

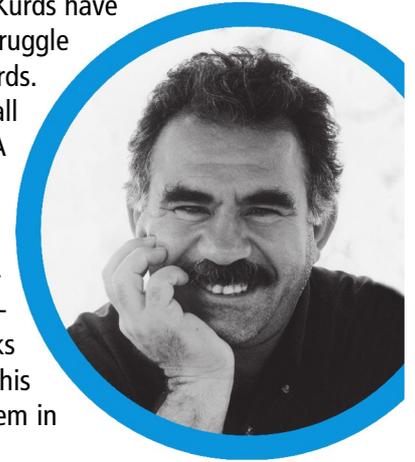
Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan

Who is Abdullah Öcalan?

Millions of Kurds regard Abdullah Öcalan as their political representative. About 3.5 million Kurds have testified this in a signature campaign in 2006. He is the most important exponent of their struggle for cultural rights and democracy and has become a symbol for the freedom of the Kurds. Öcalan opposes separatism and secessionism and stands for a democratic Middle East with all the peoples having equal rights which he has put forward as his perspective for a solution. A worldwide signature campaign for his freedom was recently launched.

Tireless peace efforts

Since 1993, Öcalan has been trying to create conditions that are suitable for a peaceful solution of the conflict. Even after his illegal abduction and imprisonment in 1999, he has remained a consistent advocate of a peaceful, political solution. From 2006 to 2011 he led talks with the Turkish government for a political solution to the conflict. In 2009 he presented his "Road Map for Negotiations". In July 2011 Erdogan terminated the talks, only to restart them in November 2012 after much bloodshed and a huge hunger strike by political prisoners.



Incommunicado and talks

Öcalan has been held under isolation conditions ever since his abduction in 1999. His inhuman isolation on Imrali Island has been subject to massive criticism by the Council of Europe's anti-torture committee (CPT). For 11 years Öcalan has been the only prisoner on the island—watched over by more than 1,000 soldiers and hidden from the outside world. Now he is one of six inmates in isolation. The collapse of the talks in July 2011 marked the beginning of a renewed complete isolation of the prison island. All visits from lawyers are banned, and since November 2011 most of his lawyers have been imprisoned. The conditions in Imrali remain worse than in any other prison in Turkey.

At the same time there are new talks underway. The Erdogan government and the Kurdish side confirm that Öcalan is the key person in these talks. We have a paradoxical situation: a chief negotiator who is held in complete isolation. For a sustainable solution to the conflict, this must change.

Öcalan must be free

Öcalan's freedom is not only a key demand of millions of Kurds. Together with an amnesty for 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. He has to be free and able to communicate with all parties concerned if he is to play the key role everybody attributes to him.

State terror in Kurdistan, repression in France

About 8,000 Kurdish politicians are in Turkish prisons. Throughout North-Kurdistan and Turkey, the arrest waves continue. Turkey today is the country with the highest number of imprisoned journalists, most of them Kurds.

Europe has also become a dangerous ground for Kurds. Three Kurdish politicians, Sakine Cansiz, Fidan Dogan and Leyla Saylemez, have been killed by a person with close connections to the Turkish intelligence service. Adem Uzun, a participant in negotiations with the Turkish government, was arrested in Paris. Europe should actively support the resolution of the Kurdish question instead of criminalising the Kurdish community. The perpetrators of the Paris massacre and all their connections must be exposed and those responsible brought to justice.

Why are we here?

15 February marks the anniversary of Öcalan's abduction in 1999. We are protesting against the international cooperation in this illegal act. 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 ask you to add support to the worldwide "FREE ÖCALAN" campaign with your signature.

Therefore:

- Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and all political prisoners in Turkey! Stop torture and isolation! Shut down Imrali prison!
- Immediate end to all bomb attacks, military operations and mass arrests!
- Dialogue, not violence: Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan!



Peace in Kurdistan

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

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