

Socialist Equality Group in Turkey condemns attack against T?P deputy after threats from interior minister

Sosyalist E?itlik
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Workers' Party of Turkey (T?P) deputy Bar?? Atay was physically assaulted in the Kad?köy neighborhood of ?stanbul on Monday morning, after he was threatened by Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu on social media.

Sosyalist E?itlik (the Socialist Equality Group, SE), in political solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), unequivocally condemns the attack on Atay.

The political differences separating the SE from the nationalist orientation of the T?P, a split-off from the Stalinist Turkish Communist Party (TKP), are well documented. However, these differences do not lessen our opposition to this attack, which serves to strengthen a right-wing political atmosphere of intimidation aimed at all political opposition, including from the working class.

Four people, shouting that he was a “traitor,” attacked Atay after he left a restaurant in Kad?köy at around 1 a.m. Another person reportedly videotaped the incident. On Monday, the T?P declared that Atay's health condition was “good.” Three alleged perpetrators of this right-wing assault were arrested on Wednesday.

The assault came immediately after a social media exchange between Atay and Interior Minister Soylu, who threatened Atay. The subject of their dispute was the case of Musa Orhan, an army specialist sergeant who has been released from prison while facing charges of abducting and “sexually assaulting” ?per Er, an 18-year-old woman from the southeastern city of Batman. Er subsequently committed suicide.

Atay tweeted Sunday: “You [Soylu] protected and backed a serial rapist. We will make efforts to ensure

that it will be held against you for the rest of your life and you will not ever forget it.”

Soylu fired back a message on Twitter accusing Atay of being a tool of the banned Kurdish nationalist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). He wrote, “The left-over of the PKK and DHKP-C [Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front], who became a deputy from the HDP [Peoples' Democratic Party] upon the instruction of the PKK heads. I cannot be a ‘rapist protector,’ but you would make quite a rapist... watch out, don't get caught...”

Only a few hours after these threats from the interior minister, Atay was physically assaulted in the center of ?stanbul. This underscores the growing dangers facing the working class as the Turkish bourgeoisie builds a presidential dictatorship based on vigilante violence, amid mass social opposition to the capitalist policies of President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an's government. This opposition has grown in the face of the government's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The events in Turkey are inseparable from the turn towards authoritarianism by the ruling classes around the world. US President Donald Trump is leading this by inciting vigilante violence against protests under conditions of growing social anger in the working class.

The recent physical attack on Atay is not a completely new development in Turkish politics, but it represents a dangerous escalation of such attacks promoted by the state forces.

In July, unidentified person(s) carried out an attack on the office of ?iar Ri?vano?lu, a lawyer and member of the Revolutionary Workers Party (D?P), leaving behind a threatening note denouncing him as an “odious traitor.”

On August 30, Metin ?lhan, a Republican People's Party (CHP) deputy from K?r?ehir, claimed that he has been kicked by police during "Victory Day" celebrations in the city.

In April 2019, Kemal K?l?çdaro?lu, the leader of the CHP, was assaulted by a right-wing mob during a soldier's funeral in Ankara, amid the frenzied atmosphere created by the bellicose nationalist campaign mounted by Erdo?an. An attacker was released on bail, a clear encouragement for similar attacks in the future.

The Kurdish nationalist parties have been among the most heavily hit by state or paramilitary attacks in last three decades. In 1994, police stormed the parliament and arrested Kurdish deputies, then members of the Democracy Party (DEP), on a live stream. Today, several HDP deputies have languished in prison since 2016, after the CHP voted for an AKP constitutional amendment removing deputies' parliamentary immunity.

Sosyalist E?itlik strongly condemns any violence carried out or promoted by the ruling class and its state and calls on all workers and youth to oppose these attacks. The only force that can take up the struggle to defend democratic rights is the working class, mobilized on a socialist program.



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