

# Repression in Turkey exposes NATO "humanitarianism"

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Those inclined to believe that the US and NATO are waging war on Serbia as a campaign to defend the human and civil rights of the Kosovan Albanians should examine this week's events in Turkey.

As a member of the NATO alliance, Turkey is supplying eleven F-16 fighter jets and one ship to the military offensive in the Balkans. At the same time, it continues to wage a war of repression against the Kurdish minority in its own country while enjoying the diplomatic and military support of the US and the other major Western powers.

On Friday a court in the capital city of Ankara sentenced 114 intellectuals and human rights advocates to a year in prison merely for signing, in 1993, a declaration calling for a peaceful resolution of the conflict with the Kurds. For their statement, apparently sent to the United Nations, the defendants were charged with "separatist propaganda," a criminal offense under Article 8 of the "Anti-Terror Law" of 1991. Among the signatories convicted is Ismail Besikci, a noted sociologist who has already been sentenced to 200 years in prison for his writings about the Kurds.

The arrest and conviction of the defendants have barely received notice in US newspapers. CNN carried no special report. The *New York Times* devoted exactly one column-inch of its Saturday edition to the matter, burying the story among a variety of world briefs. No article appeared in the *Washington Post*.

Meanwhile, between Monday and Friday, the Turkish army carried out its latest military crackdown against the Kurds. Some 15,000 troops crossed the border into Iraq, killing 44 from the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), while Turkish pilots flying US-supplied Cobra helicopters hit alleged PKK bases. Northern Iraq is nominally one of two "no-fly zones" set up by the US and Britain after the Gulf War, but exceptions have

repeatedly been made to allow Turkey to strike the PKK.

In its fifteen-year war against the PKK, in which 30,000 people have been killed, the Turkish government has carried out mass deportations of Kurdish villagers in southeastern Turkey. Estimates of the number of Kurds driven from their homes vary between 560,000 (according to the US State Department) and 2,000,000 (according to Amnesty International).

The *World Socialist Web Site* challenges the media apologists for the bombing of Yugoslavia to explain the glaring contradiction between the supposed humanitarian aims of the present war and US support for the butchery carried out by its Turkish allies against the Kurds.



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