

Call for an international delegation on forest fires!

Since June 2016 in several provinces of North (Turkish) Kurdistan the forests are burning again. These forest fires are in areas where shortly beforehand the governors – appointed by the central Turkish government – have declared no-go zones for the population and military operations are conducted. We call on all activists and organizations in Turkey and abroad to join a delegation on these spreading forest fires!

It is not an accident that the forest fires occur in the rainless summer and in the framework of larger military operations of the Turkish Army against the PKK guerilla carried out in the forested mountains. Our region is experienced with human made big forest fires which have happened in the 90'ies and last year too. According to many villagers in the affected areas in 2015 in total around 10.000 hectares of forests have been torched by the Turkish military. Particularly around military stations forest fires have been put systematically and as a result of the spreading fires gardens and fields of dozens of villages have been affected.

The ongoing forests fires concentrate in the Diyarbakir district of Lice, but there are news and images showing that also other districts and the provinces of Hakkari, Sirnak, Siirt and Mardin are affected seriously. It is reported about human rights violations against the affected local population which has even been forced by the Turkish military to flee from at least eight villages around Lice. All efforts of locals, local municipalities and people from bigger cities to extinguish the fires have been impeded by the military. The only statement of central government officials is that there are some fires on fields with cannabis.

In order to investigate the ecological destruction through forest fires, which threatens also the livelihoods of locals, we call upon on ecologists, human right defenders and other engaged people and organizations from international level and Western Turkey to form a

delegation between July 23 and 25 in our region. Beginning in the Diyarbakir province the delegation will go to forest fire affected areas, do on site researches and speak to local people and organizations. We expect all interested on the morning of the 23rd July in Diyarbakir.

Mesopotamian Ecology Movement,04.07.2016

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News in Turkish on the recent forest fires:

1) Özgür Gündem, 24.06.2016: Savaş uçaklarıyla bombalanan Lice'de orman yangınları büyüyor. Link:

<http://ozgurgundem.biz/haber/170704/savas-ucaklariyla-bombalanan-lice-de-orman-yangini-buyuyor>

2) BirGün, 26.06.2016: Lice'de Orman Yangınları. Link:

<http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/lice-de-orman-yangini-117763.html>

3) BBC Türkçe, 27.06.2016: Lice'de 'hint keneviri imha edildi'; HDP, 'amaç başka' diyor. Link:

http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/06/160627_lice_operasyon_kenevir_orman

4) Hürriyet, 29.06.2016: **Lice ve Cudi'deki orman yangını Şanlıurfa'da protesto edildi.** Link:

http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yerel-haberler/sanliurfa-haberleri/lice-ve-cudi-deki-orman-yangini-sanliurfa-da-pr_303090/