

How much do you know about Turkey?

1) Which of these, with a population of 40million, is still officially an unrecognised people?

- Palestinian
- Tamils
- Kurds

2) Which people still has its language banned?

- Arabs
- Kurds
- Others

3) Saying, ‘*Whether its women or children, our security forces will do what needs to be done*’, which government official argued the case for the killing of 13 civilians, some of which were children?

- Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli prime minister
- Hosni Mubarak, Egyptian president
- Tayyip Erdogan, Turkish prime minister

4) “*We went there in 1986. A year later there was a massacre of 30 people, 16 of which were children. I went to that village, the smell of blood and gunpowder was everywhere. The massacre at Pinarcik was carried out by groups created by JITEM, with the intention of provocation.*” These confessions belong to a special forces personnel working for which government?

- Iran
- Turkey
- Argentina

5) What is the minimum percentage of national votes required by a party to get seats in the general election?

- 2.5%
- 5%
- 10%

6) In which country were children sentenced to between 4 and 12 years for throwing stones at police?

- Turkey
- Afghanistan
- Russia

7) With its intentions on joining the European Union and its ongoing negotiations, which country was in the limelight in the world press for its alleged use of chemical weapons which have been prohibited by international law?

- Croatia
- Turkey
- Iceland

For the answers, see next page

Explanation of the questions with the answers;

Question 1): The Kurds are amongst the most ancient people in the middle east, with a population nearing 40 million people divided between Turkey (20 million), Iran (10 million), Iraq (5 million) and Syria (3 million) after the second world war. To this day, they have no status and their existence is not recognised, today 300,000 Kurds live at the Syrian border where they are not given any identification. Turkey, following its national political agenda has forced and massacred its ethnic populations into being Turks. After a 10-year struggle, the Kurds have been recognised verbally but are still non-existent in official terms.

Question 2): In Turkey, where half of the Kurds live, Kurdish is not considered as an official training and administrative language. As a means to get in the EU, Turkey needs to change its terms of service for the right of native peoples to speak their birth tongue; this has yet to be implemented for the Kurds. Many Kurdish politicians have been sentenced for speaking in Kurdish.

Question 3): After the deaths of 14 HPG supporters involving the illegal use of chemical weapons in 28 March 2006, events starting in Diyarbakir spread to nearby areas leading to the deaths of 13 people with 300 wounded. 500 people were in detention and 400 imprisoned. According to the bureau of Diyarbakir, events in the city that lasted for 4 days led to the detention of 543 people by the police and gendarme, of which 199 were children under the age of 18. While these events were happening, Prime Minister Erdogan was defending these barbaric actions by saying *‘Whether its women or children, our security forces will do what needs to be done’*.

Question 4): In the last couple of days Turkey has been shaken by the revelations of Special Forces personnel Ayhan Carkin who served in 1986. Even though the Carkin Truths commission was created, he specified that he was ready to reveal the murders he was involved in, committed in Kurdistan in the name of the state of Turkey. He confessed that he made the lives of the Kurds a misery following the instructions of the state. The Turkish state did not neglect to resort to dirty and illegal methods in fighting the Kurdish people. Filed under unsolved missing persons, Ayhan Carkin confessed that there are actually known cases of 17000 murders committed. Today, throughout Kurdistan, mass graves are discovered on a regular basis however Turkey still refrains from dealing with its recent atrocities.

Question 5): The national voting threshold in Turkey is 10%. There are many prominent people asking for this threshold to be dropped to a more reasonable and democratic level but on the 17th June this year at the national elections the AKP government insists on keeping the 10% threshold to hold back the Kurds from representing themselves in the parliament. The Kurdish representatives are forced to run with independent candidates.

Question 6): Turkey 2009, the most talked about victims of human right breaches were children. In the south-east the numbers of children tried on alleged “members of terrorist organisation” runs into thousands. A lot of them have been sentenced to years of imprisonment for throwing stones at police. From the year 2006, over 400 children who are known as the kids that threw the stones, have been sentenced to between 4 and 12 years.

Question 7): The use of chemical weapons on the Kurds is well remembered in the town of Halabja in 1988, when Saddam Hussein used them. But in Turkey, with its ongoing war against the Kurdish guerrillas, it is also claimed that chemical weapons have been used. In the last incident between 8-15 September 2009 in Hakkari, which borders Turkey and Iraq, 8 Kurdish guerrillas died as a result of chemicals used by the Turkish army. This incident only came into light after the defenders of Kurdish human right group which have members of parliament amongst their ranks, provided photographic evidence to a German led human rights committee. After a forensic examination of the photos by an institute to validate their authenticity and the trace of chemicals, they were revealed in a press conference. The institute concluded that there was a high probability that the deaths were the result of the use of chemical substances. This incident was widely reported in the European press however in Turkey there have been no attempts to investigate this incident.

For more information: knklondon@gn.apc.org or www.kurdish-info.eu