

Press statement from Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu. 8 January 2012.

TALKS BETWEEN TURKISH GOVERNMENT AND KURDS REVIVE HOPE FOR LONG TERM PEACE

I have learnt with considerable gratitude that, since the launching of the International Peace Initiative in Brussels on 5 December 2012, there have been positive and encouraging developments with regard to the resumption of talks between the Turkish Government and imprisoned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan is reported to have said that the government had revived talks with Ocalan to end the decades-old fight between PKK guerillas and the Turkish army. Prime Minister Erdogan reportedly said it was unlikely that PKK could be defeated militarily, but nor was it likely to be able to achieve its objectives by continuing to wage armed struggle.

Prime Minister Erdogan's stance is realistic, pragmatic and praiseworthy. In South Africa, we learned after decades of armed struggle that a political solution, through peaceful dialogue and negotiation, was the route to lasting peace.

I pray that the obstacles preventing all of Turkey's people from living in peace and harmony will be speedily overcome.

Ends...

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