No to anti-immigrant campaign and imperialist war! Unite the workers of Turkey, Syria and the Middle East!

Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu
4 July 2024

1. The Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu (Socialist Equality Group, SEG, of Turkey) unequivocally condemns the attacks against Syrian refugees that started in Kayseri on Sunday and spread to other cities, targeting people, homes, shops and vehicles. We call on workers to defend their migrant class brothers and sisters against such pogroms.

2. The stabbing death of a 17-year-old Syrian child worker in Antalya on Tuesday by three aggressors revealed the magnitude of the danger. It was followed by the raiding and burning of Syrian workers' homes and stabbings by fascistic mobs. It can only be ended by mobilizing workers as a united social force based on an international revolutionary program.

3. Of the 474 people detained over the anti-immigrant violence, 285 reportedly had criminal records for crimes such as "migrant smuggling, injury, drugs, looting, theft, damage to property, sexual harassment, fraud, forgery of money, threats, insults, deprivation of liberty." The coordinated incitement campaign against refugees on the social media platform X/Twitter suggests the incidents were organized.

4. In stark contrast to police-state repression of peaceful demonstrations on May Day or against the Turkish government's complicity in the genocide in Gaza, there are reports that in many places, as in previous incidents, police forces stood by and watched the aggressor mobs.

5. In any case, this massive assault on refugees, for which there have been many smaller rehearsals, is a product of the right-wing, anti-refugee campaigns of the ruling class which its media have carried out for years.

6. Adopting the lies-based program of the far right to divide and confuse the working class, the establishment parties, whether in government or in opposition, have made Syrians and other migrants the scapegoats for the rising cost of living, the deterioration of living conditions and other social problems caused by the capitalist crisis.

7. With this campaign, in which the trade union apparatus is complicit, the ruling class aims to divide workers on the basis of nationality and prevent the development of a unified struggle of the working class while ruthlessly exploiting cheap and precarious migrant labor.

8. In Turkey, where the ruling class subjected the Armenian and Greek population to ethnic cleansing in the last century, there is a long history of provocations and massacres against Kurds and Alevis. These are ultimately aimed at dividing and intimidating the working class on ethnic and religious grounds and crushing left-wing opposition.

9. Today, not only in Turkey but all over the world, including in Europe and the US, refugees and migrants have become the main target of the ruling class in its efforts to strengthen the fascistic forces and the police state apparatus against the growing social opposition to capitalism within the working class.

10. The latest anti-refugee atrocities come as President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an's government, with the tacit support of the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), deepens its austerity program against the working class for the benefit of finance capital. Workers' living standards are suffering an unprecedented decline. The government refused to raise the minimum wage this July, as the official annual inflation rate reached over 70 percent, and real inflation is still over 110 percent. Ruling circles fear an explosion in the class struggle.

11. Turkey hosts some 4.5 million refugees and migrants, including more than 3 million Syrians, according to official figures. This is a product of over 30 years of predatory imperialist interventions and wars for

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regime change in the Middle East and Central Asia. The Turkish ruling class and political establishment now scapegoating refugees have been complicit in US-NATO imperialist aggression from Iraq to Afghanistan and Syria and beyond.

12. In Syria, where the imperialist powers and their allies, including Turkey, fomented a war for regime change that has killed hundreds of thousands of people since 2011 and turned millions into refugees, the conflict continues. The reconstruction of social infrastructure is deliberately prevented by US-led sanctions and oil blackmail.

13. It is unspeakably hypocritical for Erdo?an, who has played a major role in the destruction of Syria by Islamist proxies, to pose as a friend of Syrian refugees. In reality, his government not only enthusiastically backs a reactionary war that has forced Syrians to flee their homes, it has also denied the most basic rights to millions of people seeking refuge in Turkey, refusing to even recognize their status as refugees under international law.

14. Using them as a pawn in his negotiations with the European Union, Erdo?an made a dirty deal with the EU and the pseudo-left Syriza government, which was then in power in Greece, to keep refugees in Turkey.

15. This is an unanswerable indictment of Syriza, which set up detention camps for refugees while in power in Greece, and of its pseudo-left allies internationally.

16. Syriza's sister parties in Turkey–the Kurdish nationalist People's Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party, formerly HDP) and the Left Party (formerly ÖDP), as well as the Stalinist Workers' Party of Turkey (T?P), the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), the Labour Party (EMEP) and various Pabloite tendencies–have been complicit in this reactionary campaign. They remained silent and supported the CHP as the "lesser evil" against Erdo?an, as the CHP has for years agitated for the targeting and forcible return of refugees.

17. Ankara has responded to the Kurdish nationalist movement in Syria, which has become Washington's main proxy force and controls northeastern Syria as a result of the war for regime change, by occupying many places in the north of Syria. Erdo?an has openly declared his intention to relocate Syrians from Turkey to the north of Syria as part of a plan aimed at population replacement in the region. He aims to completely block the possibility of an independent Kurdish state on Turkey's southern border.

18. The Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu irreconcilably opposes such plans, which would lead to the forced displacement of millions of people and bloody conflicts in northern Syria. We defend the right of everyone to live and work in the country of his or her choice with full citizenship rights.

19. The SEG demands an immediate end to the illegal US and Turkish occupations of Syria and Iraq, which have paved the way for new conflicts, and the closure of the US-NATO bases in Turkey. These bases, which today support Israel's genocide in Gaza, have always functioned as instruments of imperialist aggression in the region.

20. The US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, the Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza and preparations for war against Iran and China are various fronts of an unfolding global war. The defense of the democratic rights of refugees and migrant workers, the victims of imperialist wars, cannot be separated from the struggle against war and the capitalist system that produces it. It is a struggle to unite workers in oppressed regions like the Middle East and in the imperialist centers into an international socialist movement against war.

21. The development of such a struggle for a Socialist Federation of the Middle East requires the building of a new revolutionary leadership in all the countries of the region, from Turkey to Syria, from Iran to Palestine. This leadership is the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).

22. The building of the ICFI in the Middle East requires the assimilation of the strategic experiences of the 20th and 21st centuries and the lessons of the betrayals of Stalinism, Pabloism and the pro-imperialist pseudo-left.

23. The SEG, the Turkish section of the ICFI, is ready to provide all possible political support to the building of new ICFI sections in the region, as it prepares for the establishment of the party in Turkey.

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