

Şiddet Sarmalında PKK

PKK In The Spiral Of Violence*

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Özet

Halkı siyasi otoriteye karşı caydırmaya çalışan terörizm genel olarak baskı ve korku ile güvensizlik atmosferi oluşturmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu güvensizlik ortamında açık ve gizli amaçlarına ulaşmak için şiddet kullanımını tercih edip halka ve siyasi otoriteye karşı bu yöntemden faydalanmaktadır. Bundan dolayı Türkiye'nin karşı karşıya kaldığı terörizm faaliyetleri birçok olumsuzluğa neden olmaktadır. Terör örgütü PKK'nın Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin huzur ve refahını hedef alan birçok eylemi bulunmaktadır. Silahlı mücadelenin yanında örgüt zaman içerisinde bu tür faaliyetleri gerçekleştirerek siyasallaşma amacını da gütmektedir. Örgüt baskı altında tuttuğu bölge halkının desteğini alarak amaçlarına ulaşmayı düşünmektedir. Terör örgütü bulunduğu coğrafyanın temsilcisi olduğunu ileri sürerek Kürt kökenli vatandaşları kontrolü altına almaya çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: PKK, Terör, Şiddet.

Abstract

Terrorism, which tries to deter the public against political authority, generally creates an atmosphere of oppression, fear and insecurity. In this environment of insecurity, it prefers to use violence to achieve its overt and covert goals and uses this method against the public and political authority. Therefore, the terrorism activities that Türkiye faces cause many negativities. The terrorist organization PKK has many actions targeting the Republic of Türkiye. In addition to the armed struggle, the organization has also achieved its goal of politicization by carrying out such activities over time. The organization thinks of achieving its goals by gaining the support of the people of the region it oppresses. The terrorist organization has tried to include citizens of Kurdish origin in its scope by claiming that it is the representative of the geography it is located in.

Keywords: PKK, Terror, Violence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is regarded as one of the greatest threats of the modern age. This issue continues to be one of the most debated topics on the international stage. It can be argued that the reactions developed by the founding ideology of the Republic against the political and social heritage inherited from the Ottoman period paved the way for Turkey's necessity to combat various terrorist activities. Another reason Turkey is targeted by terrorism is its geographical location. Since the 1960s, terrorism has been one of the country's most significant challenges. At different times, Turkey has been the target of various terrorist organizations: it contended with Armenian terrorism between the 1970s and 1980s, and from the 1980s onward, with PKK terrorism. Furthermore, during the 1990s to the 2000s, it can be said that Islamic terrorist organizations were more active.

The founding of the PKK terrorist organization can be traced back to the Democratic Patriotic Higher Education Association, which was established by Abdullah Öcalan and university students around him. The organization's first meeting was held in Ankara in 1975, after which Öcalan was designated as its leader. Following the meeting, the brochure entitled "The Road to the Kurdistan Revolution," prepared by Öcalan in collaboration with Hayri Durmuş, was accepted as the program of the entity that would later be named the PKK. This brochure was not published until 1978, primarily due to the high costs associated with newspaper and magazine publications at that time and the risk of apprehension by security forces. The fundamental aim of the organization was to develop a strategy for operating in the Southeastern Anatolia region, where the Kurdish population is concentrated. During this period, propaganda was disseminated in cities such as Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Batman, Gaziantep, Bingöl, Elâzığ, Kars, Tunceli, and Ağrı under the names of Nationalists and Kurdistan Revolutionaries. One year later, during several meetings organized on his tours, Abdullah Öcalan was presented as the leader to the organization's sympathizers, achieving the anticipated benefits and further consolidating its presence in the region. In 1978, the first congress of the PKK was convened in Lice, Diyarbakır, thereby formalizing the organization's status (Karaca, 2015). Initially active in Southeastern Anatolia, the organization gradually expanded its operations to various regions of Turkey, especially major cities. Through the numerous actions and initiatives, it organized, it has caused Turkey's strength and resources to be used in combating terrorism rather than being shifted to other areas.

In this study, beginning with the initial action carried out for the declaration of its establishment, the violence practices manifested in the PKK's domination strategy—employing violence as an effective tool in all its strategies—are examined. In this context, information on the concepts of terror and terrorism is provided, and a detailed discussion of historical terrorist organizations is presented.

2. CONCEPTS OF TERROR AND TERRORISM

2.1. Terror

The term "terror" derives from the Latin word "*terrere*", which carries the meanings of instilling fear and intimidation. However, its usage in a sense closely approximating its contemporary meaning first emerged in France following the French Revolution (Gökçe and Aksu, 2025; Gökçe and Aksu, 2020). Terror is defined as the condition of employing terrorist activities in an organized and continuous manner as a tool to change the status quo by illegal means for a political purpose (Bal, 2006). Terror is the act of utilizing methods of intimidation and wear, employing coercion or threat tactics to instill a set of ideas and behaviors (Yılmaz, 2011). It denotes terrorism in the sense of using violence in a planned and unlawful manner with the aim of inciting conflict and war among social classes for social, national, racial, religious, and other similar purposes (Gül, 2012).

According to Prof. Dr. Ümit Özdağ's definition, "Terror is not a series of irrational actions, but rather the entirety of the violent activities carried out within a logical sequence by a politically weaker

organization in order to impose its demands on a politically stronger organization. In this sense, terror can also be referred to as the totality of the methods employed by political-military movements in their pursuit of power. In summary, terror is the strategy of a politically weaker movement that, by excluding democratic solution methods and resorting to violence, targets the instillation of societal fear and despondency as well as the political and military defeat of its opponent” (Usta, 2003).

2.2. Terrorism

There is no consensus on the concept of terrorism. This is because the term terrorism is a complex and value-laden concept (Aksu and Dere, 2021). Terror and terrorism are concepts that are particularly expressed as being confused with one another. Any individual activity that arises in a targetless and involuntary manner is labeled as terror. Terrorism, on the other hand, is the organized and calculated use of these violent elements—referred to as a terror movement—to achieve political objectives. In this context, terror is an event, whereas terrorism is a phenomenon (Kasımoğlu, 2010). Terrorism can only be evaluated in terms of a country's internal affairs when it is directed exclusively at one country or region. However, in recent times, as terrorist groups have acquired economic, political, and psychological power, the fact that a terrorist organization can pose a threat to more than one country has endowed terrorism with an international dimension. In this respect, terrorism is considered in two categories: national and international.

2.3. Terrorism in the Historical Process

Although terror incidents occurred even before the French Revolution, it can be argued that the concept of terrorism emerged with the French Revolution. Terrorism, which has appeared in nearly every period throughout history, has led to individual or organizational acts of violence affecting countries or communities. It is a known fact that terrorism affects all of humanity directly or indirectly without any restrictions of time, space, age, or gender. The oldest known terrorist organization is the “Zealot” movement. The leader of the Zealots, a Jewish sect founded on religious principles, initiated an uprising against Roman rule by combining religious and nationalist elements. Another terrorist organisation is described as the Jewish ‘Sicarii’ sect, founded in Palestine and based on the Zealot tradition. Like the Zealot organisation, the Sicarii planned assassinations targeting Roman elites and were involved in countless acts of violence that caused fear and panic among the people. This organization is credited with carrying out the first recorded suicide attack in history. Its name derives from the sword called “sica,” which its members concealed under their garments (Demirel, 2005). Another significant organization in human history is the one known as the “Hashshashins,” established in the Middle East. This organization was founded a millennium after the Sicari, when Hasan Sabbah established it during the 11th to 13th centuries against, among others, the Seljuk vizier Nizam-ı Mülk, carrying out assassinations that resulted in the deaths of numerous statesmen. Hasan Sabbah, considered the founder of modern terrorism, extended terrorism over a long period and systematized it in order to achieve his objectives. The terrorist organization he established, with its secret organizational structure and systematic activities, later served as an example for subsequent terrorist organizations. It is reported that its members carried out assassination operations by drugging their targets (Demirel, 2005). Another well-known terrorist organization is the “Thugs.” Active between the 600s and 1800s, this organization was founded on religious principles, with the aim of offering people as sacrifices to Kali, the goddess of destruction. In doing so, they eliminated many individuals living in rural areas, capturing their victims and strangling them with silk cords (Altuğ, 1995). When terrorism acquired a multidimensional character in the 18th century, various definitions of terrorism emerged. Terror, as presented during the period of 1793–1794 in France to describe a series of violent events, was expressed as the period of terror associated with the Jacobins. For Robespierre, who viewed terror not as a normal occurrence but as the product of an extraordinary situation, terror was explained as swift and severe justice. In the 19th century, leftist groups, particularly in Russia, began to play an influential role in terrorist incidents.

These leftist groups, which executed various violent actions aimed at dismantling the state and social institutions during this period, are considered the earliest examples of terrorism that continue to exist today. Moreover, nationalist and separatist political terrorism movements and struggles that emerged at the end of the 19th century and continued to develop into the 20th century, especially during the Cold War years, had a global impact. With the New World Order declared after the Cold War, united terrorism took on a different direction. In our era, technological advancements have significantly contributed to the transformation, evolution, and acceleration of terrorism. As a result, terrorism has now become a global threat, having expanded its scope from a simple attack system to the use of biological, nuclear, and chemical weapons (Uyar, 2008).

2.4. Types of Terrorism

There are many classifications of terrorism. However, fundamentally, terrorism is manifested as national (domestic) terrorism, international terrorism, state terrorism, state-sponsored international terrorism, ethnic terrorism, and cyber terrorism (Çağlar, 2009).

2.4.1. National (Domestic) Terrorism

All acts of violence carried out within the borders of a single state, without the involvement of non-state actors or the influence of a foreign state, are referred to as "National" or "Domestic" terrorism (Taşdemir, 2020).

2.4.2. State Terrorism

In state terrorism, which is ultimately classified as the crime of "genocide," the governing power implements terror practices against its own people through coercive policies such as arrests and killings, with the aim of safeguarding or advancing its political interests. Here, terror functions as a domestic policy intended to compel the public to accept the state's decisions. Regimes that have adopted state terrorism include Lenin and Stalin in the Soviet Union, Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy, the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot in Cambodia, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and the Mao Zedong regime in China (Taşdemir, 2020).

2.4.3. State-Sponsored Terrorism

State-sponsored terror is defined as terrorism that arises when a state supports individuals or groups conducting terror actions against another state in order to achieve its own objectives (Arslan, 2019).

2.4.4. International Terrorism

International terrorism is defined as terrorist actions that, despite occurring within a state's own borders, violate the rights of other states or individuals belonging to other states and are carried out in an interconnected manner. In contrast to this type of terrorist act, there is also the situation where individuals from different nations are affected (Şimşek, 2016).

2.4.5. Transnational Terrorism

Unlike international terrorism, transnational terrorism is characterized by terrorist acts that are not managed by any state. Instead, these acts are directed by non-state actors (Taşdemir, 2020).

2.4.6. Ethnic Terrorism

Ethnic terrorism refers to the entirety of terror movements systematically carried out by a specific ethnic group with the aim of achieving independence and asserting its political existence. This

form of terrorism arises when minority groups, which adopt their own origin, culture, traditions, and customs as their primary benchmarks, believe that resorting to armed violence is their only option to achieve their objectives. They aim to render individuals belonging to the target ethnic group dependent on them through the adoption of common points of action.

2.4.7. Cyber Terrorism

Cyber terrorism is defined as the entirety of harmful actions carried out against states, individuals, or groups using computer programs, networks, and technology by those with specific political, social, psychological, or religious needs aiming to subjugate or intimidate a government or society (Şimşek, 2016). In this context, actions such as crashing official or civilian websites, obtaining confidential state information, disabling national banking systems, and accessing individuals' account information are executed.

2.5. Objectives of Terrorism

Terrorist organizations have multiple objectives according to the areas in which they operate. However, it can generally be stated that these organizations act either to instill their own political and ideological* ideas in their target audiences or to establish a new order in place of the existing authority (Arslan, 2019). In this context, some of the fundamental objectives are as follows.

2.5.1. Socio-Cultural Objectives

One of the primary objectives of terror is to disrupt the unity, integrity, and order of society. To achieve this, terror operates on the principle of exploiting the differences among individuals or groups who belong to various cultures, beliefs, lifestyles, and worldviews in order to create divisions, conflict, and an atmosphere of chaos (İlhan, 2008).

2.5.2. Economic Objectives

The allocation of vast resources by states for counter-terrorism efforts causes significant harm to the economies of economically weaker countries. This situation leads these nations to divert funds that could otherwise be spent on enhancing their welfare levels toward combating terrorism, thereby negatively affecting their development.

2.5.3. Political Objectives

The political aim of terror is to weaken, dismantle, and replace the existing system with a regime and administration that align with the organization's objectives.

* The concept of ideology is generally used in two different senses. The first meaning is "partial ideology" and the other meaning is "holistic" ideology. If it is stated that the opposing side's main thoughts and ideas should not be believed, then what is meant here is partial ideology. Because here, thoughts and ideas deliberately and systematically cover up a truth that is not in the interests of the opposing side. In other words, partial ideology adopts only a portion of the opposing side's ideas and embraces them solely in terms of their content. The concept of holistic ideology, the second meaning, attempts to understand the opposing side's entire worldview by questioning and internalizing it, acting from a collective subject (Aksu, 2024: 17).

2.5.4. Psychological Objectives

The actions undertaken by terrorist groups are intended to eliminate the public's trust and loyalty toward the state through intimidation, demoralization, fear-mongering, and coercion. These violent measures generate an atmosphere of anxiety and fear within society, ultimately leading individuals who have lost confidence in the state to embrace the dominance of terrorist organizations and align themselves with them.

2.6. Causes of Terrorism

The causes of terrorism can be examined under four main headings: economic causes, social causes, political causes, and legal causes.

2.6.1. Economic Causes

Poor economic conditions within society adversely affect individuals both materially and spiritually. Individuals worn down in these ways contribute to the emergence of numerous societal problems and facilitate an environment in which terrorist organizations can easily propagate their messages. In this context, income distribution inequalities are among the most significant tools used by terrorist organizations in their propaganda efforts.

2.6.2. Social Causes

Social factors that reinforce and facilitate the spread of terrorism in society include a low level of education, the prevalence of religious, sectarian, and ethnic differences to an extent that they fragment society, and the existence of traditions that incite violence. Additionally, the ideological polarization of society and the failure to prioritize rights and freedoms as societal objectives are also among these factors.

2.6.3. Political Causes

Among the political causes of terrorism are factors such as the inability of the state regime to take root, its lack of acceptance by the populace, and the government's failure to establish authority. The activities of some groups that seek to exploit state authority for their own interests, coupled with a desire to revert to a previously implemented regime, can also be counted among the political causes. Moreover, significant ideological divergences among state institutions and the marked ideological differences between existing political parties are likewise included in these factors.

2.6.4. Legal Causes

Legal factors, which can be regarded as an overarching objective of all terrorism-related elements, are those that influence the emergence of terrorism. The dysfunction of a state's legal institutions, the inability of existing legal rules to keep pace with the times, and the partial application of these laws are all considered among the legal causes of terrorism. Additionally, the absence of a deterrent effect from legal regulations and penalties, coupled with a diminished societal belief in law and justice, also impacts terrorism.

3. TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY

3.1. The Emergence of the Terror Phenomenon in Turkey

Just as terror and terrorism exist in every social and political structure in which they emerge, in Turkey as well, for the past 35 years, the separatist-minded terrorist organization PKK has been addressing both internal and primary security issues through an ethnically based terror framework. The

PKK terrorist organization, which emerged actively in 1984, poses a threat to our country's internal security. Its formation began in the period following the elimination of the Armenian terrorist organization ASALA (Özdağ, 2008). The organization's political and policy objective is to directly fragment the Republic of Turkey and to establish a so-called Kurdish state named Kurdistan. This separatist terrorist organization, which became active with this purpose and aims for success through its actions, is an armed propaganda organization. As an example of ethnic-based terrorist organizations, it employs arms as a tool of propaganda, using terror and politics as alternatives to each other, thereby aiming to have these ideas adopted by the public. When examining the brief history of terrorism in Turkey, it is evident that the terrorist organization ASALA has long been the country's most significant internal problem. Following the curtailment of ASALA's effectiveness during the 1980s, the PKK terrorist organization's initial terror activities emerged in the form of small-scale student incidents. It is observed that these incidents were fundamentally rooted in certain ideological conflicts, originating from events led by Marxist and Leninist ideologies (Aktaş, 2006). It is also known that the anarchic and terror incidents that increasingly occurred in Turkey from the state of emergency declared on December 26, 1978, until the military intervention on September 12, 1980, were underpinned by these Marxist and Leninist ideologies (Aktaş, 2006).

3.1.1. Objectives of the PKK Terror Organization

The primary objective of the PKK terrorist organization is to capture a geographic area, region, or stronghold and establish control over it, and then, through a series of disturbances and anarchic actions, to drive society into ethnic conflicts that eventually lead to a civil war.

It is well known that the primary and ultimate objective of the organization is the establishment of a so-called Kurdish state, "Independent Kurdistan" (Özdağ, 2008). In this regard, the new strategic methods and principles, developed and supported by the organization's leadership and foreign states, are as follows (Aktaş, 2006):

1. First, certain privileges must be acquired and cultural advantages obtained.
2. Then, the unitary structure must be transformed to create a new political formation.
3. Subsequently, it is understood that a "Greater Kurdistan" will be established within a triangle encompassing Turkey (the eastern and southeastern regions), Iran (northwest), and Syria (north).

4. TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS IN TURKEY

4.1. PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) Terror Organization

4.1.1. Kurdish Nationalist Organizations and Associations That Laid the Groundwork for the Formation of the PKK Terror Organization

When examining the history and current state of the Republic of Turkey, it is evident that separatist terror activities emerged even before the establishment of the state. It may be accurately observed that the Kurdish rebellions, which arose in the late period of the Ottoman Empire—stemming from internal demands such as establishing a separate state, exemption from taxes, and avoidance of military service—were linked to the incitements of states pursuing expansionist policies. When these Kurdish rebellions, attributed to such reasons, are examined, it is observed that there were 12 rebellions up to 1912, and 25 rebellions between 1924 and 1940 (Birand, 1992). Taking advantage of the privileges granted to minorities by the Armistice of Mudros, signed on October 30, 1918, the Kurds, led by Seyyid Abdulkadir along with the prominent figures, members of parliament, and certain regional governors of that period, formed associations under the names Kurdish Terakki Cemiyeti and Kurdish Teali Cemiyeti, primarily operating in Diyarbakır and its surrounding provinces (Demirel, 2011).

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4.1.2. Turkey Kurdistan Democratic Party (TKDP)

The party, which has four main branches operating in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, was established as the umbrella organization under the name Kurdistan Democratic Party. Initially founded on a right-wing political ideology, over time, as its membership profile changed, the party shifted its primary objective and set the goal of establishing an independent Kurdish state separate from Turkey (Törel, 2002).

4.1.3. Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Centers (DDKO)

Although its members hold a revolutionary outlook, the Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Centers, which are more closely aligned with the ideology of Kurdish nationalism, were established in 1969 by a group that split from the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) due to ideological differences (İmset, 1993).

4.1.4. Revolutionary Democratic Cultural Associations (DDKD)

The organization, which aimed to unite all Kurds, including those in Iran, Iraq, and Syria, was founded in 1975 by former DDKO members who were either released due to the general amnesty of 1974 or acquitted due to a lack of evidence. It rapidly established a presence, particularly in universities (İmset, 1993).

4.1.5. Kurdistan Pioneering Workers' Party (PPKK)

The party, which was organized in the Southeastern Anatolia region, completed its structuring through legal means. It was established in 1983 by senior members of DDKO who were released under the 1974 general amnesty.

4.1.6. Kawa Organization

The organization, named after the legendary folk hero Kawa, was founded in 1976 by a group that split from DDKD. It holds the belief that the regions inhabited by the Kurdish people have been colonized by foreigners and that their liberation can only be achieved through armed struggle.

4.1.7. Rızgari (Kurdistan Liberation Party) and Ala Rızgari (Kurdistan Red Liberation Party)

The organization, which took its name from the magazine it published, was founded in 1977 by another group that split from DDKD. The majority of its members are based abroad, and the association is rooted in the pre-1980 Anti-Colonialist Cultural Associations (ASK-DER).

4.1.8. Kurdistan National Liberationists (KUK)

The Kurdistan National Liberation Organization, which conducts initiatives aimed at intellectuals and youth, has established a particularly effective organization in the border-adjacent areas of the Southeastern Anatolia Region. It was founded in 1978 by individuals who split from TKDP with the aim of establishing an independent socialist state in the region where they were active.

4.1.9. Bahoz

The Bahoz organization was founded in Sweden in 1970 under the leadership of Bedirhan Anter and Anter Anter. Its name, which means "storm" or "tornado," is also known as the Kurdistan Struggle Association.

4.1.10. Tekoşin (Kurdistan Struggle Organization)

The Kurdistan Struggle Organization, that is, Tekoşin, was formed in 1970 under the leadership of a segment of the Kurdish nationalist faction within THKP/C (Turkey People's Liberation Party/Front). With actions bearing a strong resemblance to those of THKP/C, this organization, renowned for its name through its armed activities, aimed to unite all Kurds under a single umbrella organization and to establish a Socialist Kurdish state (İmset, 1993).

4.2. The Establishment of the PKK Terror Organization

Following the termination by the Turkish state of the activities of the ASALA terrorist organization and other Armenian groups, external powers that supported terrorism found an alternative approach capable of shifting the arena of conflict to Turkey. Accordingly, the objective is to organize Turkey's significant Kurdish population under an organization with an ethnic-ideological foundation, thereby ensuring the continuation of terrorist activities.

In the early years of the young Republic of Turkey, established after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, European powers' efforts to extend their influence in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia through the Kurdish and Nasturi communities were connected to the historical and political dynamics that laid the groundwork for the emergence of the PKK terrorist organization after 1980. This situation is also closely related to those actors' strategies for perpetuating their past experiences and regional interests. As in the past, even today some international actors employ the same tactics and reintroduce the same plans (Pirim and Örtülü, 1999). The separatist organization, known by the short name PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan), organized itself as a very small cadre movement by operating in a covert and cunning manner. Founded during a Nowruz period on 21 March 1973 near Ankara by Abdullah Öcalan and several of his friends, the organization established the ideological foundation of the separatist grouping within the first three years of its inception. During that period, it adopted the name "Kurdistan Revolutionaries" (Pirim and Örtülü, 1999). Beginning in early 1978, efforts to transform the organization into a formal party structure commenced, and on 27 November 1978, it held what it considered its first congress at Fis Village in the Lice district of Diyarbakır Province. As a result, the organizational name was changed from "Kurdistan Revolutionaries" to PKK, marking its official founding date as 27 November 1978. Until that year, the organization's propaganda in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions was known as "Apocular." It is important to note that the primary factor facilitating the organization's rapid development within such a short period was the prevailing national conditions. The temporal circumstances and the chaotic crisis environment in the region were the most significant reasons for its emergence. Moreover, one of the most crucial events contributing to the organization's sudden expansion was its deliberate use of certain ideological motives and ethnic discrimination as propaganda material to mobilize support. Considering the geographical area in which the organization expanded during the 1980s—characterized by poor transportation, a lack of facilities such as electricity and communications, and significant deficiencies in connectivity—it is evident that these adverse conditions, coupled with an environment conducive to the organization's interests, greatly contributed to its development. These and similar factors have been pivotal in the organizational development and strengthening phases of terrorist groups (Özdağ, 2008).

4.3. The Ideology and Strategy of the PKK Terror Organization

The formation of an organization's ideological structure is influenced by factors such as the political atmosphere at the time of its establishment, its geo-strategic position, prevailing intellectual currents, the conjunctural situation, and the political views and ideological foundation of its founding leader. In the case of the PKK terrorist organization, it is maintained that the ideology underlying its continuous development, organization, and group formation even before its formal establishment was Marxist-Leninist in nature. This ideology was particularly effective in shaping the emergence of the

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"Kurdish Nationalism" movement by rapidly instilling the Kurdish concept and structure among the masses, taking advantage of the leniency in the provisions on mass movements found in the 1961 Constitution. The PKK developed based on the belief that, under the guidance of "Scientific Socialism," it could eliminate the feudal order and colonialism and establish an independent state by attracting the world's socialist forces solely through the aid of Marxist-Leninist ideology (İmset, 1993).

Based on Marxist-Leninist principles and with the objective of establishing an Independent Kurdistan State, the organization has developed a four-stage strategy consisting of: ensuring cultural and social rights and freedoms, establishing an autonomous or federative administration, creating a Northern Kurdistan State, and establishing an independent, united, and democratic Greater Kurdistan State. Believing that these main strategies can only be achieved through guerrilla operations, the organization is convinced that a prepared, planned, organized, and prolonged people's war is necessary. This process, rooted in guerrilla warfare and referred to in the literature as a "prolonged people's war," comprises three phases: "strategic defense," "strategic balance," and "strategic attack" (Özcan, 1999).

5. DOMINANCE STRATEGY AND OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

5.1. The Use of Violence in the Dominance Strategy of the PKK Terror Organization

Since its inception, the PKK terrorist organization has consistently incorporated violent actions in the strategies it has implemented over a period spanning more than thirty years. It is evident that the PKK consistently opts for armed actions as its method of struggle, developing a strategy aimed at imposing fear and violence on the local population in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia—areas where it seeks to establish its influence—in order to force the public to accept the prevailing situation. These violent actions serve to portray the organization as the sole power in the region through coercion, thereby compelling the populace to choose between the state and the organization. In this context, any ensuing societal rupture lays the foundation for the conflict environment that the PKK intends to establish in the region (Okumuş, 2015).

5.2. Actions Committed by the PKK Terrorist Organization

In line with its strategy of dominance, the violent actions executed by the PKK terrorist organization—which began with an attack on the residence of Şanlıurfa MP Mehmet Celal Bucak on 30 July 1979, aimed at publicizing its name—are examined within this framework. According to the Human Rights Association, a total of 25,805 individuals lost their lives due to terror-related violence between 1993 and 2011.

Table 1. İHD Casualties in Acts of Terrorist-Related Violence

Year	Deaths in Armed Conflict	Killings of Civilians	Deaths Caused by Landmines and Loose Explosives	Suspicious Soldier-Police Suicides
1993	3333	807	-	-
1994	5000	458	-	-
1995	3894	230	-	-
1996	2859	119	-	-
1997	2514	151	-	-
1998	1718	91	-	-
1999	857	138	-	-

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2000	147	52	-	-
2001	92	30	-	-
2002	30	7	35	
2003	104	6	20	18
2004	240	28	59	18
2005	499	39	70	17
2006	345	82	40	21
2007	424	27	14	36
2008	432	22	28	24
2009	141	36	22	34
2010	244	51	5	47
2011	318	21	-	31
Total	22971	2295	293	246

Source: TBMM Araştırma Komisyonu, Terör Ve Şiddet Olayları Kapsamında Yaşam Hakkı İhlallerini İnceleme Raporu, 24. Dönem 3. Yasama Yılı.

5.2.1. Acts of Economic Violence

In addition to its strategy of establishing dominance in the region, the PKK began to engage in Turkey's political administration by carrying out operations aimed at inflicting economic distress on the country. It has pressured and extorted local businessmen involved in regional investments, leading to a reduction in investment activities. Moreover, the organization exploits every available economic opportunity, launching numerous attacks and acts of sabotage by damaging buildings, facilities, vehicles, and equipment belonging to public institutions, as well as citizens' property and livestock.

5.2.1.1. The Organization's Sources of Income

Since the early 1990s in Turkey, as the number of PKK actions increased, its financial resources diversified as well. With the organization garnering more international support and an increasing number of supporters every day, its relationships also began to vary. During its period of consolidation in Syria, the PKK initially set its sights on the Kurds in Georgia and especially those in Armenia. In Armenia, which has had its issues with Turkey, the PKK easily developed ties, sending its cadres there and beginning to recruit supporters among the Kurds. Recognizing that organization would be easier among the Kurds who migrated illegally to Armenia during the early years of our Republic, the PKK further expanded its influence by also affecting the Ezidis. One of the organization's most significant sources of income has been the profits derived from smuggling and drug trafficking.

5.2.2. Acts of Political Violence

The PKK terror organization has carried out various attacks during elections by subjugating the public, designating individuals to cast votes, and intimidating those who oppose them. In polling stations, officials were pressured to direct votes toward specific candidates and parties. Blank ballots were required to be submitted with the relevant party's seal, and those who resisted faced abduction, torture, and even death.

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Table 2. Losses of Public Servants in the PKK's Violent Acts

Ministry/Institution	Number of Martyrs
TBMM* (Grand National Assembly of Türkiye)	3
PRIME MINISTRY**	20
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE***	9
MINISTRY OF FAMILY AND SOCIAL POLICIES	-
MINISTRY OF EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS	-
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY	-
MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL SECURITY****	-
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND URBANIZATION	5
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS	39
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY	-
MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES	22
MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS	-
MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK	7
MINISTRY OF CUSTOMS AND TRADE	2
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, MARITIME AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS	36
MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT	-
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM	-
MINISTRY OF FINANCE	5
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION	155
MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE	-
MINISTRY OF FORESTRY AND WATER AFFAIRS	10
MINISTRY OF HEALTH*****	14
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE	-
MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR*****	5216
Police Department	594
Gendarmerie General Command	3105
Gkk	1509
Other	8
Total	5543

Source: TBMM Araştırma Komisyonu, Terör ve Şiddet Olayları Kapsamında Yaşam Hakkı İhlallerini İnceleme Raporu, 24. Dönem 3. Yasama Yılı.

5.3. Other Acts of Violence

5.3.1. Village and Hamlet Raids

On August 15, 1984, an armed and bombed attack was carried out on a Gendarmerie station building in the district of Eruh in Siirt Province, resulting in the martyrdom of one gendarme and injuries to 3 civilians and 9 others. Two days later, on August 17, the PKK targeted the Şemdinli Military Barracks, the Şemdinli District Gendarmerie Command, and the Military Bazaar, causing injuries to one non-commissioned officer and one private.

When the dates indicate November 8, 1984, the organization once again carried out bomb attacks on two houses in the Eruh district of Siirt Province, killing 5 women and 2 children. On December 15, 1984, the terrorist organization attacked the Sığırlı Mezra of Erkent Village, affiliated with the Pervari district of Siirt, resulting in the deaths of 3 civilians.

On January 22, 1987, in Ortabağ Village of the Uludere district in Şırnak Province, during a wedding at a residence, a bomb attack carried out by PKK terrorists resulted in the deaths of eight civilians, including two children and four women. The massacre, which also injured 15 individuals—three of whom were village guards—was widely reported in the press. The following day, in Başyurt (Zaxuran) Village, located in the Midyat district of Mardin Province, a crackdown by the organization in the Efeler (Gündükörte) area led to the killing of 10 people, including seven children (two of whom were infants) and one woman.

5.3.2. Attacks on Police Stations and Security Forces

On October 25, 1995, attacks were carried out on three Gendarmerie outposts near the Midyat district in Mardin Province, resulting in the martyrdom of 17 soldiers, and following the incident, cross-border operations were initiated ("Sınır ötesi operasyonlar 1983'te başladı", 2018). On May 15, 1992, during a raid on the Şırnak Uludere Taşdelen Gendarmerie outpost by a large group of approximately 600 individuals, 27 soldiers were martyred and 40 PKK militants were found dead. On June 3, 1992, the PKK terrorist organization set an ambush in the Kupik Tepe area of Karageçit Village in Şırnak; however, security forces detected the situation early, and the operation did not succeed. As a result, 5 terrorists were killed and 1 was captured alive. On August 30, 1992, a group of PKK terrorists who managed to infiltrate Turkey from Iran attacked the Hakkâri Alan Gendarmerie outpost. In the ensuing clash, 43 PKK members were killed, while during a cross-border operation by the Turkish Armed Forces, over one hundred PKK militants were captured dead ("Sınır ötesi operasyonlar 1983'te başladı", 2018).

5.3.3. Road Blocking Acts

On June 11, 1992, in the Tatvan district of Bitlis Province, 13 individuals in a minibus, stopped by a group of PKK members, were lined up and executed by gunfire (Toktaş, 2018). On October 20, 1992, near Hazarşah Village in the Solhan district of Bingöl, 13 passengers of a bus that had been intercepted by PKK militants were lined up and shot, with 6 additional individuals injured. On December 7, 1992, an ambush on a minibus in Mardin resulted in 4 fatalities and 12 injuries. On May 24, 1993, PKK militants halted a bus carrying soldiers on the Elazığ-Bingöl highway, abducted 36 unarmed Turkish soldiers, lined them up, and shot them, leaving 33 soldiers martyred (Aydın, 2012).

On October 13, 2012, along the 25th kilometer of the Tunceli-Erzincan Pülümür highway, during a clash with a terrorist group that had blocked the road, a police officer killed one terrorist and injured another (Tosunoğlu, 2012). In Batman, on May 25, 1995, a PKK militant attempting to plant a bomb at a minibus stop—where a passenger had been dropped off—had a bomb detonate in his possession, causing the death of the militant along with seven other people, and injuring 20 individuals.

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On August 13, 1996, in Sivas Kangal, an attack on the Demiriz Train Station at Akçaşehir Village by a group of nine PKK members, including two women, resulted in the death of eight Turkish State Railways employees. Four days later, on August 17, 1996, near the Eğriçimen Plateau in the Koyulhisar District, PKK militants who had blocked the road fired upon four vehicles, leading to the death of four civilians and injuring seven others. On August 22, 1996, a group of PKK militants attacked village guards on duty in Şemdinli by launching rockets near the Örencik Mezra, resulting in the deaths of three village guards and five other individuals. On November 8, 1996, in Köprülü Village of the Çukurca District in Hakkâri Province, PKK militants carried out a rocket-propelled attack on a minibus, causing the death of 12 village guards and 17 others, with eight individuals injured. On the same day, operations by security forces in various Southeastern provinces led to the discovery of 22 deceased PKK terrorists. Finally, on December 15, 1997, a minibus traveling toward the district in Mardin Province's Dargeçit district collided with a mine laid by the PKK near Yoncalı Village, resulting in 12 deaths and 12 injuries.

6. CONCLUSION

An examination of the actions carried out by the PKK terrorist organization reveals that it invariably employs armed operations, using violence intensely as its mode of struggle. Since its first action—marking the announcement of its establishment—the organization has executed numerous armed and bomb attacks, considering violence as its most powerful argument in its strategy of dominance and acting accordingly. In this context, a review of these operations indicates that, particularly during its early years, the organization frequently targeted villages and rural settlements with raids aimed at subjugating and instilling fear among the civilian population. Simultaneously, with the same objective in mind, it conducted raids on homes belonging to individuals and tribes in districts and urban centers who were not supporters of the organization, seeking to consolidate its dominance. The village and rural raids during this period were characterized by the nature of massacres, causing the loss of many civilian lives regardless of age or gender.

It can be argued that the reason behind the massacres carried out by the PKK terrorist organization during this period was that, although its initial action was directed against state authority, the local population sided with the state, thereby preventing the organization from achieving its desired impact. In this context, the PKK has executed numerous massacres of civilians both to instill fear and demoralize the public, and to create the impression that the state is incapable of protecting its citizens, thereby drawing them to its side (Yayman, 2011). In fact, some of these massacres were even intended to be portrayed as having been carried out by the security forces of the Republic of Turkey in order to garner support. Careful investigations—as well as evidence published in the Turkish-language Serxebun Magazine, which is favorable to the PKK—have demonstrated that these operations were carried out by the organization itself and not by state forces. It has been stated that these violent actions aimed to create an atmosphere of fear, generate distrust, and increase anti-authority sentiment (Cantenar and Tümlü, 2016). In addition to village raids targeting civilians and attacks on tribes that did not support it, the organization also conducted assaults against state officials, public institutions, schools, and construction sites in a similar manner, with the purpose of creating the impression that the state is incapable of protecting its personnel and institutions, thereby asserting its dominance through violence. Over time, the increasing targeting of teachers is indicative of the PKK's keen analysis of the vulnerabilities of the local population. Since it is easier to recruit those deprived of education into the organization, teachers and schools became targeted; in this regard, during a raid on a hamlet in Lice, Diyarbakır on May 21, 1987, a village teacher and a village imam were martyred. In another raid on June 25, 1995, in Silvan, an incident occurred in which villagers, who were praying in a mosque, were forced out and lined up to be shot, indicating that the PKK's attacks on religious officials and places of worship were an effort to undermine the strength of religious unity.

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An examination of the number of operations during this period reveals that, in addition to village raids, the PKK terrorist organization also targeted numerous gendarmerie posts and official buildings, demonstrating its effort to establish sole dominance in the region. In addition, during the 1988 assassination attempt on the former Diyarbakır Prison commandant, the operation featured the display of the bodies of two ex-convicts as a form of salute to the commandant, with the aim of propagating the idea that the state was rendered powerless against the organization. Likewise, when considering the roadblock incidents—said to be carried out for identification purposes—the practice of lining up individuals opposed to the PKK, whether they were soldiers or official personnel, and subjecting them to gunfire can be interpreted as a similar demonstration of strength. This is an important example that underscores the significance of violence in the PKK’s strategy of dominance. On May 24, 1993, on the Elazığ–Bingöl highway, during an operation to block a moving military vehicle, 36 military personnel (all civilians and unarmed) were forced out and lined up, resulting in the martyrdom of 33 soldiers—again illustrating the PKK’s use of violence as a display of power. After its initial action, the PKK increased its massacres against the civilian population with the dual aims of gaining acceptance from the local people and establishing its dominance. Although the organization initially sought to secure a specific geographical area in the region, it gradually shifted its operations to other areas. In many regions of Turkey, the PKK initially focused on armed attacks; however, in later operations, it placed greater emphasis on the use of bombs and mines. In particular, attacks executed by detonating previously laid mines during the passage of military vehicles constitute the earliest instances of explosive-based terrorist operations. Occasionally, attacks on healthcare teams were also carried out by luring officials into mine-infested areas with false alerts in the form of ambushes. The PKK further escalated these violent actions into a deliberate show of bodies. In a study conducted by CANTENAR and TÜMLÜ in 2016, which examined 1,724 operations carried out by the PKK between 1993 and 2012 and listed the types of operations most frequently used, it was found that the most common operations were those carried out by ambush and mine. This finding can be interpreted as the PKK’s attempt to demonstrate its strength by achieving successes through unconventional warfare that it could not secure via direct combat. The third most frequent type of attack was harassment, which can also be seen as an effort to showcase strength through violence. In addition, the numbers of kidnappings and sabotage operations were quite high. Through these actions, the PKK sometimes aimed to intimidate, while at other times it sought to generate material revenue through ransom and extortion. Moreover, another purpose of these operations—similar to that of roadblocks, village raids, and assaults on gendarmerie posts—was to show that the PKK’s power was unstoppable and that the state was incapable of protecting its citizens. In conclusion, it is evident that the PKK terrorist organization attempts to draw the public to its side and incite the people against the state by using various ideological elements and employing coercion and violence.

Although it is well known that the Turkish Armed Forces have achieved success over the past 35 years predominantly through manpower-based operations, in today’s environment of rapidly evolving technology, terrorist targets detected by armed unmanned aerial vehicles (SIHA and İHA) are being neutralized by jets of the Turkish Air Force. This approach enables highly effective and successful operations without incurring any personnel casualties, and these operations must continue unabated. Our country should steadfastly pursue its political and armed struggle, elevate the economic level of the local population, and implement educational programs to raise awareness among the people. Such measures would help prevent the exploitation of societal values through the Kurdish propaganda propagated by terrorist organizations. The populace must be assured that the state stands by them with all its institutions, safeguarding their lives and property, and that it remains at their side in the face of any danger or terrorist incident.

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