the PKK and their designation of the PKK as a terrorist organization. Second, the label of Marxists alongside other terms like ‘Zoroastrians’, and ‘atheists’ are used by the Turkish officials as an indication of devaluing Islam by the PKK militants, and this aims at inciting the antagonism of conservative Muslims in Turkey against the PKK.

b). The PKK is a separatist organization. The terms ‘separatist’ and ‘separatism’ are used in the Turkish official texts to denote the PKK and its action. As stated earlier, the Turkish official discourse considers separatism as a form of terrorism and names it as ‘separatist-terrorism’. Accordingly, the term ‘the separatist-terrorist organization’ is used in the Turkish official texts to denote the PKK. In addition, the terms ‘separatist and separatism’ have no status in the international law unlike the terms of ‘self-determination’ and independence’, and this implies that the goal of the PKK is not legitimate, and that it is an organization that aims at chaos and disintegration.

c). The PKK is an ethnically motivated organization. This construction is used alongside terms like 'the PKK is anti-diversity' in Turkey. Like the construction 'separatist', the terms 'ethnic' implies that the PKK motivations have no status of legitimacy in the international law unlike terms 'nation' and 'people', which are linked in the UN and other international texts to the right of self-determination.

d). The PKK is a group of murderers who target civilians and civic services. This narrative is taking space in the Turkish official texts more than all other narratives. This narrative supports the description of the PKK action as terrorism. In addition, the linguistic structures that are used to describe the PKK as a criminal group aim at creating the sense of condemnation. This narrative is supported by the claim that 'the PKK terrorism resulted in the death of 40 thousand people', which is repeated by the Turkish officials and widely used in the media. Thus, the PKK terrorism is constructed as a reason of the death of such a big number of people similarly to the impacts of an epidemic disease. In addition, the narrative aims at concealing the violent role of the Turkish forces in the conflict although the reports of international human rights organizations emphasize such principal role of the Turkish forces.

e). The PKK is a criminal group involved in the organized crime of international drug-trafficking in order to fund its terrorism. This narrative creates the assumption that that the PKK constitutes a criminal threat against the international community. In particular, it constructs the pro-PKK Kurdish community in Europe as a criminal threat against the European countries. This narrative aims at inciting the European countries to adopt tough measures against the Kurdish community. The narrative also aims at legitimizing the repressive measures and excessive use of force that the Turkish authorities adopted against the Kurds in Turkey.



As stated earlier, the analysis revealed that the construction of the PKK as a terrorist organization and its action as terrorism is not used only to delegitimize the group but also to legitimize the Turkish policy regarding the Kurds and Kurdish question. The latter is elaborated in chapters 7 and 8. The analysis highlighted that during the peace process and following its failure, the narrative of terrorism was dominant, and that the Turkish authorities framed the Kurdish question and its solution according to this narrative. However, the narrative of terrorism was more dominant following the failure of the peace process and it was used as an excuse for the military action and repressive security measures in the Kurdish region of Turkey. In addition, the narrative of terrorism particularly framed the legal Kurdish party of the HDP and was used against its members and other Kurdish activists who faced terrorism related charges. The Turkish official narrative of terrorism has also similar implications regarding the PYD-YPG and the Syrian Kurdish semi-autonomous administration of *Rojava* as discussed below.

### **The construction of the PYD-YPG in the Turkish official discourse**

The analysis of the Turkish official texts regarding the PYD-YPG revealed that the dominant construction in the Turkish official discourse regarding the PYD-YPG is that they are organic parts of the PKK. Accordingly, the texts about the PYD and YPG usually involve the PKK as well. However, the construction of PYD-YPG in the Turkish official narrative of terrorism has three dimensions and each dimension has certain narratives.

A). The first dimension constructs the PYD-YPG as a threat to the national security of Turkey.

This dimension has the following narratives:

a). The PYD-YPG are organic parts of the PKK.

b). The PYD-YPG have been involved in ‘terrorist’ attacks inside Turkey.

- c). The PYD-YPG are used by other countries as proxies against Turkey.
- d). The PYD-YPG separatist goals in Syria constitute a threat against Turkey.

B). The second dimension constructs the PYD-YPG as a security threat against the international community. In particular, the PYD-YPG are constructed as a terrorist threat against the US and European countries although these countries are involved in supporting the YPG in the anti-ISIL campaign.

C). The third dimension constructs the PYD-YPG as a threat against Syria. This dimension consists of two narratives:

- b). The PYD-YPG separatism is a threat to the territorial integrity of Syria.
- c). The PYD-YPG are criminal organizations involved in the ethnic cleansing of Syrians.

The analysis revealed that these constructions and narratives have certain implied messages and they serve certain agendas. The construction of the PYD-YPG as a security threat against Turkey, and particularly the narrative that they are organic parts of the PKK is used to legitimize the frequent attacks against the Syrian Kurdish semi-autonomous cantons of Rojava, and Turkish military interventions in Syria. Whereas, the construction of the PYD-YPG as a threat against the international community and as criminal groups that perpetrated acts of ethnic cleansing is used to internationally delegitimize the PYD-YPG. In particular, these narratives aim at convincing the US and its allies to end their support to the YPG, and to consider the PYD-YPG as terrorist organizations as they did with the PKK. However, as an excuse for the Turkish military intervention in Syria, the Turkish officials also used the narratives of ‘preventing the ethnic cleansing of Syrians by the YPG and protecting the territorial integrity of Syria from the PYD-YPG separatism.

The analysis revealed that two main ideological considerations influenced the Turkish official policy regarding the PYD-YPG and Rojava. The first consideration is related to the concern of the Turkish authorities regarding the influence of the Rojava experience of autonomy on the nationalist aspiration and action of the Kurds in Turkey. The second consideration is related to the enthusiastically secular doctrine of PYD, YPG and Rojava, which constituted an obstacle to the Islamist agendas of the AKP authorities in Syria.

### **The approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure.**

This section constitutes the main points of the response to the second question of the research, which is ‘How did the Turkish authorities construct and deal with the Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure?’ However, this section and the following subsections also contribute in the responses to the three other questions (see Appendix Table 7). This section includes the main findings of analysis regarding the approach of the Turkish authorities during the peace process and following its demise (see Appendix Table 9). The analysis revealed that the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process, which extends from the end of September, 2012 until June, 2015, was pro-peace negotiations and non-military action. However, this approach was impacted to a certain degree by the Kobani crisis. The analysis also highlighted that as the peace process failed following the June 2015 elections, the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question changed, dramatically. This is as the authorities adopted an approach that favoured military action and security measures.

During the peace process, the constructions of ‘brothering discourse’ were part of the pro-peace language of Turkish officials. These constructions were interdiscursively connected to other

constructions of the peace process. Nevertheless, the brothering discursive constructions functioned similarly to the ‘othering’ discursive constructions as they considered the ingroup to be those who were pro-AKP and the outgroup to be those who were at odd with the AKP. The outgroup usually included the PKK, PYD-YPG, HDP-BDP, Kurdish activists and others.

Although the Turkish authorities were conducting peace negotiations with the PKK, they kept labelling the PKK as a terrorist organization and the conflict as an action of terrorism by the PKK. The terrorism constructions are interdiscursively connected to the majority of the constructions and narratives of Turkish authorities during the peace process. The narrative of terrorism even framed the way the Turkish authorities constructed the Kurdish question.

During the peace process, the Turkish authorities carried on denying the existence of the Kurdish question. This is because the term Kurdish question implies a political question of a nation, and this is considered as a taboo in the Turkish nationalist discourse, which denies the exitance of a nation other than the Turkish nation in Turkey. Instead of the term ‘Kurdish question, the Turkish officials usually used terms like ‘problems of the Kurds’ and ‘Kurdish problems’. These Kurdish problems are identified as terrorism and underdevelopment of the south-east Turkey, which is the major part of the Kurdish region in Turkey. However, the PKK terrorism is constructed as the main problem, which also impacted the problem of underdevelopment. Although the AKP authorities acknowledged that Kurds were subject of policies of discrimination, they rendered such policies to the previous governments, and they claimed that they already ended such policies.

The Turkish authorities expected certain outcomes from the peace process. The disarmament of the PKK was the main outcome that the Turkish authorities aimed at achieving. The Turkish

officials also constructed the PKK disarmament as the major subject of the peace process. On the other hand, the Turkish authorities refused the Kurdish demands of autonomy, and stressed on the 'indivisibility' of Turkey. Instead of autonomy, the Turkish authorities used the term 'democratic reforms' as a response to the Kurdish demands. The Turkish authorities adopted some legal reforms, which supported general human rights in Turkey. However, the reforms related to the Kurdish identity were limited to the permission of practicing the Kurdish language as a mother tongue. This is although the Turkish authorities did not include the Kurdish language in the education curriculum. In addition, the Turkish authorities adopted certain laws to protect the Turkish officials who were involved in the peace process. However, such laws did not provide similar protection to the members of the Kurdish parties of BDP and HDP and Kurdish activists who were involved in the peace process.

As stated earlier, the analysis revealed that the peaceful approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question was impacted by the Kobani crisis in October 2014, which caused a lack of confidence and a certain degree of stalemate in the peace process. This is although the Turkish officials continued to express their commitment to the peace process. During the crisis, the Turkish authorities adopted repressive measures against the pro-Kobani demonstrators. In addition, the Turkish authorities adopted certain laws that empowered the authority of the police and security forces at the expense of the rights of individuals and political groups.

Nevertheless, it was during the stalling of the peace process when the Turkish authorities and HDP deputies who represented the Kurds declared the peace agreement of Dolmabahce. Although the Dolmabahce articles are vague, the agreement was an important incident as it revealed the political character of the peace process by admitting that it was between two

partners including the Turkish authorities and the HDP as the representative of Kurds. Before this agreement, the Turkish authorities avoided to refer to the political role of the representatives of Kurds and to the political character of the peace process. They usually constructed the peace process as a process of ending terrorism and conducting democratic reforms.

### **The elections and voting agendas of AKP**

The analysis highlights that election and voting agendas of Erdogan and the AKP influenced the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the peace process and the Kurdish question. The analysis highlights two major stages of such influence of elections and voting agendas (see Figure 13). The first stage was before the June 2015 elections, and the second stage was following the June 2015 elections.

### **The stage of pre-June 2015 elections**

The analysis revealed that before the June 2015 elections, and particularly during the elections campaign, the peace process was used by the AKP leadership as a tool to win votes in the elections. Relevant academic sources argue that Erdogan and the AKP wished of the peace process to gain the Kurdish votes. However, such sources overlook that Erdogan and the AKP authorities also wished for the votes of the majority Turks. This is as they aimed at disarming the PKK and ending its rebellion, which has been desired by the majority of Turks. For this reason, the Turkish authorities emphasized on the disarmament of the PKK as the key condition for adopting the Dolmabahce agreement. However, disarmament was not possible to achieve because the PKK had no enough confidence in the intentions of the Turkish authorities.

This led to the failure of the AKP in securing the majority that it sought in the elections of June 2015. Such a majority would enable the AKP to call for the referendum to change the ruling system of Turkey by changing the constitution. Furthermore, the AKP lost a several constituencies to the HDP who was able to enter the Turkish parliament, and this was the first time in the history of Turkey for a Kurdish party to enter the Turkish parliament. For the AKP leadership the results of the elections were an indicator of the failure of the peace process, which the AKP leadership mainly used to consolidate its power.

### **The stage of post-June 2015 elections**

The analysis revealed that the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question changed dramatically following the June 2015 elections. Following the elections, Erdogan planned to go for snap elections appealing to the votes of the nationalist Turks, and accordingly, he employed a new rhetoric that appeased the Turkish nationalist sentiments. The latter favoured tough policy against the PKK and Kurdish nationalism. Erdogan announced the failure of the peace process in July 2015. This was preceded by launching a new military campaign against the PKK. The Turkish authorities also imposed curfews in several Kurdish provinces. Simultaneously, the Turkish authorities adopted a tough approach against the HDP. The military action and repressive policies of the Turkish authorities resulted in violations of human rights. However, the AKP managed to win the majority in the snap elections of November 2015. Reports of international institutions accused the Turkish authorities of abusing the elections in the Kurdish provinces where they imposed curfews and exceptional military measures.

The same approach continued to serve the agenda of the April, 2017 referendum to change the constitution. On 27 December, 2015 the HDP leadership and other representatives of Kurds

declared autonomy in the Kurdish region of Turkey. Erdogan and the AKP leadership found the Kurdish declaration of autonomy as another opportunity to show themselves as the guardians of the indivisibility of Turkey and Turkish nationalism, and this was the tool to win the votes of nationalist Turks in the referendum of changing the constitution. Accordingly, the Turkish authorities voiced highly against autonomy and adopted further military and security measures in the Kurdish region of Turkey. This matched the ideology of ultranationalist Turkish party of MHP who stood by the AKP in the parliament in passing the referendum proposal, which gained enough public votes in April, 2017, and the AKP managed to change the ruling system of Turkey from parliamentary to presidential.

The Turkish authorities constructed the Kurdish declaration of autonomy as an action of separatist-terrorism by the PKK. Accordingly, they constructed the military and security campaign against the Kurdish autonomy as a campaign against the PKK terrorism. The campaign resulted in large-scale armed violence and flagrant violations of human rights. Large parts of the Kurdish cities and towns were demolished and hundreds of thousands of civilian Kurds were forcibly displaced by the Turkish military. In addition, the Turkish authorities detained the representatives of Kurds and thousands of Kurdish civic activists who faced ‘terrorism’ related charges.

During and following the campaign against the Kurdish autonomy in Turkey, the Turkish authorities expressed antagonism against Rojava and conducted military attacks against it. The Turkish officials omitted any reference connecting the Syrian Kurdish autonomy to the Kurdish nationalism. Instead, the Turkish officials constructed the Syrian Kurdish autonomy as ‘a source of PKK terrorism’ as they constructed the Kurdish project of autonomy in Turkey. The Turkish officials used terms like ‘corridor of terrorism’ and ‘camps of terrorism’ to construct



the Syrian Kurdish semi-autonomous cantons of Rojava. In other words, the Syrian Kurdish autonomy was constructed as a source of terrorism and a threat to the national security of Turkey. Accordingly, the Turkish authorities constructed the attacks of Turkish military against the Syrian Kurdish autonomy as part of the operations of countering the PKK terrorism and protecting Turkey's national security.

### **The approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the HDP, BDP and civic Kurdish activists**

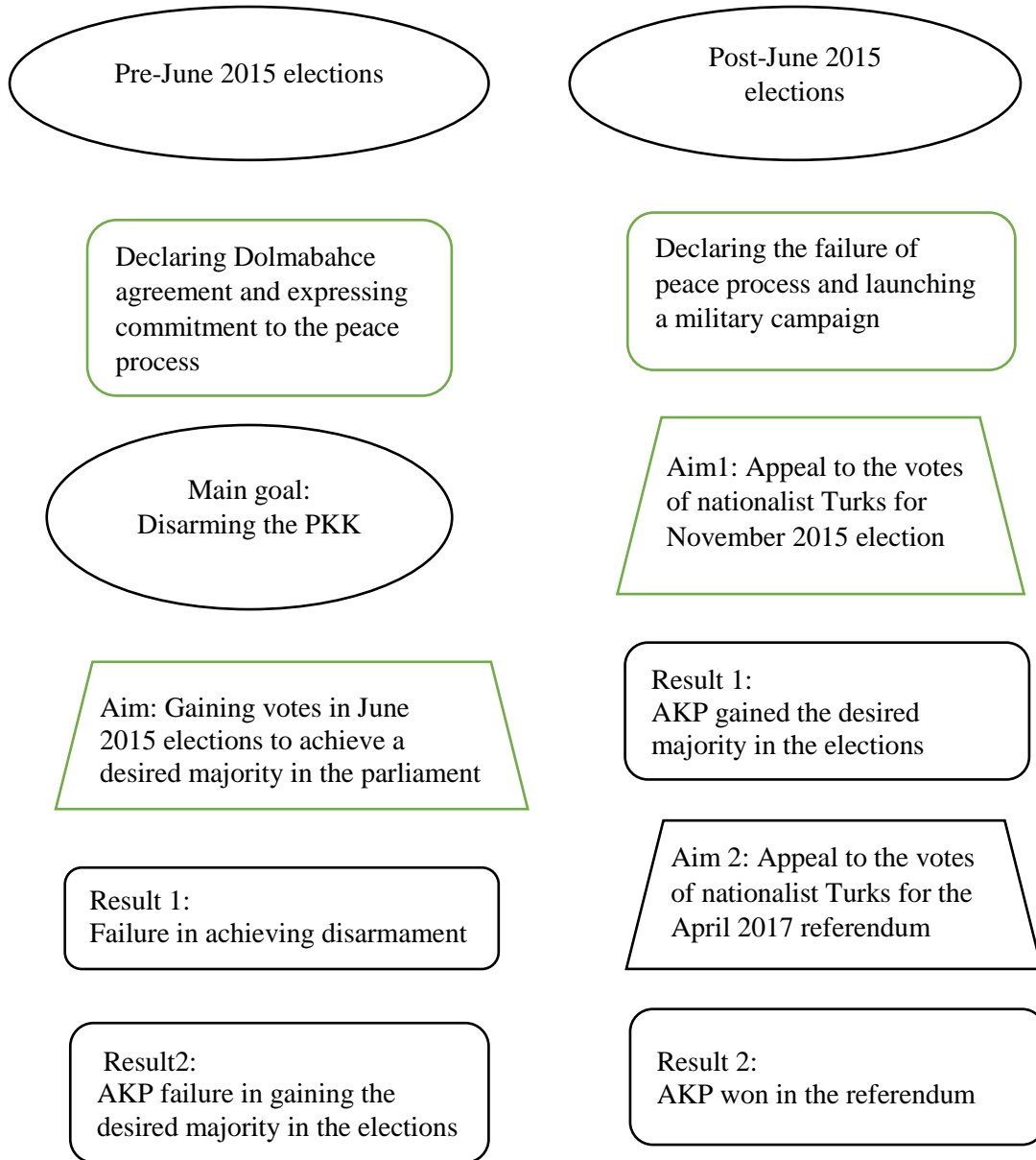
This is a subsection for the main section above, which deals with the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question. This subsection gathers the main points of the response to the fourth question, which is 'How did these constructions interact with the way that the Turkish authorities dealt with the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and civic Kurdish activists in Turkey?'

As stated earlier, the legal Kurdish parties of HDP, BDP and other Kurdish activists were constructed as 'supporters of terrorism' in the Turkish official texts even during the peace process. This is although the Turkish officials acknowledged that the BDP and HDP played a significant role in conveying messages related to the peace negotiations between Ocalan, the PKK leadership in Qandil and the public in Turkey. As stated earlier, the HDP entered the Dolmabahce agreement with the Turkish authorities and this made the HDP a political interlocuter and partner in the peace process for the first time.

However, the construction of 'supporter of terrorism' was more frequently used against the HDP and civic Kurdish activists following the demise of the peace process. As Erdogan declared the failure of the peace process in July 2015, the AKP authorities launched a campaign

against the HDP. Erdogan and the AKP officials used the narrative of terrorism to incite the Turkish public against the HDP. This resulted in several arson attacks against the HDP offices in the Turkish cities by nationalist Turks. However, the repressive measures against the HDP and other Kurdish groups and activists peaked after declaring autonomy. Following the declaration of autonomy, the majority of HDP deputies in the Turkish parliament, Kurdish mayors and officials of municipalities, journalists, and thousands of HDP and BDP members and other civic Kurdish activists were detained by the Turkish authorities and faced terrorism related charges.

**Figure 13. The relationship between the elections and voting agendas of the AKP and the change of its approach regarding the peace process and the Kurdish question.**



## **Main features of the analysed texts in the light of the concepts of critical discourse analysis (CDA).**

Findings of the research reflected certain features of the Turkish official texts. These features match the concepts of CDA, which are highlighted in the framework of analysis (see chapter 3). These include the influence of historical events on changing discourse, interdiscursivity, and the semantic and grammatical structures that serve bias and ideology. This is discussed in the following points.

First, the influence of certain historical events on changing discourse. Scholars of critical discourse analysis emphasize that discourses are not fixed entities, but they change according to social and historical conditions (Wodak, 2001a, 2001b; Van Dijk, 2001; Fairclough, 2003). However, they also highlight that discourses are not evolving progressively. Critical discourse analysts agree the Foucauldian perspective that discourses are subject to contingent changes according to certain historical events (Foucault, 1972, 1984; Wodak, 1996, 2001b). The major discursive change that this research revealed is represented in the change of the approach of the Turkish authorities from pro-peace and non-military action to pro-military action and repressive measures (see chapter 8). The research revealed that the dramatic change in the language and policy of the Turkish authorities occurred after the June 2015 elections. Thus, the June 2015 elections constituted the major event that influenced this change. In addition, the events that followed the June elections including the declaration of autonomy in December, 2015 and the April, 2017 referendum led to the adoption of further repressive approach.

Second, interdiscursivity. Fairclough (2003: 35) underlined the importance of revealing the interdiscursive aspects of texts as he stated that “the analysis of interdiscursive hybridity in texts provides a potentially valuable resource for enhancing research based upon these

perspectives, offering a level of detailed analysis which is not achievable within other methods”. The analysis revealed several types of interdiscursivity between various constructions of the Turkish official texts. However, the interdiscursive relationship between the constructions of terrorism and other constructions is dominant. For example, during the peace process, the constructions of terrorism were connected to the constructions of the brothering discourse, non-military action, underdevelopment, democratic reforms, and anti-autonomy (see figure 9). The analysis also revealed that following the failure of the peace process, the constructions of terrorism were more frequent in the Turkish official texts and were interdiscursively connected to the constructions that favoured military action and repressive measures.

Third, the grammatic and semantic structures of text that serve bias and ideological implications. Revealing the structures of text that serve bias and ideology is considered by critical discourse analysts as a principal goal of CDA. Wodak (2001a: 10) states that “one of the aims of CDA is to ‘demystify’ discourses by deciphering ideologies”. CDA emphasizes that ideological features of text are related to power relations, domination and exploitation (Fairclough, 2003: 218). There are various semantic and grammatical structures that explicitly or implicitly serve bias and ideology. However, the major structures that served bias and ideology in the Turkish official texts include ‘creating assumption’, ‘the othering constructions’, ‘omitting certain information’, and ‘using certain lexicons and rhetorical figures’. These are discussed below:

a). Creating assumptions. Assumption is an abstracted description of certain phenomenon and constructing it as a reality that is taken-for granted (Fairclough, 1995: 2). Fairclough (2003) highlights that assumptions are usually implicit. However, assumptions depend on oppressing

or keeping untold the details that reflect different views (Fairclough, 2003: 41, 55-60). Thus, assumption depends on hiding certain information that contradict with the claim of text producer. However, in order to create an assumption, the text producer tries to make the recipient considers the account of the text as an unquestionable reality (Locke, 2004: 59-60).

The analysis revealed that assumptions dominated the way the Turkish official texts constructed the PKK and PYD-YPG. For example, the construction of the PKK as a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist organization forms the assumption that the PKK is an anti-capitalist organization although the PKK is a national liberation movement and not a communist organization (MFA, n. d., e). Another example is the construction of the PKK as a criminal group that is involved in international drug trafficking although the Turkish texts do not provide reliable evidence for this claim (MFA, n.d., e). Likewise, the Turkish official texts build certain assumptions against the PYD-YPG. For example, the Turkish official texts construct the PYD-YPG as internationally designated terrorist groups and compare them to ISIL and other Jihadist groups that have conducted suicide attacks in several countries (BYEGM, 29 March, 2016; BBC Monitoring, 27 March, 2016). This is although the PYD-YPG are not internationally designated terrorist organisations, and on the contrary, the PYD-YPG have been part of the international campaign against ISIL.

b). The othering constructions, or the othering discourse (Bartolucci, 2010: 123). Hansen (2006:33-34) describes the ‘othering process’ as the formation of the identity of ‘the self’ through the construction of the identity of ‘the other’. As explained earlier, the othering constructions serve ideology as they form a dichotomy between the in-group, or ‘we’ and the out-group, or ‘they’, which serves the positive presentation of the ingroup and the negative presentation of the outgroup (Van Dijk, 2006b: 126).

The analysis revealed that the Turkish official texts employed the othering constructions against the PKK, BDP, HDP and others who were at odd with the AKP and Erdogan. The analysis highlighted that the ‘brothering constructions’ that Erdogan and other Turkish official used aimed at creating the assumption that the Kurds were in favour of the AKP and its ideology. However, the brothering discourse functions as the othering discourse. This is as the brothering constructions demarcate the boundaries between ‘we’ or the in-group of the AKP and those who supported it and the out-group or ‘they’ that denotes those were at odd with the AKP.

c). Omitting certain information. This technique is practiced in order to hide certain information or to oppress certain views, which contradict with the interests of text producer (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 2006b; Mayr 2008). The analysis revealed that the Turkish official texts omit the full name of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and this is due to ideological considerations. In particular, the term ‘Kurdistan’ is considered as a taboo in both Turkish law and nationalist discourse. The Turkish official texts also omit the involvement of the Turkish military and security forces in the armed violence and violations against human rights. This is described by Van Dijk (2001: 107) as omitting the agent of negative action. Furthermore, the majority of Turkish official texts omit reference to the conflict itself, and instead they construct it as a phenomenon of terrorism perpetrated by one party; the PKK. Omitting relevant information is also discerned in the Turkish official texts about the PYD-YPG such as omitting any details about the political goals and agendas of PYD-YPG, which are dissimilar to these of the PKK. Omitting information in this case serves the construction of the PYD-YPG as organic parts of the PKK.

d). Using certain lexicons and rhetorical figures (Van Dijk, 2006: 126). These include metaphors, hyperboles, euphemisms, and other lexicons that serve the negative presentation of the PKK and other Kurdish movements. As explained earlier, metaphor is a term or phrase, which is located in an unusual setting, and it targets the emotional cognition of the recipient of text to make them accept its message (Bhatia, 2009: 280). The Turkish official texts used metaphors such as “blood sucking vampires” to describe the PKK (BBC Monitoring, 11 June, 2014), and “the snake” that “can bite” to describe the PYD-YPG (BBC Monitoring, 27 March, 2016).

Hyperboles and euphemisms also aim at exerting certain influence over the cognition of recipient to accept the message of text (Van Dijk, 2006, 2006a, 2006b). While hyperboles are represented in structures of exaggerations, euphemisms are reflected in structures that aim at alleviating the negative impacts of certain action. An example of hyperbole in the Turkish official texts is Erdogan’s statement that the Turkish government spent “35 quadrillion [old] Turkish lira” in investments in the south-east (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012), and an example of euphemism is the usage of the term “integration” to describe the forced assimilation of Kurds (MFA, n. d., e).

The analysis also revealed that in addition to the terms and structures of terrorism such as ‘terrorist’ and ‘supporter of terrorist organization’, the Turkish official texts contain various lexicons that aim at creating the sense of condemnation and criminalization against the PKK, PYD-YPG and HDP. For example, the terms and structures “murderers”, “lowlifes”, “bloodstained”, and “enemies of humanity, democracy and freedom” are used against the PKK and PYD-YPG (BBC Monitoring, October, 2012; 10 November, 2014; 27 March, 2016), and the terms and structures like “vandals”, “who turn blind eye to murders”, and “make children



orphans” are used against the HDP (BYEGM, 9 October, 2014; BBC Monitoring, 11 June, 2014).

### **Recommendations**

Overgeneralization in understanding certain social or political phenomena usually stem from using a single concept to collectively identify more than one phenomenon regardless of their different characteristics. This is the case of the concept of terrorism, which is used in the mainstream studies to describe various cases of armed action and various armed groups regardless of the differences in their characteristics, motivations and methods of action. The research revealed the importance of the critical study of the characteristics of each case of conflict in order to avoid overgeneralization.

The research demonstrated that the narrative of terrorism and its associated constructions are usually used by the authorities of states as a tool to delegitimize certain non-state actors and their causes, and to legitimize the policies that the authorities adopt against such non-state actors and against their wider communities. In the case of this research, such delegitimization targeted not only the PKK, PYD-YPG but also the Kurdish question and Kurdish legal parties and civic activists, and likewise the terrorism narrative functioned as a tool for the legitimization of the relevant repressive policies of the Turkish authorities.

The research demonstrated the need for an in-depth research on a definition for ‘terrorism’ in the light of international law and norms. The researcher acknowledges that such kind of research is quite difficult to accomplish since there are no universal criteria to define terrorism. However, such type of research is particularly important as the absence of a universal definition

of terrorism has caused the exacerbation of the suffering of human beings in several parts of the world.

The researcher suggests that certain international codes could be the point of departure in establishing the criteria that identify certain form of armed violence as illegitimate or 'terrorism'. Important examples of such codes that identify certain acts as illegitimate violence during war and peace are the Geneva conventions of 1949 and their additional protocols, and the 1988 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICRC 2010; ICC, 2002). Such research would be promising if it also considers the internationally warrantied texts, which identify the right of subjugated nations to self-determination and recognise the characteristics of legitimate 'armed struggle' of national liberation such as the 3103 UN Resolution of 1973 (UN General Assembly, December, 1973).<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> See also Achour (2009) and Moltchanova (2009).

## Appendices

### Appendix table 6. List of Turkish officials

This list is for the main Turkish official who have more than one statement in the chapters of analysis. This list helps avoiding repetition in writing the positions of these officials. The researcher also uses the acronyms PM and FM instead of the terms Turkish prime-minster and foreign minster.<sup>182</sup>

Name	Position	Duration of holding the position
Abdullah Gul	President of Turkey	28 August 2007- 28 August, 2014
Recep Tayyip Erdogan <sup>183</sup>	Prime-minster of Turkey	14 March 2003 – 28 August 2014
	President of Turkey	28 August 2014 to date
Ahmet Davutoglu	Minister of foreign affairs	1 May 2009 to 29 August 2014
	Prime-minster	28 August 2014 - 22 May 2016
Binali Yildirim	Prime-minster	24 May, 2016-9 July, 2018
Ibrahim Kalin	Spokesman (or press-secretary) of the Turkish president	11 December 2014 to date
Yalcin Akdogan	Advisor of prime-minster (Erdogan) then deputy of the prime-minster (Davutoglu)	During the peace process until 24 May 2016
Mevlut Cavusoglu	Minister of foreign affairs	29 August 2014 to date
Basir Atalay <sup>184</sup>	Advisor of the prime-minster and later deputy of the prime-minster.	14 July 2011 – 29 August 2014
Bulent Arinc	Deputy of the prime-minster	1 May 2009 – 28 August 2015
Hatem Ete	Advisor of the prime-minster	September 2014-May 2016

<sup>182</sup> The list highlights the positions of these officials during the period that the research covers. However, these positions demonstrate that they were all high-ranking officials.

<sup>183</sup> Erdogan made more statements about the Kurdish issue than any other Turkish official, and accordingly, he has more statements in this research.

<sup>184</sup> Basir Ataly was also Turkey's minister of interior between 28 August 2007 – 14 July 2011.

**Appendix Table 7. The main themes of the responses to the research questions**

Subject of enquiry and main themes of the response
<p><b>Response 1: Turkish official constructions regarding the PKK, PYD and YPG.</b></p> <p>Constructions and narratives regarding the PKK, and PYD-YPG in the contexts of the Turkish official narrative of terrorism:</p> <p><b>A). PKK:</b></p> <p>a). Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist, b). Separatist, c). Ethnically motivated, c). A group of murderers who target civilians and civil services, d). A criminal group involved in international drug-trafficking.</p> <p><b>B). PYD-YPG</b></p> <p><b>A).</b> Threat to the national security of Turkey: a). Organic parts of the PKK, b). Involved in terrorist attacks in Turkey, c). Used as proxies by other countries against Turkey, d). Their separatist threat to the Syrian territory is a threat to Turkey.</p> <p><b>B).</b> They constitute a security threat against the international community. In particular, they are a terrorist threat against the EU and US.</p> <p><b>C).</b> They are a threat against Syria:</p> <p>a). They are a threat to the territorial integrity of Syria. b). They have perpetrated ethnic cleansing against Syrians.</p>
<p><b>Response 2: Approach of Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure.</b></p> <p><b>A).</b> During the peace process: Pro-peace and non-military approach.</p> <p>This is although the Kobani crisis left impacts on the peace process</p> <p><b>B).</b> following the failure of the peace process: AKP adopted an approach that favoured military action and security measures.</p> <p><b>Relationship between the approach of the AKP authorities and their elections and voting agendas:</b></p> <p><b>A).</b> Pre-June 2015 elections. The Turkish authorities expressed their commitment to the peace process. The agenda that this approach served aimed at winning the voted of both Kurds and Turks by progressing in the peace process and achieving the disarmament of the PKK.</p> <p><b>B).</b> Post-June 2015 elections. As the AKP was not able to secure the majority that it sought, its authorities abandoned the peace process and adopted military action and security</p>

measures. This approach served the AKP agenda of winning the votes of nationalist Turks in the snap elections of November 2015, and later in the referendum to change the constitution in April, 2017.

**Response 3: Function of the terrorism constructions**

*Regarding the PKK and PYD-YPG*

- A). Delegitimizing: PKK, PYD-YPG and their action.
- B). Legitimizing: The Turkish policy against the PKK and PYD-YPG.

*Regarding the Kurdish question and its solution*

- A). Denial of the Kurdish question. Instead, usually terms like Kurdish problems. These include: a). Terrorism by the PKK, b). Underdevelopment of the Kurdish region impacted by the PKK terrorism.
- B). Disarmament of PKK is the main step to solve the Kurdish problem.
- C). Military and security measures are part of the counter-terrorism policy.
- D). Kurdish autonomies in Turkey and Syria are an action of terrorism by the PKK and they are also sources of PKK terrorism. Therefore, Turkish military and security action against Kurdish autonomy in Turkey and Syria are part of the counter-terrorism policy.

**Response 4: Interconnection of constructions and approach regarding HDP and civic Kurdish activists.**

- A). During the peace process: HDP and BDP were part of the peace process but were also constructed as ‘supporters of terrorism’.
- B). Following the failure of the peace process: a). HDP and civic Kurdish activists were more frequently constructed as ‘supporters of terrorism’.
- b). Turkish authorities adopted an anti-HDP campaign. c). Following the declaration of autonomy: HDP deputies, Kurdish mayor and thousands of HDP members and other civic activists and journalists were detained and faced detention and terrorism related charges.

**Appendix Table 8. Constructions and narratives used against the PKK, PYD and YPG in the context of the Turkish official narrative of terrorism.**

<p><b>PKK</b></p> <p>Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist</p> <p>Separatist</p> <p>Ethnically motivated</p> <p>A group of murderers who target civilians and civic services</p> <p>Involved in international drug trafficking</p>
<p><b>PYD-YPG</b></p> <p><b>A).</b> They constitute a threat to the national security of Turkey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Organic parts of the PKK</li><li>- Involved in ‘terrorist’ attacks inside Turkey</li><li>- Used by other countries as proxies against Turkey</li><li>- Their separatist goal in Syria is a threat against Turkey.</li></ul> <p><b>B).</b> They constitute a security threat against the international community. In particular, they constitute a terrorist threat against the EU and US.</p> <p><b>C).</b> They are a threat against Syria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- They are a threat to the territorial integrity of Syria</li><li>- They perpetrated an ethnic cleansing of Syrians</li></ul>

**Appendix Table 9. Major themes of the approach of the Turkish authorities regarding the Kurdish question during the peace process and following its failure.**

**During the peace process (September, 2012-June, 2015)**

- . Rhetoric of pro-peace and non-military action.
  - . Brothering discursive constructions, which also function as othering constructions.
  - . Denial of Kurdish questions. Instead, problems of Kurds: Terrorism and underdevelopment impacted by terrorism.
- Outcomes that the Turkish authorities expected from the peace process and their response to the Kurdish demands:
- . Disarmament of the PKK.
  - . Refusing the Kurdish autonomy.
  - . Adopting limited reforms named ‘democratic reforms’.

**The Kobani crisis led to a certain degree of stalemate in the peace process**

During the crisis, the Turkish authorities adopted certain security measures and laws. This was also the beginning of anti-PYD-YPG rhetoric. The Turkish authorities carried on expressing commitment to the peace process. Declaring the Dolmabahce agreement.

**Following the failure of the peace process (following the elections of June 2015)**

Adopting a pro-military approach.  
Anti-HDP approach.  
AKP gained the desired majority in the November 2015 elections.  
Anti-Autonomy campaign.  
Large-scale violations of human rights.  
AKP succeeded in the April 2017 referendum of changing the constitution.

## Appendix Texts of TMFA 1-7. Texts of Turkish Ministry of foreign affairs

The following are texts by the Turkish ministry of foreign affairs, which were published in the website of the ministry in the section ‘terrorism’. Reference details are under each text. These texts are copied from their original sources.

### Text 1

.....

#### Terrorism

Turkey’s Contributions to International Community’s Efforts to Fight Terrorism

Turkey’s Contributions to Anti-Deash Coalition

Turkey’s Contributions in the Fight Against Drug Trafficking

PKK

DHKP-C

Fight Against FETÖ and July 15 Coup Attempt

.....

MFA. (n. d., a). Terrorism. *Republic of Turkey-Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.en.mfa?b5f54c11-33be-4b40-aa34-a54d719a0fa3> [accessed: 23 May, 2017].



## Text 2

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### **Turkey's Contributions to International Community's Efforts to Fight Terrorism**

Turkey has been countering terrorism in different forms and manifestations for decades, from the ethnic separatist PKK terrorism, and the leftist DHKPC to religiously motivated terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and DAESH, as well as "17 November" "ASALA" terrorist organizations.

The call for international cooperation is not just a rhetoric or an academic interest for Turkey: The terrorist groups targeting our country have been operating across national borders: Running training camps, acquiring financial resources, operating media outlets to disseminate their propaganda and glorify their vicious acts, abroad. Perpetrators of terrorist crimes, their mentors and financiers have been able to escape justice and travel freely. Our own struggle against this menace has thought us the crucial lesson that we cannot succeed in our counterterrorism efforts in the absence of solid international cooperation.

Accordingly, Turkey has been on the forefront of efforts to increase awareness of the international community on the threat of terrorism. We have worked hard bilaterally and at the various international platforms to create mechanisms for more effective counterterrorism measures.

Turkey has all along been underlining that:

-Terrorism poses major threat to international peace and security and regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed, all acts of terrorism are unjustified.

-There should be increased cooperation between states on the basis of the "extradite or prosecute" principle, in order to deny any safe haven to terrorists.

- International community should not discriminate between terrorist organizations and must act with equal determination in preventing, suppressing, pursuing and prosecuting all terrorist groups, their members and activities.

-Any attempt to affiliate terrorism with any religion or ethnic group is utterly wrong and would in fact play into the hands of terrorists.

The growing threat of terrorism in the past years revealed even more the importance of international cooperation. What we are being faced today is unprecedented. There is a drastic proliferation of terrorist groups all around the world that possess enhanced capacity to inflict much serious physical damage on us, and ever-increasing ability to disseminate their "narratives" and to lure disillusioned young people to commit heinous forms of violence. Hardly a day goes by without an act of terrorism taking place somewhere in the world, indiscriminately affecting innocent people, who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. As such, terrorism has become a truly global and rapidly evolving threat. The very phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters is a very disturbing illustration of this reality. To address this growing threat, effective, nimble and coordinated global response has become a must.

The good news is that, international solidarity and collective capabilities against this transnational threat has been enhanced considerably. International community owes this particularly to the United Nations. By virtue of its universal representation and capacity to interlink various aspects in addressing terrorism, the United Nations is playing the central role in garnering a global response to this scourge.

It is very important that we have now a global legal framework, criminalizing terrorist acts and obliging member states to cooperate in suppressing various aspects of terrorism: To this date, eighteen universal instruments against terrorism have been put in force relating to specific terrorist activities.

Moreover, the Security Council has also been active in countering terrorism through resolutions, in particular 1267 (and ensuing resolutions) and 1373, and by establishing several subsidiary bodies.

At the same time a number of programmes, offices and agencies of the United Nations system have been engaged in specific activities against terrorism, further assisting Member States in building effective counterterrorism capacities.

One should also highlight the UN Counter Terrorism Strategy, adopted in 2006. Based on four main pillars, the Strategy marks the first time that all Member States of the United Nations have agreed to a common strategic and operational framework, to fight terrorism, committed by whomsoever, wherever and for whatever purposes.

Turkey has been playing an active role in the development of a universal legal framework under the UN system. Accordingly, Turkey has become a party to all UN counterterrorism instruments. We strongly support the Global Strategy and implement UN Security Council Resolutions in a determined manner.

Turkey has also initiated, together with the US, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, and has cochaired this body between September 2011- April 2016. Turkey also cochaurs the Horn of Africa Working Group within the GCTF together with the EU.

Turkey is an active member of the Anti-Deash Coalition and is co-leading the FTF working group within this coalition.

Turkey is also a member of the FATF, the global anti-money laundering/countering terrorist financing body. Turkey is constantly reviewing legislation as well as implementation on countering terrorist financing, in order to be fully compliant with the FATF recommendations. Turkey has also co-led, together with the US, in preparing the report on ISIL financing in 2015 within the FATF. Turkey's Financial Intelligence Unit (MASAK) operates in cooperation and coordination with the law enforcement authorities and prosecutors at the national level. MASAK also cooperates with other FIU's through EGMONT Group and actively contributes to the efforts of the FATF. Turkey has created the legal framework in line with the FATF recommendations in order to implement effectively UNSC resolutions 1267 and 1373, which calls for criminalizing terrorist financing and freezing terrorist assets.

Over the years, Turkey made bilateral agreements with more than over 70 countries around the world in the field of counterterrorism. These agreements provide the legal basis for bilateral

cooperation against illegal entities including terrorist organization and facilitate exchange of information among the relevant agencies.

Moreover, Turkey is also an active contributor to counter terrorism capacity-building programmes of several states around the world. Counterterrorism Department, established in 1986 within the General Directorate of Turkish National Police, contributes significantly to building better international cooperation in the field of counterterrorism by organizing trainings with various countries. International trainings courses covers topics such as counterterrorism basic training, radicalization process leading to terrorism and preventive measures, public awareness and prevention activities, combating terrorist organizations abusing religion, crisis management in terrorist attacks, suicide attacks and preventive strategies, investigation process, combating the financing of terrorism. Turkish National Police is also organizing other training programmes in various aspects of the law enforcement work. Between 1997-2015 Turkish National Police provided training to around 26.000 law enforcement officials from 62 countries.

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### **Text 3**

#### **Turkey's Contributions to Anti-Deash Coalition**

Since its formation, Turkey has been actively participating activities of the anti-DEASH coalition which specified five lines of effort to degrade the capabilities of, and ultimately defeat DEASH. A diverse group of countries from across the globe have embarked on persistent and comprehensive approach. In that regard, members of the anti-DEASH Coalition have made significant progress to degrading DEASH on the battle field, challenged them in the media, cut their funding and recruitment, and stabilize the territories they have left devastated.

It has been fundamental to anti-DEASH Coalition to degrade and defeat DEASH through denying safe haven and building up military capacity. Within this context, Turkey;

- has participated in the Coalition Campaign military planning from day one,
- has declared its national contributions to the Coalition as part of the Campaign Plan as of February 2015,
- has allowed its airspace to be used by Coalition aircraft for both combat and noncombat roles, including intelligence gathering, personnel recovery,
- has opened its facilities to the US and other Coalition partners, allowing over 60 aircraft with over 1200 personnel to be deployed to support operations, for counter-DEASH operations in Syria and Iraq,
- has been hitting DEASH targets since the beginning through air, artillery and other assets,
- has actively been hosting the Train-Equip Program,
- only since January this year, hit 487 DEASH targets eliminating at least 86 DEASH terrorists,
- has developed plans to clear DEASH from our borders, and these efforts will continue.

Turkey has also put in place a broad array of mechanisms to disrupt or stop the flow of foreign fighters. Turkey is continuously enhancing security measures to stop and intercept foreign terrorist fighters at airports and other border crossing points through Risk Analysis Units established specifically for this purpose. Turkey has begun to counter threat of foreign terrorist fighters since 2011 and called for source countries to take necessary legal and administrative measures to prevent departure and travel of FTFs from their countries. In this regard, Turkey, as of February 2016, has included about 37.000 foreigners in the no entry list since the Syrian crisis erupted. More than 3.000 foreigners were deported since 2011 in the context of measures against foreign fighters.

Within the context of anti-DEASH coalition, Turkey is cochairing Counter ISIL Coalition Working Group on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (WGFTF) which focuses on supporting and encouraging actions that directly complement and support Coalition efforts to degrade and ultimately defeat DEASH in Syria and Iraq. At the same time, Turkey, in the context of WG's plan including nine strand of action assumed to lead "promote intensified and accelerated exchange of actionable information on FTF travel, facilitating effective communication channels and points of contacts between Coalition members" and in that respect an international meeting was held in Ankara on 2324 November 2015. Results of this meeting is shared with the members of the Coalition.

Turkey, in line with the Security Council resolutions 2178(2014) and 2199(2015) has launched a comprehensive strategy and took effective measures to combat DEASH's finances and disrupt and prevent the terrorist organization from raising, moving and using

funds. Turkey co-led a FATF typology project on DEASH with the US. Turkey also takes part in the Working Group on counter financing. At the same time, as an active member of FATF, Turkish Financial Intelligence Unit (MASAK) also cooperates with other FIUs.

Turkey, along with its 911 kilometers land border with Syria and 331 kilometers with Iraq employs effective and robust measures to prevent smuggling activities. Turkey conducts a zero-tolerance policy regarding illegal cross-border activities.

Actually, oil smuggling along Turkey's southeastern borders is not a new phenomenon. Turkey has been victimized by this phenomenon for decades, losing millions in tax revenue, and the Government has been actively fighting oil smuggling and the use of smuggled oil in gas stations all around the country through inspections and enhanced legislation, in particular since the beginning of the 2000s. In this context, the Anti-Smuggling Law was adopted in 2003, and a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry was set up in 2005 to investigate oil smuggling, which led to the revision of the Petroleum Market Law in 2006. In 2012, the Action Plan on Countering Oil Smuggling was revised. A Circular Order (2012/19) by Prime Ministry for enhanced measures were introduced. A legislation was passed on April 11, 2013, which increased the penalties for smuggling of oil as well as the sale of smuggled oil in gas stations in the country.

After the beginning of the Syrian crisis, in response to increasing lawlessness at the other side of the borders, Turkish law enforcement and security forces stepped up their efforts to counter all threats to our security including smuggling activities stemming from Syria.

These enhanced measures targeting smuggling networks were introduced in 2012, and preceded the capture of two major oil fields in Syria and Iraq by DEASH in June and July 2014 and months before the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2170 in August 2014 and 2199 in February 2015 respectively.

Turkey, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 2199 (2015) regularly provides information to the UN Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee about the incidents of smuggled oil and amount of oil seized in the border area with Syria and Iraq although the link between material seized and DEASH or ANF terrorist groups cannot be established. Due to enhanced and effective border security measures amount of smuggled oil is decreased considerably. This is clear indication of Turkey's determination to fight any illicit trade activity across our borders.

While in 2014, 79 million liters (21 million gallons) of smuggled oil was intercepted by the Turkish law enforcement and customs authorities all over Turkey, in 2015 this amount decreased to 1,22 million liters (322,289 gallons) due to effective measures taken to prevent oil smuggling. On the other hand, amount of intercepted smuggled oil at Syrian border which was 12,6 million liters in 2014 decreased to 887 thousand liters in 2015. Within the context of counter measures 300 kilometers of illegal pipelines, which are often little more than hoses used for oil smuggling across the Syrian border, were destroyed.

Turkey employs effective and enhanced measures for border security. Within this context;

- Only two border gates are operating at Syrian border area and no vehicle transit is allowed. Goods, not subject to UN sanctions, are unloaded at zero point and delivered to the other side of the border after customs check.
- Measures at the Turkish-Syria and Turkish-Iraq borders are enhanced by additional personnel, patrols and equipment.
- Overall land borders of Turkey (with Iran, Bulgaria, Greece, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iraq and Syria) are secured by 50.000 military personnel. Within the framework of enhanced security measures at Syrian border, number of the personnel of the existing 12 Border Battalions which was 12.000 in 2104, has been increased to 20.000.
- New units of air defense and reconnaissance have been added to the battalions.
- 90 percent of the operations of unmanned air vehicles are focused in Syrian border area to detect illegal crossing and smuggling activities.
- Turkey has also strengthened physical security measures along its 911 kilometers border with Syria. Within this context, Turkey is in the process of establishment of “Syrian border physical security system” which includes construction of 192 kilometers of wall and 93 kilometers part of the said wall has already been completed. This project is expected to cost 81 million US Dollars. At the same time the number of border patrol stations are increased, 375,6 kilometers length of trenches are dug, 153,3 kilometers barbed wire installed, 19,8 kilometers of movable concrete wall formed, 26,3 kilometers of accordion barrier systems positioned, along 422.630 meters part of Syrian border illumination poles installed at every 50 meters, 79,5 kilometers embankment (3x3 m.) formed, 1,217 kilometers length of border patrol path improved and 7,8 kilometers road constructed.

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## Text 4

### ..... **Turkey's Contributions in the Fight Against Drug Trafficking**

Due to its location Turkey is exposed to extensive flow of licit and illicit goods. This location lies at the crossroads of the heroin production sites in Afghanistan and consumption markets in Europe. Turkey is also intensively exposed to the growing ATS and precursor trade between Europe and the Middle East.

Turkish counter narcotics policy is based on three pillars. The first pillar focuses on the fight against domestic distribution networks and street dealers. The second pillar deals with the dismantling of the international drug trafficking networks. The third pillar concentrates on investigations related to the financing of terrorism (particularly the PKK) through drug trafficking.

In recent years, the Turkish National Police (TNP) has made nearly 20 percent of the global heroin seizures. Over the past decade, Turkey's consistent cooperation with European counterparts led to the dismantling of numerous heroin networks along the Balkan route.

On the other hand, we have been observing that the Northern route is gaining gravity in terms of heroin trafficking, which led the Turkish law enforcement agencies to develop operational partnerships with our counterparts along this route. More recently, (2012-2013-2014) Anti-Smuggling & Organized Crime Department (KOM) under the TNP has conducted 11 heroin operations in collaboration with Sweden, USA, UK, Canada, Austria and Macedonia. These operations resulted in the seizure of over 20.400 kilograms of heroin and 56.738 kilograms of opium gum.

In addition to active participation in bilateral and multilateral operations, Turkey also provides distinguished training to the personnel of the national law enforcement agencies of many countries. We have been organizing training programs through the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC) for the benefit of the counternarcotic units of many countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, as well as the countries of the Middle East, Central Asia and the Balkans. TADOC is also a significant contributor to the training projects organized within international organizations and institutions such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and SELEC. Currently, TADOC, as a leading Academy in the region, is referred to by UNODC as a "Center of Excellence" while its work is presented as "best practices" to the rest of the world. Since its establishment in 2000, TADOC has organized a total of over 500 international training programs with the participation of nearly 9.000 law enforcement personnel from 88 countries.

Methamphetamine has become a new threat after 2009. Over the past two years, the number of meth operations have increased by 55.7 % and the volume of its seizures by 39 %. Turkish authorities work closely with Malaysian, Japanese and Thai authorities against methamphetamine trafficking. In 2012, a joint investigation of Turkish and US agencies led to the seizure of nearly 2,6 kilograms of meth. A Turkish-Italian joint investigation led to the seizure of 2,8 kilograms and a Turkish-UK joint investigation led to the seizure of nearly 709 grams of meth.

Currently, Turkey is affected by the cocaine traffic both as a transit and a target country.

We have also been working closely with Saudi Arabian and Bulgarian law enforcement agencies against captagon trafficking.

Turkey is a target country for ecstasy which is produced in the Netherlands and Belgium. Turkish law enforcement agencies are engaged in close cooperation with the source countries and are keen to increase the level of cooperation.

To increase the efficiency of police cooperation, Turkey has recently expanded its police liaison network to 27 countries across the world. We use this network to conduct international operations.

In 2012, Turkey conducted 14 joint operations with Romania, Macedonia, Germany, USA, Sweden, Italy and the UK. In 2013, 25 joint operations were conducted by the Turkish law enforcement authorities with 15 countries, 10 of these operations being controlled deliveries.

In 2014, Turkey conducted a joint operation with France and 4 controlled delivery operations with Germany, UK, Austria and Sweden.

During the last decade, nearly 119 international operations and 91 multinational controlled deliveries have been carried out with 35. Despite these achievements, we sometimes face challenges in international cooperation emanating mainly from differences in national legislations and diversity in institutional priorities of countries.

In other words, Turkey efficiently contributes to all efforts in fighting drug abuse as well as trafficking, through an effectively functioning network of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Turkey is present in major activities of international organizations and readily shares expertise and experience in this area.

PKK/KCK terrorist organization is considered to be an important player in the international drug smuggling network due to its widespread connections in Turkey and Europe. Conducted operations indicate that the narco-terrorist activities of PKK/KCK terrorist organization are not limited to extortion or collection of protection money from smugglers but also include international delivery of drugs. Details of statistics and related analysis may be accessed through “[www.kom.pol.tr](http://www.kom.pol.tr)”.

During the last decade, TNPKOM has become a principal actor in global and regional counternarcotic efforts. This accomplishment is mainly due to utmost care in deployment of the KOM staff and their sophisticated training schemes. All new recruits are obliged to participate in long term training programs in TADOC, which are jointly developed by KOM and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Turkish Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (TUBİM), which operates under KOM, has been established as a national focal point of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), with the aim of monitoring drug use as well as the supply and demand aspect of drugs, in order to collect and report data to EMCDDA.

TUBİM is also responsible for the preparation of The National Strategy/Action Plans and The Annual Turkish Drug Report, which includes all relevant data concerning drugs.



“National Drug Policy and Strategy Document” covering the period 2013-2018 and the “Third National Drug Action Plan” covering the period 2013-2015 have both been prepared by the Turkish Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (TUBİM). The above Action Plan seeks a balanced, effective and coordinated approach at the national level with regard to tackling the demand and supply of drugs.

As proposed by the first Action Plan, Provincial Coordination Boards on Drugs have been established in all provinces of Turkey. Furthermore, local Action Plans were prepared in 78 provinces.

There is an Early Warning System (EWS) controlled by TUBİM to identify and assess new drugs. If the Working Group of the EWS deems necessary, a substance may be brought under legal control in accordance with the Law 2313 on the Control of Drugs. In 2011, 19 new substances were brought under legal control including bonsai, khat, synthetic cannabinoid and cathinone. A total of 274 substances were included in the mentioned Law by the Early Warning System between 2008 and 2015.

Besides monitoring, TUBİM and its local contact points (ILTEMs) also carry out demand reduction activities. Demand reduction experts conduct awareness raising activities to reduce the demand for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. TUBİM and the ILTEMs publish books, magazines and other relevant material to raise the consciousness and awareness of the public (particularly the youth) against drug abuse. They also follow issues related to treatment.

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that TUBİM has been the organizer of two International Drug Conferences in 2011 and 2013, which brought together national and international experts to discuss contemporary issues on the global drug problem.

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## Text 5

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### PKK

PKK is a terrorist organization. The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization internationally by numerous countries, including the members of the European Union and others such as United States, Canada and Australia. European Union also designated PKK as a terrorist entity in 2004. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) also refers to PKK as a terrorist entity.

Since its foundation in 1984 more than 40 thousand people lost their lives because of PKK terrorism. PKK's ideology is founded on revolutionary Marxism-Leninism and separatist ethnonationalism. PKK wants to suppress the diversity of Turkey, prevent participation and integration of Turkey's citizens of Kurdish origin and intimidate the people in the region. PKK's primary targets include police, military, economic, and social assets in Turkey. PKK also attacks on civilians and diplomatic and consular facilities. PKK is also involved in extortion, arms smuggling, and drug trafficking.

Turkey's tourism industry, economic infrastructure, educational Institutions, teachers, hospitals, public and private enterprises particularly in southeast Turkey have been the main targets of PKK terrorists. It uses a wide range of method to carry out acts of terror ranging from attacking infrastructure, various facilities, schools and ambulances, kidnapping nurses, customs officials to using cyanide to poison drinking water supplies; and engaging in unconventional tactics, assassination to drive by shootings, executing uncooperative civilians, ambushes, kidnapping etc.

Until 1998 PKK found a safe haven in Syria. Then its leader Abdullah Öcalan had to flee the country only to be captured several months later. He is now serving life sentence in a prison in Turkey.

Following the power vacuum in the north of Iraq after the Gulf War, PKK established camps in various points around the Qandil Mountain where they receive training and infiltrate to Turkey to carry out attacks.

PKK's funding is based on variety of sources. In a number of European countries there are ongoing investigations and court cases related to financing of PKK terrorism. In a major European country, the number of court files related to PKK related illegal activities exceeded five thousands.

PKK is also into organized crime, illegal human smuggling and drug trafficking. On 14 October 2009, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) targeted the senior leadership of the PKK, designating Murat Karayılan, the head of the PKK, and high-ranking members Ali Riza Altun and Zübeyir Aydar as significant foreign narcotics traffickers. On 20 April 2011, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced the designation of PKK founders Cemil Bayık and Duran Kalkan and other high-ranking members as Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers (SDNT) pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act.

PKK subsidiaries and offshoots exploit the democratic rights and freedoms in Europe. In certain countries, there are continuing major investigations against PKK financing and other unlawful acts by PKK affiliated entities and individuals. In some others there are ongoing court cases related to PKK activities. As stated in TESAT reports, in addition to collection of money from private persons and firms there are cases that revenues are also obtained from criminal organizations. PKK also continues its systematic recruitment activities of young persons living in European countries and trains them in various camps. It also forges identity documents.

PKK has also offshoots and affiliates in Iran, Syria and Iraq. KCK, headed by imprisoned Öcalan, is the same organization with PKK. “KCK” is “PJAK” in IRAN, “Tawgari Azadi” in Iraq and PYD/YPG in Syria.

PYD/YPG’s affiliation with PKK is clear. PYD/YPG was set up under the control of PKK terrorist organization in 2003. They share the same leadership cadres, organizational structure, strategies and tactics, military structure, propaganda tools, financial resources and training camps.

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## Text 6

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### DHKP-C

DHKP-C is a terrorist organization. The Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) is enlisted as a terrorist group by Turkey, the European Union and US.

The DHKP-C was originally formed in 1978 as Devrimci Sol, or Dev Sol. It was a splinter faction of the Turkish People's Liberation Party/Front. It was renamed as the DHKP-C in 1994 after factional infighting. It has a Marxist-Leninist ideology. It aims at overthrowing the Turkish state through violence and removing the US and NATO presence in Turkey.

The DHKP/C uses several tactics in the form of armed attacks, such as assassinations, suicide bombings and bomb traps which are still maintained among the terrorist organization's attempts.

Some recent major terrorist acts of the DHKP-C include:

-August 10, 2015, Attack to US Consulate General: Two suspected DHKP-C members attacked the U.S. Consulate General in Istanbul. There were no casualties.

-March 31, 2015, Killing of a Prosecutor: Two DHKP-C members took hostage and then killed Prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz at the Istanbul Courthouse.

-On February 1, 2013, US Embassy bombing: a suicide bomber attacked to the US Embassy in Ankara, killing a Turkish security guard, and wounding three others.

-The DHKP/C carries out a variety of activities such as propaganda, recruitment and financing through several associations, cultural centers and press organizations established in European countries.

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## Text 7

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### **Fight Against FETÖ and July 15 Coup Attempt**

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**Appendix Satellite Images 1-8. Demolished areas in the Kurdish cities**

Images1 & 2. Cudi neighbourhood in Cizre city. Source: (HRW, July, 2016).

The below image was taken after the military operation.



The below image was taken before the military operation.





Images 3 & 4. Nusaybin city in Mardin province. Source: (OHCHR, 2017: 11)

The below image was taken on 22 May, 2016 during the military operation.



The below image was taken on 21 June 2015, before the military operation.





Images 5 & 6. Sure district in Diyarbakir. The images were taken before the operation and the after the operation. Source: (Riley, 2017).

The below image was taken on 28 July, 2016, after the operations.



The below image was taken on 11 May, 2014, before the operations.





Images 7 & 8. Sure district in Diyarbakir. Source: (Ayasun, 2017).

The above image was taken before the operation and the below one was taken after the operation.



**Appendix Image 9.** Demolished Nusaybin city centre. Turkish military celebrating their control of Nusaybin. Source: (Ayasun, 2017).



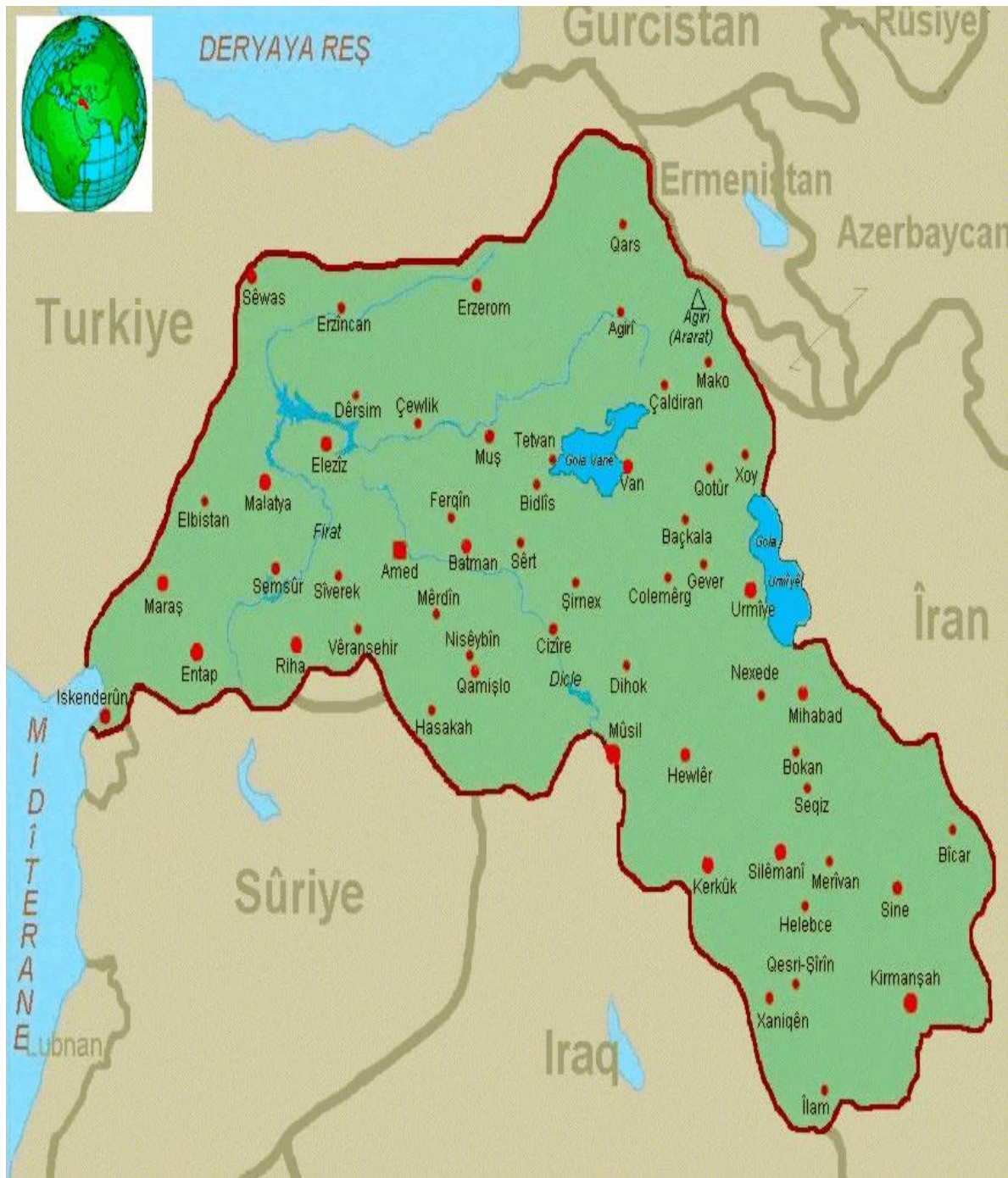


**Appendix Map 11. The southern and eastern areas of Ottoman Empire.** The map was drawn by the authorities of Ottoman Empire in Arabic language. The map shows Kurdistan (in Arabic: كردستان). Source: Farrokh (2010). The researcher added to the map a yellow line stretching under the name of Kurdistan in Arabic.



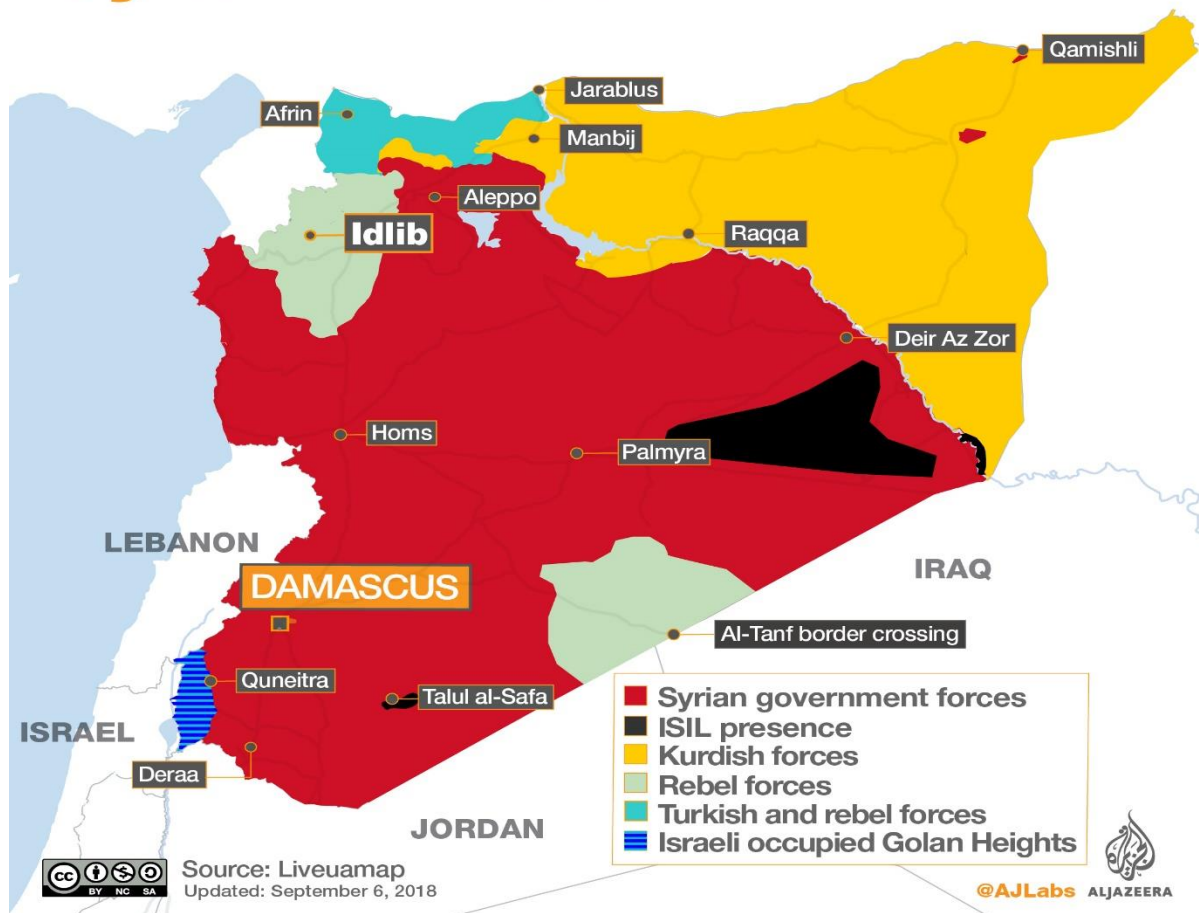


**Appendix Map 12. Map of Kurdistan claimed by the Kurdish national movements.**  
Source: The Kurdish Institute of Paris (2014).



**Appendix Map 13. Updated military control map of Syria.** The map shows the area of YPG and SDF control in yellow. Source: Chughtai (September, 2018). This map shows the Rojava canton of Afrin controlled by Turkey and connected to the area which was already invaded in the Euphrates Shied Operation of August, 2016. Afrin was invaded in March 2018 by the Turkish military and its allied Islamist factions of FSA.

## Syria: Who controls what?



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