

## The report of Kolbarnews for the year 1402

At the end of the year 1402, we continue to witness the continuation and exacerbation of the painful phenomenon of "kolbari" (border couriers) in Kurdistan Rojhelat (Iran). Every passing year, the number of kolbars killed or injured due to accidents during kolbari or border violence by government agents increases. This tragic situation acts as a deep wound on the body of society, imposing additional suffering and deprivation on the people of Kurdistan.

A brief look at the dimensions of the catastrophic phenomenon of kolbari shows that this issue is more than just a labor-intensive and hazardous job. Although kolbari is not unique to Rojhelat and is recognized as an economic problem in other parts of the world, in Kurdistan, this phenomenon takes on deeper and more complex dimensions. The intertwining of historical discrimination, political oppression, economic inequalities, and the government's severe security approach has turned kolbari into a multifaceted and perplexing phenomenon.

The exploitative situation in Rojhelat makes kolbari the only means of livelihood for many families, despite their awareness of the deadly risks involved. Limited opportunities for livelihood in Kurdistan, lack of stable industrial employment and investment, unfair wealth distribution, and a very small share allocated to peripheral areas like Kurdistan are evident. The unemployment statistics in Kurdish provinces testify to this inevitable coercion.

While the Iranian government has made all aspects of social, economic, and political life unsustainable for the people of Rojhelat, depriving them of the right to a dignified life, and by destroying the infrastructure of this region, it directly and indirectly exposes people to overt and covert violence. On the one hand, through overt militarization, border securitization, and military confrontation at its extremes, it puts kolbars at even greater deadly risks.

The involvement of children in kolbari and the reduction of the kolbari age to 13, its spread among citizens from other central cities of Kurdistan to the border areas, diversity in the presence of women and other segments of society such as educated individuals, athletes, precarious workers, and unemployed laborers in this phenomenon, bear witness to the evasion of this phenomenon from the economic definitions within the framework of governmental propaganda and non-engaged analyses of other aspects of this economic-political phenomenon.

However, the most urgent aspect of this phenomenon is the multitude of life-threatening dangers that kolbars face in their difficult livelihood paths. Dangers that every year lead to the killing, injuring, and disabling of hundreds of kolbars and the destruction of their own and their families' economic and social lives. Beyond the irreparable physical and psychological effects of kolbari, the harsh nature of this profession and the environment in which kolbars operate, including difficult mountainous passageways, harsh weather conditions, and the presence of millions of leftover landmines from the war, play a significant role in jeopardizing kolbars' lives. Nevertheless, as evidenced in the statistical report before you, compared to natural factors, human factors, particularly direct military confrontations and shootings by government forces stationed at these borders, play a key role in the high death toll of kolbars.

In the hope that efforts such as this report will play a small role in demonstrating the catastrophic and inhumane dimensions of this painful phenomenon and raise public awareness

in Kurdistan and Iran about this problem. Emphasizing the [il]legitimacy of this phenomenon, we once again remind that kolbari is not just a job but a deeply rooted problem and a product of structural injustices and overt discrimination. Only through solidarity and collective protest can we end this tragedy and bring about the right to a dignified life for the people of Kurdistan.

We would like to draw your attention to the statistics collected by Kolbarnews:

Based on the statistics recorded by Kolbarnews in the year 1402, a total of 444 Kolbars have been killed and wounded in border areas and routes between the provinces of West Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and Kermanshah, due to factors such as direct shooting by regime military forces, winter conditions, stepping on mines, falling from mountains or heights, and other causes.

❖ **Out of this total number, 44 Kolbars, equivalent to (10%), were killed, and 400 Kolbars, equivalent to (90%), were wounded.**

❖ **From the total of 444 Kolbars who have been killed and wounded in the year 1402, a total of 373 cases, equivalent to (84%), were due to direct shooting by regime military forces.**

**The situation of fatalities is as follows, out of the total ❖ 44 Kolbars who have been killed:**

- 31 were killed due to direct shooting by regime military forces.
- 1 was killed due to direct shooting by Iraqi military forces.
- 2 drowned in water during their Kolbari journey.
- 2 suffered cardiac arrest during Kolbari.
- 3 died due to hypothermia.
- 2 died in accidents on their Kolbari route.
- 2 were run over by border patrol vehicles.
- 1 fell from a height.

- **The situation of the wounded is as follows, out of the total 400 Kolbars who have been injured:**

- 337 injured due to direct shooting by regime military forces.
- 2 injured due to direct shooting by Iraqi military forces.
- 14 injured due to beating by regime military forces.
- 17 injured due to beating by Iraqi military forces (Border Guard).
- 4 injured due to stone throwing by regime military forces.
- 7 injured due to mine explosions.
- 10 injured due to falls from heights.
- 9 injured in accidents on their Kolbari route.

- **The statistics of Kolbars killed and injured in the year ❖ 1402, categorized by provinces, are as follows:**

- West Azerbaijan Province: a total of 13 Kolbars, equivalent to (3%) killed and injured.
- Kurdistan Province: a total of 262 Kolbars, equivalent to (59%) killed and injured.
- Kermanshah Province: a total of 169 Kolbars, equivalent to (38%) killed and injured.

**The statistics of Kolbars killed and injured in the year 1402, broken down by months, are as follows:**

- Farvardin: a total of 5 Kolbars, equivalent to (1%) killed and injured.
- Ordibehesht: a total of 11 Kolbars, equivalent to (3%) killed and injured.
- Khordad: a total of 18 Kolbars, equivalent to (4%) killed and injured.
- Tir: a total of 16 Kolbars, equivalent to (4%) killed and injured.

- Mordad: a total of 26 Kolbars, equivalent to (6%) killed and injured.
- Shahrivar: a total of 9 Kolbars, equivalent to (2%) killed and injured.
- Mehr: a total of 18 Kolbars, equivalent to (4%) killed and injured.
- Aban: a total of 84 Kolbars, equivalent to (19%) killed and injured.
- Azar: a total of 68 Kolbars, equivalent to (15%) killed and injured.
- Dey: a total of 55 Kolbars, equivalent to (12%) killed and injured.
- Bahman: a total of 49 Kolbars, equivalent to (11%) killed and injured.
- Esfand: a total of 85 Kolbars, equivalent to (19%) killed and injured.



**Out of the total of 444 Kolbars who were killed and injured during the year 1402 in the border areas of Kurdistan, 37 of them are children under 18 years old.**