



*Kongreya Neteweyî ya Kurdistanê*  
*Kurdistan National Congress*  
*Congrès National du Kurdistan*

**KNK**

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INFORMATION FILE

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## **THE PEACE PROCESS IN TURKEY-KURDISTAN HAS REACHED A SERIOUS STAGE**

**HDP and AKP Government Issue joint statement: Kurdish Leader Abdullah Ocalan made a historical declaration to solve the Turkey's question of democratization and the Kurdish Issue**

*Will the Turkish government seize this opportunity and start the negotiations process?*

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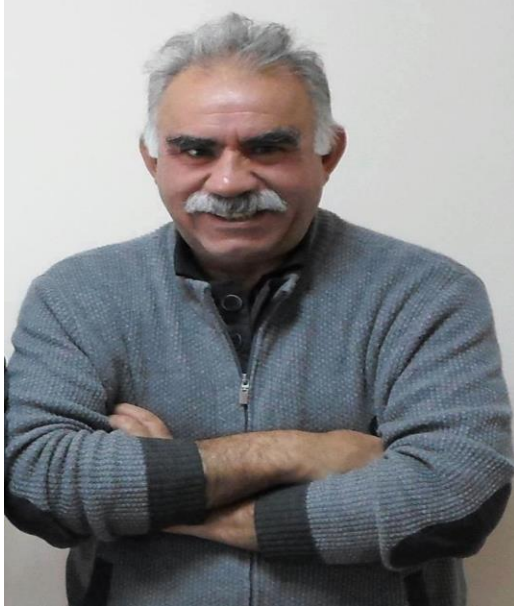
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**Abdullah Ocalan, Imrali Island Prison**

*21st March 2015*



**TO ALL OUR PEOPLE;**

I am greeting the Newroz of all our people and friends who are on the side of peace, equality, freedom and democracy.

The crisis caused by neoliberal policies imposed on the whole world by imperialist capitalism and its despotic local collaborators is affecting our region and country. In this environment of crisis, ethnic and religious variations among our people and within our cultures are being erased by meaningless and brutal identity wars. Neither our historical nor our modern values, neither our conscience nor our political values can remain silent in this bleak political landscape. On the contrary, urgent intervention is our religious, political and moral responsibility.

Our struggle for democracy, freedom, fraternity and the honourable peace of our people is the next historic step. This painful struggle of our forty-year movement has not come to nothing, but is now at a stage which cannot continue in the same way. History and our people demand peace and a democratic solution proper to the spirit of the time. In this way, we are faced with a mission to start the new process on the basis of ten articles which are officially declared in the historic Dolmabahçe Sarayı.

With the agreement on principles in the declaration, I see it as historically necessary to hold a congress to bring to a stop the nearly 40-year armed struggle carried out by the PKK against the Turkish Republic, and to determine societal strategies and tactics suitable for a new period. I hope that it is possible to come to a principled agreement in a short time through the truth and reconciliation commission, which is composed of parliamentary members and the monitoring council, in order to make this congress successful. With this congress the new period begins. In this new period, we are entering a new process in the Turkish Republic based on free and equal constitutional citizenship in a democratic society, with democratic identity, living in peace and fraternity. In this way, going beyond the conflict-ridden 90-year history of the Republic, we approach the future in genuine peace and with the universal criteria of democracy. The real historical meaning of Newroz is to join with you in welcoming this process. However, what is right for our country and our people should at the same time be valid for our whole region which is sacred. The reality of capitalist imperialism for the last two hundred years in general, and especially for the last hundred years, is: On the basis of nation state nationalism, to set ethnic and religious identities against one another; that is, it has always depended on a policy of divide et imperia, divide and rule!

We should know that the old brutality of the imperialist powers - who do not give up their ambitions in the Middle East – has come back in the image of ISIS. This organization

exemplifies the meaning of brutality, slaughtering Kurdish, Turcoman, Arabian, Ezidi and Assyrian people without sparing women and children.

The day has come to terminate this brutal and disastrous assault, and to change over to the fraternity and democracy befitting our past. In my belief, it is necessary to facilitate open democratic identities in order to bring a democratic solution to the problem of confrontational, exhausting and disastrous nationalism on which nation states depend. For this, I call on nation states to engage in a new type of democratic process, and I call on them to build for themselves a new democratic collective abode in the Middle East. In addition, today I call on the women and youths who beat the wings for freedom, and who form the overwhelming majority, to strive for success in economic, social and political fields and in the realm of security. Furthermore, I salute the resistance and victory of Kobane which has great significance for our region and for the whole world. In this manner, I greet the “Spirit of Eşme<sup>1</sup>” which has been embellished as a symbol of a new era. These declarations which I have stated above comprise in one sentence a vital call for the rebuilding of society and for revision and restoration, both for our past and for our present.

Once again, I greet this historic Newroz and wish for it to be beneficial for all the people of the world.

**Long live Newroz!**

**Long live the fraternity of all peoples!**

*Foto: Newroz 2015 Diyarbakir-Amed*



<sup>1</sup> Eşme is the village that the Suleyman Shah tomb was moved to by YPG forces and Turkish soldiers in February 2015. Ocalan is highlighting the unity and co-operation of Kurds and Turks. The HDP Imrali delegation and representatives of the AKP government have held a joint press conference on the process of resolution.



## II. OCALAN STATEMENT OF INTENT REGARDING A POSSIBLE PKK CONGRESS BASED ON A MINIMUM CONSENSUS ON THE 10 ARTICLES STATED

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### **HDP and AKP Government Issue Joint Statement**

*ANF-28<sup>th</sup> February 2015*

The HDP Imrali delegation, that a few days ago met KCK executives in Kandil, comprising deputies Pervin Buldan, Idris Baluken and Sirri Süreyya Önder today met Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan and Interior Minister Efkan Ala. Following the meeting a joint press conference was held. A statement was read out by Sirri Süreyya Önder.

#### **‘The problem concerns the transformation of the state’**

The statement was as follows: “We are on the verge of an historic decision process. Since the beginning of the process the problem has concerned the transformation of the state. The existing dominant state mentality has always seen this question solely as a means of maintaining power, which has led to it being the victim of violence. Unless strong ties are established with peace and universal democracy we cannot expect rights, justice and equality from the state and society. The process will develop with the recognition of all the communities that have been ostracised throughout the history of the republic.”

#### **The process has reached a serious stage’**

“The great responsibility for this question put on our shoulders by history is one that does not just concern our own society, but affects the whole region and even the world. While the century-old equilibrium in the region is being overwhelmed and violence spirals, it is important that perceptions and approaches are developed on the basis of universal human values. There is a need for a dynamic approach given conditions in the region. In the light of this the occasionally faltering process of dialogue has now reached a formal, responsible and serious stage.” (...)



## **Öcalan calls on PKK to hold congress based on a minimum consensus of principles.**

“While taking the 30-year period of conflict to a lasting peace our principal aim has been to reach a democratic resolution. I call on the PKK to hold an extraordinary congress in the spring months to take a strategic and historic decision to abandon the armed struggle based on a minimum consensus of principles. This invitation is a historic declaration of the intention to replace the armed struggle with democratic politics.

### **These are the headings which will constitute the backbone of both our real democracy and our great peace:**

1. *Democratic politics, its definition and content*
2. *Democratic resolution and the recognition of the national and local dimensions of resolution*
3. *Legal and democratic guarantees of free citizenship*
4. *Headings regarding the relationship of democratic politics to state and society and the institutionalization of this*
5. *The socio-economic dimensions of the resolution process*
6. *Treating the relationship between democracy and security in the process in a way that will protect public order and freedoms*
7. *Legal solutions and guarantees for problems of women, culture and ecology*
8. *Development of a pluralistic understanding of the concept of identity, its definition and recognition*
9. *The recognition of a democratic republic, common homeland and people with democratic criteria, within a pluralist democratic system with legal and constitutional guarantees.*
10. *A new constitution for the purpose of internalizing all this democratic transformation.”*

### **Call for support**

Önder said the following at the conclusion of his speech: “There is no doubt that in order for these historic developments to become reality there must be no conflict. We, as the HDP, call on all democratic circles and those who are in favour of peace to support these democratic negotiations and the stage of resolution. We salute all those forces that are working hard for peace, which is now closer than ever.”

### **Akdogan: we consider this to be an important statement**

Akdogan said: “We know that in the process of resolution we will achieve an outcome through sincerity, bravery and decisiveness. We consider this statement highlighting democratic politics as a method and the move towards the giving up of arms and the complete ending of actions to be significant. With arms out of the equation democratic development will gain momentum. Ideas and policies with public support gain value in democracies. We are determined to reach an ultimate solution with the blessing and support of our people. We see a new constitution as an important opportunity to resolve many long-standing and chronic problems.”

### III. KURDISTAN COMMUNITIES UNION KCK STATEMENT

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#### **Co-Chair of KCK Executive Council**

*1<sup>st</sup> March 2015*



After meetings in Imrali Island between our leader Abdullah Ocalan and delegates from the state and the HDP, our leader Abdullah Ocalan asked the state and the HDP to make a joint announcement on the commitment to solve Turkey's question of democratisation and the Kurdish question. Within this framework a joint announcement was made.

#### **Ocalan's efforts for a peaceful and democratic solution**

The efforts of our leader Abdullah Ocalan to bring about a democratic and political solution to the Kurdish question reached an unprecedented level on the Newroz of 2013. With the call of a ceasefire and the retreat of our guerrillas, he wanted to further his democratic political struggle. This call that excited the peoples of Turkey was left unanswered by the Turkish government who only wanted to utilise these developments to consolidate its own grip on power and win elections. The Kurdish people's leader saw that the actions of the AKP were forcing the process into an impasse and that this would inevitably lead to fighting once again; so in November 2014 he presented the state and our movement with a draft democratic negotiation document.

According to this draft document the 10 articles would be negotiated on by the 15th of February 2015 after which our leader Abdullah Ocalan would make a call to our organisation to end the armed resistance against Turkey. In accordance with this call, the PKK would gather its congress and take the decision to end its armed resistance against Turkey.

Our movement had evaluated our leader Ocalan's draft document and had decided to support the contents of the document and act in accordance with it. This was announced publicly. However, the AKP government had once again chosen to implement its delaying tactics by not taking any of the necessary steps, by not negotiating and by not meeting any of the deadlines. Our leader Ocalan has once again taken the initiative to overcome this impasse in order to further his efforts for a democratic solution. The latest announcement made jointly by the HDP and the AKP is another opportunity presented by our leader Ocalan on behalf of our peoples and our movement to the Turkish state and the AKP government. We see this latest announcement as very important in our leader Ocalan's efforts for a peaceful and democratic solution and hereby announce that as long as the government takes the necessary steps as outlined by the document, we too will do everything necessary to further the process.

## **Will the Turkish government behaved this opportunity**

The fact that we are upholding the ceasefire that we declared in the Newroz of 2013 despite the fact that the Turkish government has continued to build military posts, roads and dams in Kurdistan, has continued to kill civilians and imprison many Kurds shows just how seriously we are taking the process.

The latest announcement gives both the state and our movement many responsibilities. We openly declare that if the government behaves responsibly we will ensure that the ceasefire becomes permanent. A permanent ceasefire in itself is a significant step that ensures a platform for a democratic solution.

Our leader Ocalan's statement of intent regarding a possible ceasefire once a consensus is reached on the ten articles stated in the document is a historical step. This statement of intent has given the Turkish state and government an important opportunity to democratise the country and solve the Kurdish question.

There is no longer any excuse to not take steps in solving the Kurdish question. Our peoples are now expecting the government to take the necessary steps. If this announcement is significant — and seen as the government has been expecting this announcement for a long time it seems to be — then the government has to reciprocate with significant actions. The irresponsible approach shown in 2013 during the retreat of the guerrillas must not be repeated.

Our leader Ocalan has behaved responsibly and has offered the AKP government an opportunity for peace. The government must now behave responsibly. Our peoples are in expectancy of this. This is imperative for the permanent removal of war and conflict.( ...)

### **The First Steps to be done:**

Democratic politics is only possible in an atmosphere where basic democratic problems have been overcome. The 'Internal Security Bill' which paves the way to a more authoritarian system will only hinder the development of democracy. Therefore, the first test of sincerity for the government will be to retract this bill, as the bill is incompatible with the spirit of our leader Ocalan's announcement. This will only serve to preserve our suspicions regarding the government's intentions.

- *The joint announcement by the HDP delegation and the AKP officials shows that the meetings are at an important stage. We believe that in accordance with the spirit of this announcement our leader Ocalan must be allowed to make direct contact with our movement. If this happens the process will no doubt be furthered and the belief and support for the process will increase. Also, other political parties and non-governmental organisations should be allowed to meet with our leader Ocalan. This will raise support for the process among the people.*

- *If the Kurdish question has come to an important stage then a negotiation team must be formed immediately, the negotiations must commence as soon as possible and an observatory delegation must be formed in order to ensure a smooth process.*



• *Sincerity on the part of the government will only become evident once these practices are put into action. To expect unilateral steps from the Kurdish Freedom Movement will be right neither politically nor ethically. Rather than strengthening and encouraging the steps taken by the Kurdish Freedom Movement, insistence on a decaying mentality and deposition and an arrogant and dominant approach clearly cannot resolve these historical issues.*

## **Democratization of Turkey**

The essence and content of the articles of the historic declaration do not aim at just resolving the Kurdish issue, but the problems of all those that have been excluded and oppressed, foremost the Alevis. This declaration also expresses the strengthening of democracy, freedoms and the responsiveness of the state to democracy as well as the unearthing of society's democratic will. The woman issue and ecological issues are also primary on the list of things to resolve for Turkey to democratise. The resolution of problems of income inequality and exploitation are also fundamental headings in the democratisation process. Therefore it is necessary to the essence of the declaration that all these ethnic, belief and societal groups participate in the resolution process.

It is evident that our leader Abdullah Ocalan's democratisation manifesto in 2013, the negotiation outline he presented in 2014, and finally the declaration also attended by the (Turkish) government in 2015, are the fruits of the long struggle for democracy and freedom. It is the democracy and freedom struggle of the Kurdish people, of socialists, democrat Muslims, all anti-capitalists, Alevis and other ethnic and belief groups that have made it possible for this declaration to be made in the presence of state representatives. This level has not been reached because of the will or desire of the government or state. Everywhere, it is the struggle of the people and society that forces government's and state's into democratic compromise, and this is what has happened in Turkey and Kurdistan.

Our leader Ocalan and the Kurdish Freedom Movement wish to take the decades long democracy and freedom struggle, and the 20-year democratic resolution process, with its accumulation of democracy and freedom, to an end result through projects of democratisation. This struggle needs to be viewed and supported as the struggle, effort and political drive of all democracy forces. These forces need to develop their struggle and pressure the AKP and state to take steps. This struggle and its revolutionary drive has not gone to waste; on the contrary, with the joint struggle of democracy forces, it will be crowned with victory as the democratisation of Turkey and a free and democratic life for all peoples.

#### IV. INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS AND PRESS VIEWS ON THE JOINT STATEMENT

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##### **Pervin Buldan: Mr. Ocalan's statement was historical and an important step for Turkey**



Pervin Buldan member of the Imrali HDP delegation has spoken of the negotiation process and said that For the first time in the history of Turkey a joint statement was made. This is very important for us. However, it is very important to highlight that yesterday's announcement was a statement of intent by Mr. Ocalan, and that only if the 10 articles expressed by Ocalan were seriously taken into consideration would any further statement regarding the disarmament of the PKK would be made.

Since yesterday, many TV programs and news channels insisted that the PKK was disarming. No one was talking about the 10 articles that were also announced. Without the prior discussion of these 10 articles, Mr. Ocalan will not make any such call. The first thing that needs to be done is to discuss and agree upon the 10 articles that were mentioned.

This agreement has to be watched over by an observation committee. Our next visit to Imrali Island must include this observation committee. It is only after these articles are discussed will Mr. Ocalan make his actual call. We made it very clear in our statement that Mr. Ocalan's announcement was a statement of intent. Preparations should be undertaken, but only when the articles have been agreed upon will the actual call be made.”

##### **DTK: 10 articles are new opportunity for solution**



The Democratic Society Congress (DTK) co-presidents Selma Irmak and Hatip Dicle have issued a statement regarding the talks that took place between the AKP government and the Imrali delegation in the Dolmabahçe Palace. Irmak and Dicle recalled that the historic call for a democratic peaceful solution to the Kurdish question made by Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan in 2013 had created a historic opportunity, the PKK's ceasefire had laid the ground for a solution and raised hopes of a solution.

The statement drew attention to the potential for provocations, adding that the 'Internal Security Package' currently being debated in parliament could cause problems. The statement called on the government to take seriously the declarations made by the KCK and to initiate the necessary legal work without delay. “As the DTK we wish to make clear that we will offer our full support to all efforts to achieve a solution,” the statement stressed.

## **EU Statement by the Spokesperson on the announcement of Abdullah Öcalan's call to the PKK to hold an extraordinary congress.**



The EU welcomes today's announcement at a joint press conference by the Government and the HDP - of Abdullah Öcalan's call to the PKK to hold an extraordinary congress to decide to lay down arms in the Spring. This is, as also expressed by Deputy Prime Minister Akdoğan, a positive step forward in the peace process.

We hope that all parties will seize the opportunity to make decisive progress towards reconciliation and democratisation. As ever, the EU gives the strongest political support to this process and repeats its readiness to provide practical help, including through pre-accession funding.

## **The US welcomes Öcalan's call for disarmament of PKK**



"We would welcome all steps in support of a peaceful resolution in this conflict and commend the efforts of both the government and all parties concerned to work towards a lasting peace," said State Department deputy spokeswoman Marie Harf.(...)

## **Kurdish rebels call leader's disarmament move 'historic'**

*Reuters – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015*

Kurdish militants on Sunday described as "historic" a call by their jailed leader to hold a disarmament congress and said Turkey must now take concrete steps to keep the peace process on track. Abdullah Öcalan, who still exerts influence over the armed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) from his prison cell, on Saturday called on followers to meet in the spring and agree to lay down their arms.

"Such a goodwill statement presents a very important foundation and opportunity to democratize the state and government and resolve the Kurdish issue and Turkey's basic problems," the PKK said in a statement. "The government should take sweeping, concrete steps and have a serious political response," it said.

President Tayyip Erdoğan, who has expended considerable political capital to try to resolve the long-running conflict, on Saturday cautiously welcomed the statement, saying the rebels must now follow through. His ruling AK Party faces a parliamentary election in June and is keen to keep violence at bay heading into the campaign. "Using this historic goodwill declaration by our leader as election propaganda would be an example of great injustice and irresponsibility for our people," the PKK warned.

The rebels said they also wanted to speak directly with Ocalan to ensure the peace process progressed. Currently, lawmakers in the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) shuttle between Ocalan's island prison near Istanbul and the mountainous region of Qandil in northern Iraq, where the PKK's leadership is based. The European Union, which Turkey is seeking to join, called Ocalan's statement "a positive step forward." "We hope that all parties will seize the opportunity to make decisive progress towards reconciliation and democratization," an EU statement said on Saturday.(...)\*\*

### **PKK leader tells fighters to lay down arms for Turkey peace process**

*Associated Press and Reuters – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015*

Dialogue is now at a serious stage Sirri Sureyya Onder Pro-Kurdish MP. Imprisoned Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan has called on his fighters to lay down their arms as part of a peace process to end a 30-year insurgency in Turkey. Pro- Kurdish legislator Sirri Sureyya Onder said yesterday that Ocalan was asking his Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, to hold an extraordinary congress in the spring to take the "historic decision" to end its armed struggle.

He quoted Ocalan as saying: "This call (for a congress) is a declaration of intent for democratic politics to replace the armed struggle." There was no immediate response from PKK commanders in northern Iraq, but the group generally heeds Ocalan's calls. Mr Onder also quoted Ocalan as calling for 10 measures that Kurds wanted to ensure peace, including a new constitution. President Tayyip Erdogan is also seeking a new constitution that grants more executive powers to his office and would replace a charter drawn up by technocrats after a 1980 military coup.

Ocalan has been serving a life term in prison since 1999 but retains influence over his fighters. Turkey began talking to him in 2012 with an aim to end the conflict that has gone on since 1984.

Ocalan declared a ceasefire in 2013 and ordered the PKK to withdraw fighters to bases in northern Iraq. The ceasefire is still in place but the PKK halted its withdrawal a few months later, saying Turkey had not taken any steps to reciprocate. "The dialogue which, from time to time hits disruptions and breakages, has reached a serious stage," said Mr Onder.

He spoke after a meeting with Turkey's deputy prime minister, Yalcin Akdogan, who also described Ocalan's call as a major step. "We regard the statement toward the acceleration of efforts to lay down arms as important."

### **V.FOR MORE INFORMATION AND URGENT REQUEST**

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