

# On the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his abduction we demand: **Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan**

## What is happening in Kurdistan at the moment?

The Islamic State is terrorising Rojava, while its long-standing helper, Turkish President Erdogan, terrorises the Kurdish regions in Turkey. Erdogan decided in favour of war and state terror against the population. As a result, hundreds of civilians have been killed and entire cities have been bombed in the past weeks—not in Syria, but in Turkey!

## Autonomy demands

The fact that the Kurds in Rojava (Syria) achieved the autonomy they fought for has moved the Turkish state to act even more aggressively towards the demands of the Kurds in Bakur (Turkey) for more self-determination. Erdogan categorically rejects any kind of dialogue and instead opts for civil war and a "military solution" which is impossible to achieve. The only possible solution are talks over political demands of the Kurdish population.

## Tireless peace efforts

For many years, Abdullah Öcalan has been trying to bring about favourable conditions for a peaceful, political solution to the conflict. He held talks for a solution with the Turkish government for years. In 2009, he proposed his "Road Map for Peace". In 2013, his call for the withdrawal of the guerrillas effectively stopped the armed conflict in Turkey. He keeps on being the voice of peace and reason.

## Isolation instead of talks

But Erdogan wants to silence this voice of reason. This is why Öcalan is totally cut off from the rest of the world on Imrali Island. For 11 years Öcalan has been the only prisoner on the island—watched over by more than 1,000 soldiers. Now he is one of four inmates in isolation. Since July 2011 he has not been able to talk to a lawyer. This is a Europe-wide record—the longest ban on contacts with lawyers: more than 4½ years! Since April 2015 there have been no visits to the island whatsoever. These isolation conditions make Imrali the worst prison among the already bad prisons in Turkey: the Turkish Guantanamo.

## Öcalan must be free

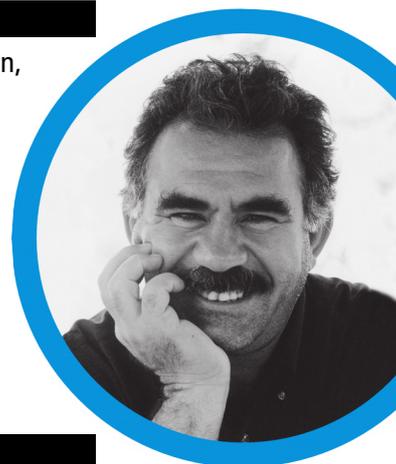
Öcalan's freedom is not only a key demand of millions of Kurds. Together with the release of the other political prisoners, it is a necessary step on the way to peace. Öcalan is recognised by all sides as the key person for a real peace process. He has put a peaceful solution on the Kurdish people's agenda. His "Road map" is the only comprehensive peace plan on the table so far. He has to be free and able to communicate with all parties concerned.

## Why are we here?

The renewed total isolation of Öcalan on Imrali Island was the start signal for the current escalation. Erdogan is doing everything in his power to block a peaceful solution. We want peace and a democratic solution in Kurdistan and Turkey. We believe that Abdullah Öcalan with his ideas for a democratic autonomy in a democratic republic is the guarantor of such a solution. We want his freedom, now!

## That is why we demand:

- An end to the massacres in Kurdistan! The immediate end of sieges and curfews!
- Respect for the Kurdish demands for autonomy!
- Mandela said: "Only free men can negotiate." Freedom for Öcalan and all political prisoners in Turkey!
- Stop torture and isolation! Shut down Imrali prison!



## Who is Abdullah Öcalan?

Millions of Kurds regard Abdullah Öcalan as their political representative. As their most important representative in the struggle for rights and democracy, he is a symbol for the freedom of the Kurds. He stands against separatism and secessionism and presents a democratic Middle East of equal peoples—as is currently being implemented in Rojava (northern Syria)—as a perspective for a solution. The worldwide signature campaign for his freedom has gathered 10.3 million signatures. TIME Magazine listed him among the 100 most influential people in the world in 2013. He is the author of several books.



## Peace in Kurdistan

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