

**ROUND-THE-CLOCK CURFEWS IN NUSAYBIN AND INFORMATIVE REPORT ON
POST-CONFLICT SITUATION**

by

Union of Southeastern Anatolia Region Municipalities (GABB)

Nusaybin Municipality

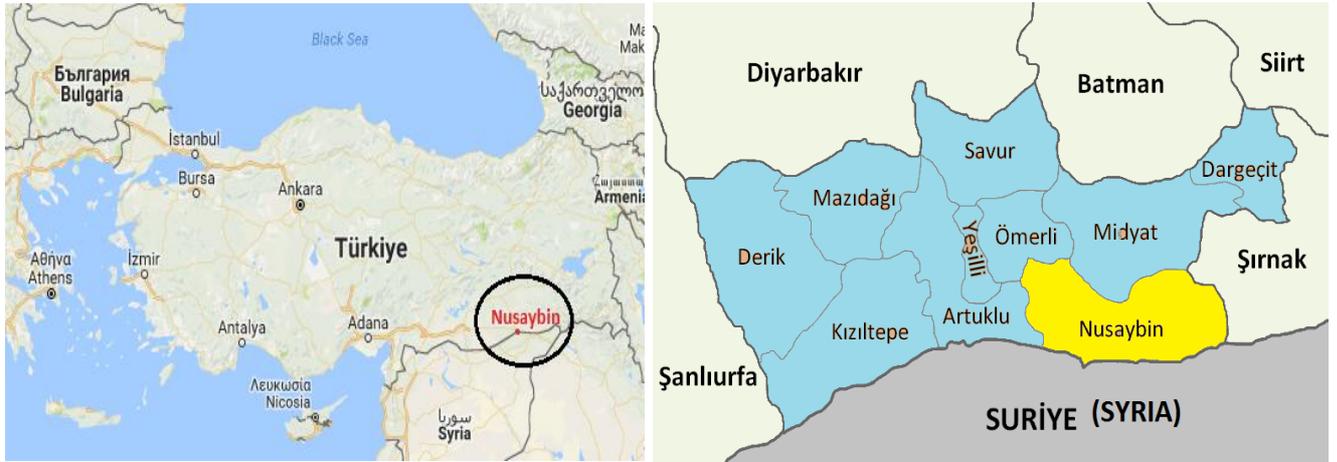
25th of August, 2016, Nusaybin

www.gabb.gov.tr

www.nusaybin.bel.tr

gabbinternational@gmail.com

ROUND-THE-CLOCK CURFEWS IN NUSAYBIN AND INFORMATIVE REPORT ON POST-CONFLICT SITUATION



Round-the-clock curfews and blockades implemented in Nusaybin and a number of cities located the region of since August 2015 have caused a huge devastation and mass forced migration as well as widespread rights violations including “right to live”. Until now, as a result of curfews declared by the central government for tens of neighbourhoods in city centers of 2 provinces and 23 towns of 8 different provinces gave rise forced migration of 500 thousand people, thousands of houses and shops were heavily damaged¹, private properties and houses were expropriated, the region has faced significant economic difficulties and poverty has peaked. This fact sheet aims at delineating what happened in Nusaybin as one of above-mentioned towns during round-the-clock curfews and outcomes emerged after the blockade was removed in certain neighbourhoods.

Round-the-Clock Curfews in Nusaybin

Nusaybin, a town of Mardin province, had a population of 113.594, of which 87.948 used to live in city center while 25.646 in rural side of the city. People in the city witnessed curfews for 7 times during October 2015-March 2016 period while 8th curfew started on 14th of March, 2016. The last round-the-clock-curfew declared by governor’s office lasted for 134 days. On 26 July 2016, curfew was lifted in 9 neighbourhoods (*Gırnavas, İpekyolu, Barış, Devrim, 8 Mart, Selahattin Eyyubi, Yeni Turan, Yeşilkent ve Mor Yakup*) between 5 am and 11 am. On the other hand, round-the-clock curfew still continues in 6 remained neighbourhoods in city center (*Firat, Dicle, Yenişehir, Zeynel Abidin, Abdulkadir Paşa, Kışla* neighbourhoods).

Civilians lost their lives in curfews

25 civilians, including 2 children and 7 women, lost their lives during the curfews in Nusaybin declared in different dates starting with 1st October 2015. Regarding the informations taken from the human rights organisations, the names and ages of the civilians lost their lives are as follows: *Ahmet Sönmez(50), Şahin Turan(25), Selamet Yeşilmen(44), Abdulkadir Yılmaz(65), Hasan Dal(45), Musur Aslan(19), Emin Öz(55), Muhammed Altunkaynak(19), Nurhan Kaplan(45), Şerif Alpar(55), Sedat Güngör(22), Mehmet Emin İnan(55), Cudi Teber (23), Mahsum Alpdoğan(19), Fehime Aktı(56), Hakan Doğan(15), Medeni Orak (45), Rohat Karakoç, Hasan Korkmaz(60), Mehmet Pitek(40), Heyhat Müjde(43), Saadet Müjde(19), Fehime Kurumaz (11), Dilşa Ak (59) and Emire Gök (39).*

¹ Damage Assessment and Forced Migration Report, Aftermath the Urban Armed Conflicts in Southeast of Turkey, published by GABB, 30 June 2016, <http://www.gabb.gov.tr/doc/2016/07/gabbhasartespit/GABB-Report-EN.pdf>

Weaponry Used by Turkish Armed Forces in the Course of Curfews

In the course of blockade, weapons which are used only in conventional warfares such as tanks, artilleries, grenade throwers, bridge tanks and howitzers were employed by the Turkish Armed Forces in Nusaybin. In addition to use of heavy weaponry and military vehicles, thousands of soldiers, policemen and special forces units participated the military operation. In the midst of military operation, authority of governor's office was transferred to military commanders in Nusaybin by April 2016. Use of heavy weaponry in urban areas where civilians live, which is violation of binding international agreements signed by Turkey, increased volume of devastation in the city as well as number of rights violations committed. This change also left no civilian bureaucracy that municipal bodies could communicate.



Photo: A Snapshot of the Area Enclosed via Fences in Nusaybin

Enclosure of 6 Neighbourhoods with Wire -Fences in the City Center

The 6 neighbourhoods where round-the-clock curfews still continue have been enclosed with wire fences. Those fences having 2,5 metres-long height divide the city into two and people are not allowed to enter that particular zone. In this area, there are 9575 houses and shops. 70 percent of buildings in this area, where most severe clashes took place, are either seriously damaged or still being demolished in accordance with a decree taken by the authorities. While authorities do not provide any official explanation about the extent of destruction, they also do not allow the independent damage assessment teams to enter the area that blocks flow of reliable information. Local authorities and residents of Nusaybin claim that majority of destructions took place after the central government announced that the military operation is ended in Nusaybin on 3rd of June, 2016.

Since the enclosed area is located at the center of Nusaybin city, ongoing destruction process can be observed clearly from outside. 41.927 people used to live in these six neighbourhoods, all of them were forced to migrate without even having chance to get any of their household belongings.

Damage Assessment

While those six neighbourhoods still remain enclosed as of 25 August 2015, damage assessment could be partially conducted in remaining nine neighbourhoods by GABB (Union of Southeastern Anatolia Region Municipalities), Mardin Metropolitan Municipality and Nusaybin Municipality. According to the damage assesment, buildings damaged partially and heavily were detected in Moris and Devrim neighbourhoods aligned next to the enclosed area. Until now, over 300 applications were submitted to Nusaybin Municipality for a damage assessment.



Photo: Fences around the enclosed area in Nusaybin. Warnings: "It's Forbidden to Trespass" and "Forbidden Zone"

There have been serious damage in Kaçakçılar Bazaar and nearby structures which are the heart of economic activities in Nusaybin. On the one hand, damage assessment of 197 shops located in Kaçakçılar Bazaar continues, on the other hand, 270 more applications for damage assessment wait for action. So far, it could be diagnosed that 22 houses were damaged. In addition to this, Acatlar Passage inside the Bazaar was burned down and destructed utterly with more than 20 shops in it. Moreover, it was also documented that these shops were looted and goods in these shops were stolen according to the recorded statements of the shop owners

Damage assesment also conducted in public parks as well as cafeterias and such structures in these parks. Women's Cooperative and the cafeteria nearby within the Democracy Park was raked randomly, thus external structure and belongings in these buildings were damaged. Must Anter Park, the biggest park in the city with a 24 decares area and about 7000 trees in, was totally destructed and each tree in this park were destroyed one by one as well.



Photo: Acatlar Passage after the curfew

Forced Migration and Humanitarian Crisis

42 thousand people who used to live in 6 neighbourhoods enclosures with fences and about 25 thousand of 46.021 people from 9 remaining neighbourhoods were forced to migrate from Nusaybin city which had a population of 113 thousand before round-the-clock curfews started. The remained people kept on living in neighbourhoods with less-intensive conflict in city center, but under round-the-clock blockade. Majority of those people migrated to Mardin city center, villages, nearby towns as well as to Diyarbakır, Batman and Van cities. Based on applications for aid to municipalities

officially, it was diagnosed that 27.398 people migrated to Mardin city center - Artuklu, 18.910 to Kızıltepe, 11.228 to Midyat, 4340 to Dargeçit and remaining ones to other cities in the Kurdish region.

Just after the curfew was lifted partially, residents of the city started to come back to Nusaybin. Particularly people used to live in that 9 neighbourhoods have already begun to come back. Nevertheless, people who used to live in those 6 neighbourhoods have faced a serious problem due to lack of accommodation.



Photo: Musa Anter Park and destroyed neighbourhoods behind it.

Due to lack of undamaged house stock in Nusaybin accompanied with poverty stemming out of dispossession, most of those families could not find shelter despite they came back. Therefore, some of them started to live in public buildings such as mourning houses, wedding houses and etc. and very less number of them could find a proper housing. A considerable number of people either continue to live in tents or as group of families in houses. Such condition brings a bunch of other problems pertaining to health and nutrition.

Social and Psychological Impacts

Both people who were forced to migrate as well as those who lived under the blockade have been affected from this process seriously. Those families who forced to migrate or had to live in tents faced serious nutrition, health problems and their children could not continue their education. Remaining ones who lived under the siege were subjected to sounds of bombs, tanks and armed clashes in addition to having no access to food and electricity.

Explosives Remain Undetonated

Due to armed conflicts took place in the course of round-the-clock curfews, there are too many explosives remain not-yet-detonated both in enclosed area (6 neighbourhoods) as well as in other remaining neighbourhoods. Heyhat Mjde (43) and her daughter Saadet Mjde (19) who entered the forbidden area with permission of security personnel to get some of their belongings in their house on 19 July 2016 lost their lives due to explosion took place in front of their houses. Similarly, a bomb found out in non-curfew neighbourhood by children exploded and 4 kids and 2 adults were wounded on 16 August 2016. And, on 26 August 2016, Fehime Kurumaz (11) lost her life as a result of the explosion of an explosive material that she found in the street.

DEMANDS AND CALL FOR ACTION

- ❖ **While ongoing destruction in Nusaybin can be traced day by day through satellite images, UN-OHCHR to establish a fact-finding mission and a truth commission to go to Turkey and conduct an assesment against the demolishing of structures and also to conduct the same assessment for gross human rights violations and destructions took place in other cities, too (Cizre, Sur, Yuksekova, İdil, Şırnak etc.)**
- ❖ **National and international human rights organizations, local government institutions and activists to act for urgent removal of wire fences, *border of shame*, surrounding 6 neighbourhoods and fastening the process of remigration to Nusaybin through settling families not yet destructed houses.**
- ❖ **Policies to be developed and budget to be allocated in central level in collaboration with local dynamics and municipalities elected by local people regarding the families who face serious accommodation problems, their right to shelter is violated and have no house to shelter; and to organize national and international aid/support campaigns .**
- ❖ **Ongoing policy of depopulating the cities such as Nusaybin, Şırnak, Yksekova and Sur to be stopped immediately and all related efforts to be channelled into purpose of making residents of those cities to remigrate their original hometowns.**
- ❖ **Empowerment solidarity ties for strengthening the social projects particularly for women and children in Nusaybin.**