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ABDULLAH ÖCALANS SITUATION.

ER ÖCALAN I LIVE? – VI KRÆVER ET SVAR NU!

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Er Öcalan i live? – vi kræver et svar nu!

Det kurdiske samfund i Danmark er dybt bekymret for tilstanden for den kurdiske folkeleder Abdullah Öcalan, som siden juni 2015 været udsat for en total isolation i fængselsøen Imrali. I en tid, hvor den tyrkiske præsident Erdogan truer med dødsstrafen, bliver vores bekymringer naturligvis endnu værre, idet Öcalan vil være en af de første, som tyrkisk regime vil henrette, hvis dødstraffen bliver genindført. Som underskrevne organisationer og medborgere i Danmark opfordrer vi det danske parlament til at foretage de nødvendige skridt for at få en afklaring på Öcalans aktuelle tilstand hos det tyrkiske regime.

Siden 5. April 2015 har det ikke været muligt at få en indsigt i tilværelsen for Öcalan. Nelson Mandelas advokat, Essa Moosa, der førte Mandelas sag i en årerække, udtalte d. 19. juli, at Abdullah Öcalans isolation er værre end den Mandela var underlagt. Öcalans helbred og fængselsforhold er i det hele taget afgørende for det kurdiske folk. Kurdere verden over demonstrerer derfor i disse dage for at sætte fokus på Öcalans situation med en forventning om at det internationale samfund griber ind. Vi som underskrevne organisationer vil ligeledes fortsætte med at være på gaderne indtil det bliver bekræftet at Öcalan er live. Den totale isolation mod Öcalan og tyrkiske regimes tavshed omkring hans tilstand udgør grundlaget for vores bekymringer. Vi vil desuden understrege at en eventuel trussel mod Öcalans liv vil bringe Tyrkiet i en mere kaotisk tilstand, idet kurderne på ingen måder vil acceptere, at deres leders liv er truet.

Öcalan, som er grundlæggeren af Kurdistans Arbejderparti (PKK), er fortsat garant for freden og demokratiet i Tyrkiet. Hans rolle som primær forhandler under de nu fejlslagne fredsforhandlinger tilbage i 2013 demonstreret tydeligt, at han anses af kurderne som deres ideologiske front, og at han er i stand til at få begge parter mødes ved forhandlingsbordet. På trods af denne vigtige rolle har tyrkisk regime udsat Öcalan for en forfærdelig isolation, hvor han ikke har mulighed for at møde sine familie og advokater. Siden 5. april 2015 har han ikke haft mulighed for at møde sin familie og han har ikke haft mulighed for at møde sine advokater siden 27. juli 2011.

Derfor er der i dag vakt stor bekymring omkring Öcalans situation. Denne bekymring er blevet udtrykt af hans advokater, familie og offentligheden. Som følge af fredsprocessens sammenbrud har han siden juni 2015 været i komplet isolation. Denne bekymring forstærkes i kraft af den alvorlige udvikling i Tyrkiet, hvor vold mødes med kontra-vold, hvor den tyrkiske stat har jævnet byer i sydøst, erklæret tre måneders undtagelsestilstand, midlertidigt sat EU's Menneskerettighedskonventionen til side og anholdt 16.000 mennesker samt overvejer indførelsen af dødsstraf med tilbagevirkende kraft for landsforræderi.

Öcalans lederskab og analytiske evner gør ham i stand til at påpege retningen, der kan bane vejen for en demokratisk løsning af det kurdiske spørgsmål, der i sidste 40 år kostet mere end 50.000 mennesker livet.

Under fredsprocessen tilbage i 2013 og før genoptagelsen af krigen mod den kurdiske bevægelse har Abdullah Öcalan gentagne gange advaret den tyrkiske præsident Tayyip Erdogan i forhold til at foretage de nødvendige skridt for at etablere freden i landet. Allerede i 2012 kunne Öcalan forudse, at en manglende løsning af det kurdiske spørgsmål vil forårsage et militært kup, hvilket har vist sig at være reelt. Dengang udtalte Öcalan ordret følgende til fredsdelegationen: "*Han (Erdogan, red.) forstår det ikke. Fortæl ham at han handler dumt. Ved at fortsætte fredsprocessen vil jeg støtte ham,*

men hvis fredprocessen a rydes vil mekanismerne og grundlaget for et kup være reelle og han vil ende som Mursi i Egypten.”

Der er derfor brug for international solidaritet mere end nogen sinde, idet tyrkisk regime med Erdogan i spidsen efter det mislykkede kupforsøg ikke vil tillade Öcalan komme i kontakt med omverdenen. Öcalans lederskab og analytiske evner udgør nemlig en reel trussel mod Erdogans regime, der har stået bag adskillige korrupsionssager, massakrer og krigsforbrydelser i Kurdistan og i Syrien.

Med venlig hilsen

Den Demokratiske Kurdiske Folkeforsamling i Danmark, FEY-KURD (Sammenslutningen af Kurdiske Foreninger i Danmark) FOKUS-A (Forbundet for Kurdiske Studerende og Akademikere Kurdisk Forum HDK-A (Folkets Demokratiske Kongres Europa komiteen i Danmark. Demokratiske Union Parti- PYD- komiteen i Danmark og Dansk Kurdisk kvindeforening.

The Committee for Freedom of Öcalan

INFORMATION FILE

2016-04-25

Freedom of A. Öcalan Will Guarantee
Success of the Peace Process in Turkey

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INTRODUCTION

In 1998, Turkey threatened Syria with war if Syria did not expel the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan from the country. As a result of this threat, Abdullah Öcalan left Syria and travelled to Europe in order to promote a political solution. However, due to continued pressure from Turkey, Öcalan could not find amnesty in Europe and eventually found himself in Kenya.



On 15 February 1999, Öcalan was captured in Kenya by Turkish special agents in a clandestine operation backed by an alliance of secret services, CIA and Mossad (which was officially accepted by the US State Department at the time). He was abducted and handed over to the Turkish state. The capture of Turkey's "enemy number one" was claimed by the authorities in Ankara as their victory against the Kurds, who had been waging a mass uprising against the policies of denial and discrimination; a struggle Öcalan had led since the 1980s. The capture of the Kurdish leader was regarded by the Kurds as the outcome of an *"international conspiracy"*, the denial of the legitimacy of the Kurdish struggle, and involving the security services of several nations. His abduction sparked outrage and major protests from Kurds all over the world.



PKK became a signatory to the Geneva Conventions in 1995.

Since this date, this war was subject to the Geneva Conventions, but this was completely ignored by Turkey and its allies. Despite these limitations, Öcalan was deeply committed to a peace process, and with this in mind he began a new quest for a peaceful solution.

Within this framework, Öcalan used his defence to articulate the case for peace and reconciliation between Turks and Kurds based on the recognition of the Kurds' cultural and national differences within a unitary state. The defence by Öcalan was very significant, as at the time Turkey was on the brink of a full scale civil war. This stand prevented Turkey from deteriorating into a Turkish-Kurdish civil war.



Öcalan's lawyers took the case to the European Court of Human Rights to overturn the unfair trial that took place in Turkey. The court ruled in 2003 that Öcalan's trial was not fair, that his right to fair legal representation had been restricted and that he had faced inhumane conditions in Imrali prison. Unfortunately, the ECHR did not fulfil its role completely and did not attempt to adequately investigate the truths behind Öcalan's illegal abduction through the international conspiracy and the breaking of the rules of war. This inadequate

stand is still encouraging the Turkish state to continue with its policies of isolation, and preventing any pressure on Turkey to engage in a legitimate peace process. During the 16 year imprisonment of Mr Öcalan, the CPT prepared several reports – after strong mass actions (hunger strikes, rallies and signature campaigns) by the Kurdish people – in which they accepted that Turkey was infringing the human rights of Öcalan and keeping him in solitary confinement. This, however, never led to any practical sanctions.

CURRENT SITUATION

Turkey's Failed Coup and Erdogan's Anti-Kurdish Agenda

On 15th July 2016 an unsuccessful attempt at a coup happened in Turkey. Even at this early stage, the post-coup process obviously will have important consequences. It is important to understand that this process was started on the 7th June 2015, when Erdogan lost the elections and conducted an anti-democratic intervention into the results. It is important to make a comprehensive analysis of the coup in order to understand the potential outcomes.

Before everything, it is important to specify that this coup was not undertaken by Gulenists. Due to the conflict between the AKP and the Gulenists, sympathisers of Gulen may have taken part in the coup attempt. But by saying "*the Gulenists attempted the coup*" they are trying to make a platform in which **they can suppress Gulen's supporters even more.** By labelling the coup as Gulenist, they are hoping to rally support in order to take revenge on the coup plotters. In other words, they are trying to kill two birds with one stone.

It is evident that this attempt was backed by a large part of the army. If they had planned and executed it more professionally, it may have had a chance to succeed. In this regard, it cannot be said that it was undertaken by Gulenists or a minority; **there isn't enough of a Gulenist presence in the army to pull off a coup.**

Maybe many of the coup plotters who are waging the war against the Kurds in Kurdistan were not practically involved, but it has been understood that many of the Generals in the region supported the coup. They were careful because their participation would have hampered their war effort against the Kurds. However, many of the Generals in the war against the Kurds have been detained as supporters of the coup.

An insistence on war strengthened the hands of the coup-plotters

When the AKP couldn't solve the Kurdish question, it veered towards a war of destruction against the Kurdish Freedom Movement in the past year. Especially towards the end of 2014 and the 7th June 2015 election, the coup mechanism was in place and resulted in the attempt at a fascist coalition. When Erdogan veered off towards war, the army became the main player. Tayyip Erdogan and the AKP were dependent on the army in their war against the Kurdish Freedom Movement.

When Erdogan decided to intensify the war and sent the army to destroy Kurdish towns, the coup mechanism was set in place. During the war, the army strengthened its own hand against Erdogan. This is because the army can only become a central player in Turkish politics while it is in a war against the Kurdish Freedom Movement. So after a period in which the army had lost its centrality in Turkish politics, through Erdogan's notion that **"we won the war in the cities, we destroyed the PKK"**, the army once again gained the confidence to attempt a coup. This coup wanted to redesign Turkish politics. The statement by the coup-plotters clearly points towards this.

"We fought the war, we should do the politics"

The coup-plotters are a new nationalist wing, separate from the Ergenekonists [traditional nationalist statist]. This new trend has been shaped by an opposition to the policies of the AKP. We might even say **that the changes made in the AKP's foreign policy (renewing relations with Israel and Russia, and a change of policy towards Egypt, Iraq and Syria) may have stimulated this new formation. This coup-plotters, who can also be called 'neo-nationalists', have closely witnessed the cooperative relationship between the AKP and ISIS. Due to the fact that they are on the frontlines where this relationship is being implemented, they have learnt how the relationship between the AKP and ISIS is handled. If the coup had been successful, they would have prosecuted the AKP for supporting ISIS with backing from the West.**

It seems as though the coup-plotters' approach was: *"Turkey's main political problem is the Kurdish question, and we are the ones on the front line, so we should shape the politics of Turkey."* When civilian governments do not have any policies in solving the Kurdish question, the coup mechanism is always functioning. The fact that they named themselves *"The Council of Peace in the Country"* is a reflection of their thinking that *"we will conduct the politics when it comes to the Kurdish question"*. In short, their approach was *"whoever is fighting the PKK should dominate politics and own Turkey"*.

After the coup attempt: Sectarian nationalism will create a Turkish ISIS

After the coup was defeated, the AKP and its allies declared themselves as the *"will of the people"* and *"democratic forces"*. The AKP now hopes to strengthen its grasp on power and their anti-Kurdish, anti-democratic system. In this regard the representation of the AKP, its supporters and its allies as the defenders of democracy is a dangerous development; the AKP can more easily implement its anti-Kurdish, anti-democratic policies.

Given that the AKP's allies are the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and chauvinist nationalists, a rise in anti-Kurdish sentiment and anti-democratic approaches can be expected. These forces have become even more tightknit after the coup attempt; this will lead to a deepening of genocidal policies against the Kurds. Just as this coup attempt has emboldened the AKP, its allies and the nationalists, it has also radicalised the sectarian nationalist circles close to the AKP. This will lead to a new breed of Turkish ISIS-like formations, such as *Osmanli Ocaklari*, a paramilitary group organised by Erdogan himself. They are already organising in European countries; links between them and ISIS are already being discussed. These sectarian nationalist trends will further radicalise and become repressive forces against any opposition to the AKP. Many of the people who took to the streets during this period were from these organisations. It can be expected that these groups will step up their attacks against the Kurdish people. The freedom forces of the Kurdish people and the democratic forces of the country should prepare themselves against these attacks.

What the AKP will do -- and the responsibilities of democratic forces

There are statements that say "*this coup attempt should be turned into an opportunity and platform for democratization*". These calls are made with good intentions but need to be followed up. All attempts at a coup can be blocked by democratisation. However, the anti-coup rhetoric of some is not grounded in a **democratic mentality**; rather it is more to do with the ongoing power struggle. **These people aren't democrats or anti-coup!** These people had already taken power through a coup against democracy. For this reason, democratisation cannot be expected of these people in order to hinder possible coup attempts. These people will use this coup attempt in order to cover their real faces and intentions. They have already started doing this.

In this regard, to expect that the AKP will take steps to democratise the country in response to this coup attempt is nothing but self-deception. One needs to take a closer look at Erdogan and the alliances of his Gladio. Nothing other than anti-Kurdish sentiment and anti-democratic development can be expected from this coalition. And when the AKP eventually discards these allied groups, the sectarian nationalist **groups will radicalise and become Turkey's version of ISIS**. Under the ideological and political umbrella of the AKP, a more radical version of the Muslim Brotherhood will be formed in the region. Tayyip Erdogan will see this coup attempt as an opportunity to make preparations and take steps towards this end. There already are sectarian nationalist factions within the police force. Erdogan saw the actions of these groups during this coup attempt. Turkey will become a police state. The police will become an alternative armed force to the army.

The forces of democracy must reanalyse the situation after this coup attempt. The fascism of the AKP will seek to suppress all democratic forces. They will try to get all factions of society to obey its rule. Any **opposition will be labelled as 'coup-supporters' and will be brutally suppressed**. If the forces of democracy do not act to change this situation, Erdogan will force everyone into submission. In this regard, the forces of democracy must understand the reality of the AKP and its allies and must form a new front for resistance.

IMRALI PEACE DELEGATION IN ISTANBUL

This was not only worrying for the Kurdish people, but also for many internationally renowned individuals, academics, human rights activists and politicians. Those people that did not accept the continuous massacring of people formed an initiative named the Imrali Peace Delegation. This initiative was popularly supported by many people around the world. Supported by people like Noam Chomsky Professor Emeritus at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and author, US; Mauro Palma President of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe, Italy; Tariq Ali Writer, journalist and filmmaker, UK; Dr Felix Padel Professor at JNU, Delhi and author, India; Prof David Graeber anthropologist, London School of Economics; author and social activist, UK; Baroness Helena Kennedy QC House of Lords, UK; Baroness Jenny Jones House of Lords, UK; Mark Thomas political satirist, author and journalist, UK; Jeremy Hardy, stand-up comedian, actor, writer and activist, UK; John Holloway Professor of Sociology and author, Mexico; Dr Norman Paech, Professor of international and national constitutional law, Hamburg University, retired and politician, Germany; Dr Dafydd Iwan, former President of Plaid Cymru Party, Wales; Dr Bill Bowring Professor of Law in the School of Law, Birkbeck, University of London and author, UK; Mike Mansfield QC President of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, UK; James Kelman Writer and Booker Prize winner, Scotland; Bruce Kent Vice-President Pax Christi, UK; Dr Derek Wall Writer and International Coordinator of the Green Party, UK; Bert Schouwenburg, International Officer, GMB, UK; Stephen Smellie, Deputy Convenor UNISON, Scotland; Grahame Smith, General Secretary, Scottish Trades Union Congress, Scotland; Nick Hildyard Policy adviser, UK; Louise Christian Vice-President of Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, UK; Tony Simpson Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, UK; Ara Sarafian Director, Gomidas Institute, UK; Alastair Lyon lawyer, Birnberg Peirce Solicitors, UK; Matt Foot lawyer, Birnberg Peirce Solicitors, UK; Bronwen Jones barrister, Goldsmith Chambers, UK; Johannes de Jong, Manager of Christian Political Foundation for Europe (CPFE), The Netherlands; Feroze Mithiborwala, well known international activist and the General Secretary of India Palestine Solidarity Forum who recently visited Syria, India, and led by Nelson Mandela's

lawyer, Judge Essa Moosa, a group (Dimitri Roussopoulos, Co-founder of the Transnational Institute of Social Ecology, Quebec, Canada; Janet Biehl, writer, translator, artist, US; Federico Venturini, School of Geography, University of Leeds; Member of Advisory Board of the Transnational Institute of Social Ecology, UK; Dr Thomas Jeffrey Miley, Lecturer of Political Sociology, Cambridge University, UK; **Dr Radha D'Souza**, Reader in Law and social justice activist, UK; Andrej Hunko, German MP of The Left party for Aachen, Germany;



Eirik Eigliad, writer, translator and New Compass Press, Norway; Edgar de Jesús Lucena González, Member of the National Assembly of Venezuela; Joe Ryan Chair of the Westminster Justice and Peace Commission, UK) consisting of people from Canada to Venezuela to India and various European countries applied to the Turkish Justice Ministry to visit Imrali Prison. The delegation conducted

several meetings in Istanbul while waiting for a response from the Justice Ministry. However, the isolation of Ocalan meant that this application fell on deaf ears. Below is a summary of the report from this delegation:

ISOLATION OF ABDULLAH ÖCALAN

The escalation of conflict has coincided with the total isolation of the leader of the Kurdish freedom movement, Abdullah Öcalan, who from his lonely prison cell on the island of Imrali has been a crucial role-player and a consistent voice calling for peace.

Yet the very fact that Öcalan is in prison was a problem even during the talks that occurred for two years starting in March 2013. His condition of imprisonment forces him to negotiate with his captors - an inherent disadvantage. Moreover, in prison he cannot consult with his constituency. Before substantive negotiations can start, the state must first release him, as Nelson Mandela was released before - not after or during - the South African negotiations. Until Öcalan is freed, only talks about talks, and not actual negotiations, can take place. Mandela emphasized that only free persons and not prisoners can negotiate, on behalf his people, for a political solution.

THE ONLY VIABLE SOLUTION

Neither the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) nor the Turkish military could ever decisively prevail in a war that would only exacerbate the severe humanitarian crises in the country, the peace process offers the only solution and Öcalan, as the chief spokesperson for the Kurdish movement, is essential to that process. No progress toward a solution can be achieved without Öcalan's participation.

THE TEN-MEMBER INTERNATIONAL PEACE DELEGATION

On February 14 a ten-member international delegation assembled in Istanbul to try to help restart the Kurdish-Turkish peace process, which has been suspended since the spring of 2015. The leader of the delegation, Judge Essa Moosa of the High Court of South Africa, on behalf of the delegation, wrote a letter to the Turkish Ministry of Justice on February 3 to request two meetings: one with the Ministry, to discuss ways and means to resume the peace process between the Turkish government and Öcalan; and one with Abdullah Öcalan on Imrali to discuss the same issue. We requested that the meetings take place on February 15, which coincided with the seventeenth anniversary of Öcalan's capture and detention. Judge Moosa formerly acted for Nelson Mandela, while imprisoned on Robben Island and elsewhere and was involved in the negotiation process in South Africa.

REQUEST FOR AUDIENCE

Unfortunately the delegation was granted neither of the two meetings that was requested. On February 15 the ministry acknowledged receipt of the letter but did not bother to formally accept or reject the request. Beyond that mere acknowledgment, it gave no response at all by the time the delegation left Turkey. The delegation was not afforded an opportunity to engage the Minister of Justice and Öcalan on the question of the resumption of the peace process.

MEETINGS

The delegation meanwhile met with representatives from a variety of political and social organizations who briefed us on the country's most disturbing situation. They also met with lawyers and lawyer's organizations, who have been deeply involved in the defense of members of the Kurdish freedom movement against criminal charges, and who have themselves been the subject of much intimidation and persecution by the state.

FROM PEACE TO WAR

During the current period of Öcalan's isolation, from April 2015, the Erdoğan government has shifted from a peace footing to a war footing. The shift from peace-making to war-making has coincided with the total isolation of Öcalan. As he enters the eighteenth year of his detention, he leads a solitary life. Two

other prisoners who were formerly present on Imrali have now been transferred to other high-security prisons. Öcalan's only human contact is with his guards. Not even his family can visit him. His lawyers, who have not been able to visit him since 2011, apply to visit at least once a week, but they have applied 600 times now and are repeatedly turned down, given absurd excuses that the boat is broken. No one at all has been permitted to visit since the last HDP delegates left on April 5, 2015. No communication from him has been received since then. He is suffering from poor health and his access to medical care is limited.

*Meanwhile the situation in the country deteriorated rapidly after the elections and the peace process decisively came to an end. Cities have become war zones, pounded with heavy artillery and tank fire. **Children are being killed. People's parents and grandparents are shot dead in streets, but because of the curfew, their bodies cannot be retrieved for extended periods. Certain police forces are licensed to shoot anyone with full impunity, with no fear of consequences. These Special Forces are not commanded by local governors but are directly linked to the government.***

In Cizre, people, many of them civilians who took refuge in three different basements were killed, even burned alive, and now the state is destroying the buildings to eliminate the evidence. Violence against women is on the rise. Women are killed, then stripped and humiliated. These constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. It violates the Third Geneva Convention, to which Turkey is committed and it meets United Nations criteria for genocide.

IMRALI PEACE DELEGATION IN STRASBOURG



The International Peace Delegation continued its work due to the urgency of the situation and decided to visit the most supreme institutions in the Ocalan case. Along with 50 academics that responded to their call, the International Peace Delegation was in Strasbourg between the 18th-22nd of April to meet with

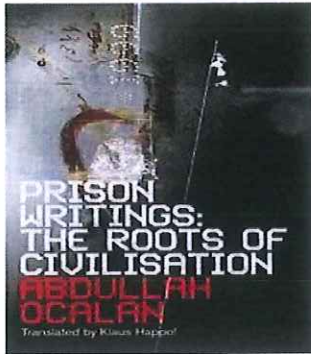
the European Council and the CPT. The delegation while joining the continuous vigil that has been ongoing for four years (25 June, 2012) in front of the European Council also conducted **meetings with the European Commission's Cabinet of the General Secretary, political groups of the Parliamentary Assembly, delegations from member countries and the CPT.** The delegation made this statement after the meetings:

THE RESOLUTION

In the light of circumstances, we, the members of the International Peace Delegation, unanimously resolve as follows:

- *We call upon the Turkish Government and the Abdullah Öcalan to resume the peace process as a matter of urgency. In December 2012, the Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu as the Chair of the Elders, which was founded by Nelson Mandela, in a personal note to the then Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that “Peace is better than War” and appealed to the Prime Minister to resume the peace process with Abdullah Öcalan.*
- *In order for genuine Peace negotiations to take place to resolve the Kurdish issue in Turkey that Abdullah Öcalan, who is a crucial role-player, be released unconditionally from prison, to enable him to take his rightful place at the negotiating table for the lasting resolution of the Kurdish issue in Turkey and for the democratization of Turkey.*
- *We call upon the Turkish Government to level the playing field by, amongst other, legitimizing PKK and other banned organizations, releasing of all political prisoners and permitting exiles to return to the Turkey to participate in the peace process.*
- *We have to lobby our respective governments and non-governmental organizations to put pressure on the Turkish government to resume the peace process as a matter of urgency and in those countries where PKK is listed as a terrorist organization and Abdullah Öcalan is listed as a terrorist that pressure is put on such government to remove them from such list as they are a liberation movement and a freedom fighter in terms of the International Human Rights Instruments.*
- *We call upon the international human rights organizations to investigate, as a matter of urgency, the human rights abuse perpetrated by the Turkish authorities against the civilian population in the areas of conflict and to assess and determine whether such abuses constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and/or contravention of the Geneva Convention.*
- *We call upon the Committee for the Protection against Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of the Council of Europe (CPT), as a matter of extreme urgency, to visit Abdullah Öcalan on Imrali Island Prison in order investigate the violation of his rights, in terms of the European Convention for the Protection Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as a political prisoner in that (i) his right to have access to his lawyers have been violated for the last 5 years; (ii) his right to have access to members of his family have been violated for the last 14 months; (iii) his right not to be completely isolated from social contact which has been violated for an unknown period; and (iv) his right to have access to medical doctors and/or treatment; and to report urgently on their findings to the Council of Europe, the Turkish government and to Abdullah Öcalan and his lawyers.*
- *We call upon the international academic fraternity to come out in support of the dissident academics in Turkey in the interest of academic freedom and give them moral, material, physical and academic assistance.*
- *We call upon members of our delegation to distribute this Report as widely as possible to head of state, foreign minister, ambassadors, officials, the media, both electronic and print, human rights organizations and non-governmental organizations in our respective countries.*

TRANSFORMATION PERIOD



Due to these policies, for many years Öcalan was held in solitary confinement in hazardous conditions on Imrali Island off the coast of Istanbul. His health condition has deteriorated because of the harsh environment of the prison. But despite all his personal difficulties, Öcalan has continued to play a central role in Turkey's politics, and exerts influence among the Kurdish movement which cannot be ignored. From within his prison cell, through his writings and calls, Öcalan changed the paradigm of the PKK in which he called upon them to seek a democratic political solution to the Kurdish question **within the borders of Turkey**. He also called upon the PKK's armed forces to withdraw to a position of self-defence.

Since then, Öcalan and the Kurdish national movement have maintained a consistent stand for a peaceful conclusion to the conflict based on the achievement of justice for the Kurdish people. Through continuous discussions their proposals have evolved into the current demand for **“democratic autonomy”** inside Turkey, a policy which envisages the granting of local decision-making powers in the regions through political, social and cultural rights, such as the use of the Kurdish language and mother tongue education, thus fulfilling longstanding key Kurdish demands.

As a result of the subsequent internalisation of these calls by the PKK, Öcalan advocated a negotiated settlement by putting forward detailed proposals calling on both sides to take steps to bring about a permanent end to the conflict. He has used his stature among the Kurds to urge repeated unilateral ceasefires on Kurdish guerrillas to give peace a chance which they have repeatedly adopted in the face of continued aggression by the Turkish military.

EFFORTS FOR PEACE AND RESPONSE

The first of these calls for peace was in 1999-2004 when the PKK replied to Öcalan's call to cease fire, and retreated from Turkey in order to change its strategy. As a result, in 1999 the PKK withdrew all armed forces outside the borders of Turkey. This marked the beginning of a five-



year cease-fire, the longest in the history of the conflict. In another surprising move in the same year Öcalan suggested that two **“peace groups”** consisting of PKK members should return to Turkey, as a sign of readiness for a peaceful solution. The two groups did indeed arrive in Turkey. But the members of the peace envoy were immediately arrested, and now serve long prison terms.

The Turkish state wasted this opportunity for peace talks, and did not respond positively by taking this gesture seriously. When the escalation of violence took over, in 2006-2007, Öcalan again intervened and called for another ceasefire from the PKK, which the PKK again duly obliged but was left unanswered by the Turkish state.

Öcalan's third call for peace negotiations and a ceasefire came in 2009 when the publicly known 'Oslo meetings' was initiated. From 2009 until mid-2011, secret negotiations, later known as the Oslo Process, were held between Öcalan, a government-appointed delegation of the Turkish state and senior PKK members. The subject was a political solution to the Kurdish question. *Based on the Road Map to Negotiations*, which Öcalan authored in 2009, the parties agreed on three protocols. They contained a phased plan for an end of the conflict and a political solution to the Kurdish issue. Additionally, in 2010, Öcalan called for another peace envoy to enter Turkey.



Subsequently, a group of unarmed guerrillas, and a group of refugees from the Mexmûr refugee camp crossed the border from South Kurdistan (Iraq) into Turkey as a symbolic representation of peace and negotiations. Unlike the earlier peace envoy this group was not arrested immediately, creating a false sense of hope and security. The delegation was welcomed ecstatically by Kurds who hoped that "the war had finally ended".

The Turkish government, however, chose not to implement the plan or engage in discussions, and many members of the peace groups were soon arrested and imprisoned. Due to the escalation of violence after July 2011, Öcalan once again responded to calls by social movements to call for another ceasefire and started a new negotiation process, the so-called 'Imrali Process', in early 2013. Finally, this latest most significant attempt was once again halted by *President Erdogan when he realised that the process was becoming successful in March, 2015, leading him to state that "there is no negotiating table, no Kurdish question and peace process"*. With this statement all hope for a continued peace process were eradicated.

IMPACT ON THE MIDDLE EAST

Abdullah Öcalan is best known as the living symbol for the struggle of the Kurdish people for



recognition and self-determination. The continued systematic denial of these rights has paved the way for numerous massacres and genocidal attacks on Kurdish populations in different countries. Resistances against these attacks have resulted in armed conflicts which have contributed to the overall instability in the Middle East. During more than four decades, Öcalan has made a tremendous effort to transform the conflict from an armed struggle into a political one. Through his continuous efforts, now for the first time

in decades, a political solution seems to be within reach.

In a political atmosphere in the Middle East that increasingly dictates national or religious uniformity and oppression of women's rights, over the last 20 years Öcalan has developed a political philosophy that stands for the implementation of an alternative vision of society. His ideology for peace advocates equal rights for people of all nationalities and beliefs and – especially – the practical recognition of woman's rights and freedoms in all areas of society. This paradigm has proven to be influential and a source of hope for many groups. Policies that follow his approach have helped to keep the *Rojava Kurdish region of Syria* peaceful and stable, while most of Syria sank into chaos, which inspired several long-lasting ceasefires and a promising dialogue between two former staunch enemies: the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

In Rojava, the inclusion of all ethnic and religious groups like *Assyrian, Syriac and Chaldean Christians* into the canton administrations came about due to Öcalan's advocacy and repeated calls for this model. In his writings and statements, Öcalan argues for an inclusive approach and has managed to influence political leaders, Kurdish and non-Kurdish, in the relevant region.

This made the rescue of the *Yezidi-Kurds* possible, contributed immensely to the relatively peaceful development of the region amidst the turmoil of the Syrian civil war and serves as a model for the future of Syria and the Middle East in General. This paradigm of Mr. Öcalan has been adopted by the Kurdish movement in Syria who have been in a tense war against ISIL since 2013.



The Kurdish movement in Syria has applied this paradigm in the liberated areas and have proven to be the most effective force against ISIL barbarism. The success of the Kurdish movement in Syria, not only in the fight against

ISIL terrorism, but also for an inclusive model of coexistence between long mistrustful ethnic and religious groups is reliant on the ideas and paradigm of Mr. Öcalan. The efforts of Abdullah Öcalan for peace and democracy has not only been welcomed by the Kurds in Turkey but especially the other ethnic-religious groups in Syria fighting ISIL. The model of inclusive coexistence has served and can serve, as a powerful tool for peace, stability and prosperity for the peoples of the region.

ISOLATION

Abdullah Öcalan last had access to his legal team on 27 July 2011. Since then, Öcalan has been cut off from the outside world. Neither family members nor lawyers are allowed to visit. Telephone calls or written communication are also not possible.

Even in Turkish law – which is not at all flexible on political prisoners – there is no legal basis for this total and inhumane isolation. Weekly unconvincing excuses, such as a defective vessel or bad weather, are cited to prevent the due visits occurring. However, Prime Minister Erdogan, as well as Minister of Justice S. Ergin, have both stated publicly that it is the government who blocks every visit. Without a doubt, the prevention of Öcalan from having access to his legal

team or the peace delegation is a deliberate policy by the AKP government to silence the most powerful Kurdish voice for a peace process, democracy and human rights in Turkey and the region.



This deliberate isolation also demonstrates the complete arbitrariness of the AKP government whose representatives publicly defend breaches of the law where Kurdish matters are concerned. Another scandalous and illegal development was the detention of Öcalan's complete defence team of 36 lawyers who have been in jail for more than half a year now.

The real scandal however is the silence of foreign countries. The European Convention on Human Rights is valid in 47 states. For over 40 million Kurds, it seems, it is not. At least not for Abdullah Öcalan. The Council of Europe delegates the responsibility for the appalling prison conditions on Imrali Island to the powerless anti-torture committee (CPT) and otherwise deliberately still ignores the matter. Even the much-appraised European Court for Human Rights has so far not been able to determine the facts and conditions of isolation. Turkey, it seems is not constrained by international human rights laws or conventions.

The Kurds and their friends have repeatedly resorted to public and mass protests to show their support for Öcalan, and their rejection of the Turkish government's anti-democratic and anti-human rights policies towards the Kurds. There have also been many campaigns launched for Öcalan's freedom. In a signature campaign conducted in 2005-2006, around 3.5 million people from all parts of Kurdistan signed a statement affirming that they regard Öcalan as their political leader.

On September 6, 2012, a second signature campaign began, demanding ***“Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and other political prisoners in Turkey.”*** The signatories state that ***“Öcalan's freedom will mark a breakthrough for the democratization of Turkey and peace in Kurdistan.”*** The campaign began in Brussels, and subsequently 10, 321 million signatures were gathered. The number of signatures was remarkable considering that the campaign was conducted under immense restrictions— Turkey, Syria, and Iran declared it illegal. Hundreds of people were convicted and sentenced to several years in prison.

ISOLATION: FACTS AND FIGURES

- In the 16 years of Öcalan's imprisonment his family and legal team have always been hindered from visiting him. Mr Öcalan was allowed to meet with his lawyers once a week for one hour, although even this right was never consistently implemented. However, since the 27th of July, 2011, Öcalan has been prevented from meeting with his lawyers.
- Mr Öcalan was previously allowed to meet with his family once a week for one hour. In June 2005 this was reduced to one hour once in two weeks. However, this has come to a complete stop since October of 2014.
- These are the figures for applications made by Abdullah Öcalan's family and lawyers since the 27th of July, 2011:
- From the 27th of July, 2011, to the end of that year, of the 43 applications by Mr Öcalan's lawyers to meet him none were permitted (17 rejected due to bad weather conditions, 23 rejected due to broken down ferry and 2 rejected due to official holidays).
- Throughout the year of 2012 of the 104 applications by Mr Öcalan's lawyers to meet him none were permitted (14 rejected due to bad weather conditions, 73 rejected due to broken down ferry, 16 due to repair of ferry and 1 rejected due to official holidays).
- Throughout the year of 2013 of the 102 applications by Mr Öcalan's lawyers to meet him none were permitted (12 rejected due to bad weather conditions, 86 rejected due to broken down ferry and 4 rejected due to official holidays).
- Throughout the year of 2014 of the 104 applications by Mr Öcalan's lawyers to meet him none were permitted (9 rejected due to bad weather conditions, 86 rejected due to broken down ferry, 6 due to repair of ferry and 3 rejected due to official holidays).
- Throughout the year of 2015 of the 56 applications by Mr Öcalan's lawyers to meet him none were permitted (5 rejected due to bad weather conditions, 27 rejected due to broken down ferry and 24 due to repair of ferry).



Needless to say, all of the reasons given above are clear violations of Öcalan's human rights as a political prisoner and in direct breach of international legal norms and values. Nothing has been done since by the Turkish government and the international community and major organizations to address this violation, which not only limits the human rights of Öcalan but also silences the needs of millions of Kurds who rely on Öcalan as the voice for

their human rights, calls for peace and democracy. To silence Öcalan is to silence the Kurds and their basic and fundamental human rights.

THE REALITY IN TURKEY AND THE ONLY WAY FOR PEACE



Turkish context Öcalan's total isolation is politically thoughtless. It was Öcalan who was able to urge the Kurdish guerilla to adhere to several cease-fires. No one else is capable of exerting such an influence on the Kurdish forces. His constructive proposals for a political solution, laid out in his Road Map, formed the basis of the 3-year negotiations between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. A solution to the conflict was within grasp; However, Recep Tayyip Erdogan stopped the negotiations abruptly and stepped up the attacks against Kurdish civil society.

This sudden change in policy by the AKP government solved none of the existing and ongoing problems, but instead created new ones. The clashes between Kurdish guerillas and the Turkish army have rekindled, the situation seems ever more complex and a solution for peace even more out of reach. But even Erdogan will have to realize that the Kurdish issue can only be solved through dialogue and through concrete steps to accept the human rights of ethnic and religious groups in Turkey. With the rise of popular political parties such as HDP, which recently gained a historical win in the Turkish parliament, the democratic call of the people of Turkey for peace, for democratization, for political reforms, gender equality and human rights is increasing. It is essential that the Turkish government resumes negotiations to prevent further bloodshed.

Öcalan's actions throughout the last years have proven that the Kurdish leader is able to play a balancing role regarding Turkish and Kurdish interests. This balance is the precondition for a lasting and legitimate peace. The ball is now in the Turkish government's court to put things on track.

Abdullah Öcalan's release, as a vital contribution to the solution of the conflict, is therefore inevitable. To continue to silence and isolate Öcalan is to continue to ignore the Kurdish question in Turkey, and to fail to take concrete steps towards political reforms and democratization. To fail to address this issue humanly and according to international legal norms and values is to highlight that Turkey has no intention to uphold universal human rights.

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PROCES-VERBAL DE CONSTAT

L'AN DEUX MILLE QUINZE

LE 25 MARS

A LA REQUETE DE

The International Initiative « Freedom for Ocalan, Peace in Kurdistan » avec siège social à 1060 BRUXELLES, « Kurdistan National Congres » rue Jean Stas 41

Je soussigné, **Célestin PLUGERS**, Huissier de Justice, de résidence à 3090 OVERIJSE, Brusselsesteenweg 80

Me suis rendu au siège prénommé où j'ai rencontré une préposée de l'organisation soit Madame OZLEM TANRIKULU.

Elle me montre les signatures réceptionnées en réponse sur la pétition organisée. Au hasard je vérifie.

Le solde du constat de ce jour s'élève à 701.903 pour les villes Kurdes en Turquie et la Russie .

En supplément du constat du 10 février 2015 le total s'élève des lors à :

Constat du 10.02.2015 : 9.548.303

Constat du 25.03.2015 : 701.903

TOTAL : 10.250.206

Je joins la liste me remise en annexe.