

# THE TIME HAS COME! FREEDOM FOR ÖCALAN!

## **Crisis**

The Kurdish question relates to Iraq, Iran, Syria and in particular Turkey and is one of the major unsolved problems of the Middle East. For many years Turkey, and now ISIS, have been threatening the Kurds with genocide. In this conflict countless lives have been lost. Cities and villages have been destroyed, genocidal attacks have taken place. Millions of people have become refugees dispersed over different territories. Thousands of women have been sold into slavery by ISIS.

The Middle East is in deep crisis. But not all is black, there is hope!

## **Hope**

Abdullah Öcalan, founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), has led the struggle for Kurdish rights for many years. In 1999, he was abducted from Kenya and brought to Turkey. In prison, he wrote numerous books which advocated a democratisation of Turkey and the whole region. Recently, he has inspired the democratic and feminist revolution in Northern Syria / Rojava.

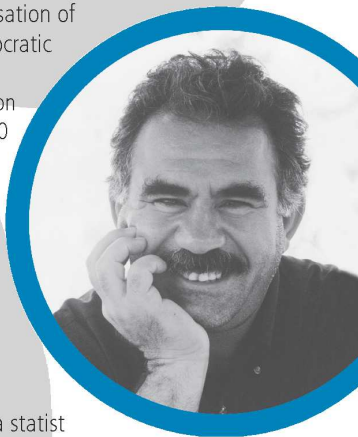
Öcalan has been isolated in prison for almost 20 years now on İmralı Island, Turkey's equivalent to Robben Island. For more than 10 years he was the only prisoner on the island. Despite the horrendous conditions, Öcalan has never given up hope for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in the Middle East, especially the Kurdish question. For several years the Turkish government held talks with him about a resolution of the conflict. In Northern Syria people inspired by his writings have created a multi-ethnic, multi-religious democratic system. Öcalan has become a symbol of hope for peace and democracy in a troubled region.

## **Inspiration**

Not only was he able to transform the Kurdish society from a statist approach to a confederalist approach, he was also courageous enough to enter into talks with the Turkish state. He has laid down the theoretical and practical grounds for the Rojava revolution, liberation of the Yazidi Kurds in Shengal, as well as the HDP project in Turkey. Thus, prison bars and limited means could not prevent him from inspiring the people.

## **Trust**

The vast majority of Kurds rally behind Öcalan. In 2005-2006, 3.5 million Kurds signed a petition stating that they regarded him as their political representative. He is their most trusted leader and the most important symbol for the struggle for freedom, peace and democracy. Like Nelson Mandela, Abdullah Öcalan represents his people's political will, and his freedom is critical to a lasting peace in Turkey, Syria and Kurdistan.



## Peace

Öcalan has devoted his life to the struggle for democracy, peace and the solution of the Kurdish issue. He initiated numerous unilateral cease-fires and presented constructive proposals. From 1993 onwards successive Turkish governments have from time to time approached Öcalan and thus recognized his key role in the search for a solution. Between 2012 and 2015, The AKP government maintained negotiations with him for two and a half years, during which time Öcalan proposed a step-by-step plan for achieving peace, from confidence building measures, to the silencing of arms under international surveillance, to a permanent political solution to the Kurdish question. The talks collapsed in April 2015, but Öcalan's proposals, laid out in his "Road Map", remain of the utmost importance.

## Freedom

The approach to Öcalan has always paralleled the approach to the Kurdish people. There can be no freedom without the freedom of the political prisoners.

Öcalan's freedom is vital to break the military logic of the conflict and to shift the focus irrevocably towards peaceful negotiations.

## THE TIME HAS COME!

As the crisis in the Middle East deepens and Turkey slides into dictatorship, Öcalan's voice of peace and democracy is more necessary than ever. He is the architect behind the proposal for a dignified co-existence, thus only his freedom shall mean that a reconciliation can be reached. The potential is there, and the conditions are ripe to achieve this.

Now is the time to listen to the people: Freedom, not slavery! Peace, not endless war! Democracy, not dictatorship! This is what Öcalan stands for.

15 February 2019 will mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his abduction and imprisonment. 4 April 2019 will be Abdullah Öcalan's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. We want him out and celebrate with him. The time has come!

## THE "FREE ÖCALAN" WORLD CAMPAIGN

As the one leader who possesses the confidence of the Kurdish people, and as the progenitor of a peaceful solution, Öcalan is indispensable to resolving the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. But he can not fulfil his role from prison, due to the onerous conditions and the extremely restricted communication—he is at present **entirely** cut off from the outside world. To end this isolation is the first, urgent step. And it needs **your** support.

Millions have been rallying for his freedom for many years now. More than 10 million people world-wide have already signed the demand for his freedom. We need your voice, too!

# FREE ÖCALAN!

Support the Campaign! Discuss it in your local community!

For information visit [freeocalan.org](http://freeocalan.org)



International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan – Peace in Kurdistan", Cologne