

## An interview with Duran Kalkan

This interview took place on March 07, 2022

Duran Kalkan, member of the KCK Executive Council comments on today's most important political developments in Kurdistan, the Middle East and beyond.

Kalkan discussed the low expectations from international institutions regarding bringing an end to the isolation of Abdullah Öcalan, the war in Ukraine, the dangerous consequences of the collaboration of the KDP with the Turkish state, the unclear political program of Turkey's opposition parties, the role of the HDP in broadening the Democracy Alliance in Turkey and the need to increase the support for the resistance in Turkey's prisons.

### Low Expectations from International Institutions Regarding End to Isolation of Abdullah Öcalan

"The International Conspiracy of February 15 [1999] continues. There has recently been some progress with regards to the legal struggle against the isolation [of Abdullah Öcalan]. The most important development in this context was the report of the Asrin Law Firm [Asrin Hukuk Bürosu] about the situation on the prison island Imrali in 2021. This report shed light on a lot of important issues. It includes detailed information on the system on Imrali, on how far the Turkish state implements its own laws and on the stance of the global system regarding this issue. This report basically constitutes the democracy and human rights balance sheet of the Turkish state and the AKP-MHP government, but also of the European system. Europe considers itself as very democratic. But the latest report of the Asrin Law Firm is also a balance sheet regarding democracy and human rights in Europe. It is important for everybody to be aware of this. The report clearly shows how democratic all the different forces really are and how much each of them really cares for human rights. Everything else are just empty words that aim at deceiving the public. But the mentioned report is what counts. Lately, appeals have also been made to several international institutions, e.g. the UN. Appeals are constantly being made to the Council of Europe. And there is a continuing dialogue with

the European Court of Human Rights. All these efforts are important. It is important to continue this struggle and to try all available ways. Thus, at least, the responsibility of all the forces involved needs to be shown clearly. Yet, it is important not to expect too much of the different international institutions. All of them stopped functioning many years ago. They don't have any other role than serving the interests of the hegemonic powers and the global empires. These international institutions don't even fulfill the purpose for which they were established. Actually, the purpose for their establishment was exactly this, but in the past they still used a certain cover or justification. But today, all of this has ceased to exist. These institutions have become empty institutions. Today, all that is left are their names. It is important to be aware of this. Instead of expecting a lot from them, it is important to unmask these institutions and thus make it more difficult to continue with the policy that they are based on. The most important thing is the struggle against the International Conspiracy, the isolation and the policy of denial, annihilation, fascism and genocide that keeps them alive."

### War in Ukraine

"The government of Ukraine has lost already. Why am I saying this? Because these kinds of governments have always ended up losing. Governments like this predicate themselves on the kind of politics that were prevalent at the time of the Cold War and the clear division between the USA and the Soviet Union. They think that these conditions still exist today and act accordingly. They presuppose that there are two different sides and try to rely on one of them. Accordingly, the government of Ukraine also tried really hard to rely on the NATO, England or the USA. But now, everybody has let them down because this kind of world simply does not exist anymore. Neither the old USA exist today, nor the Soviet Union. The government of Ukraine seems to be unable to properly analyze and understand the historic phase that started with the breakdown of the Soviet Union. They seem to be wishing for the return of the world that existed 30 years ago. But this approach won't work. This is what the government of Ukraine was wishing for, but now we can clearly see what this has led to. Today, a world divided into only two poles does not exist anymore. Therefore, it is impossible to stay on your feet by simply relying on one side. Without a doubt, Russia's attack on Ukraine is absolutely unjustified. But can we

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say that the actions of the USA, the EU, England and NATO are right? This would also be the wrong thing to do. Is the mentality and policy of the current Ukrainian government right? Absolutely not. There is no need to take sides with one of the mentioned forces. The historic phase that we used to call the Cold War ended with the breakdown of the Soviet Union and led to the beginning of a new phase. We call this new phase the Third World War. It has been going on for the last 30 years and has spread to the Middle East, Afghanistan and many other parts of the world. This Third World war clearly differs from WWI and WWII with respect to military and ideological aspects. The war in Ukraine is the latest part of the long chain that we call the Third World War.”

“Instead of talking about a renewed Cold War it is important to understand that we are experiencing a Third World War today. On the one hand some forces claim to be looking for a way out of this war and for solutions. But on the other hand we continuously see new conflicts starting in new regions and we witness how Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine have become centers of these conflicts. This shows clearly that the system of capitalist modernity is undergoing a serious crisis and chaos. All these conflicts show us that capitalist modernity is incapable of finding a way out of its crisis. On the contrary, it only causes new diseases and wars. It has caused the Corona virus and now it is causing the war in Ukraine. Only yesterday, this system started wars in Syria, Iraq and many other parts of the Middle East. The system can only guarantee its survival during this crisis and chaos by causing new diseases like cancer, new bacteria, wars, occupations and invasions. Capitalist modernity does not have a way out of these wars or a way of escape. It can only guarantee its own survival with the help of these kinds of wars. Of course, these wars constitute wars of occupation and invasion that serve the interests of the imperialist forces. Through these wars these forces divide the world among themselves and exploit it. It would be wrong to support these wars. All peoples, revolutionary democrats and socialists are against these wars and against all the sides involved in them. They would never take sides with one of the war actors. Because all of the sides involved in these wars are wrong.”

“After the Second World War, a new world system was established. The war in Ukraine has once again shown that this system – its laws, defense etc. – has broken down. It had broken down much earlier but this new war has shown this once again. The UN has broken down, just like NATO and the current principles of the EU have. It is important for us to acknowledge that all of these institutions have lost their influence. They have turned into empty institutions. Today, only their names continue to exist. Some are now asking why Russia is occupying Ukraine and why the USA does not prevent this. But has the USA not also occupied many different places? For 30 years, the USA has now been attacking Afghanistan, Iraq and many more places all over

the world. What Russia is doing now in Ukraine is something that the USA has been doing all over the world. Now some are asking why the UN Security Council is not doing anything and they demand that it lives up to its own laws and principles. But this is exactly what the UN Security Council has been doing anyways: it is in a state of war. The USA is waging war, England is doing the same, Europe is doing it, Russia is doing it and China is doing it as well. So those who think that the world of 30 years ago still exists are making a great mistake. Why is Russia occupying Ukraine...Well, everybody is carrying out occupations. The strong ones attack the weaker ones. Turkey has been trying to occupy Syria and Iraq. It has carried out military attacks against Libya and Armenia. So why should Russia not attack Ukraine or somewhere else? There are absolutely no differences between all these different attacks. This is what our world is like today.”

“The global system of capitalist modernity finds itself in a situation where it is preoccupied with in-fighting. And now we are faced with yet another war...It is important for all of us to acknowledge and understand this and to then take a stance accordingly. What kind of stance? The stance of the oppressed and of the people is to bring an end to the mentality and policy that have caused all these contradictions and conflicts and to destroy their material, their economic foundation. This means waging an anti-capitalist and anti-fascist struggle. And it means for the peoples to lead a free and democratic life. The system of power and state has reached its final modernity, i.e. capitalist modernity. The contradictions and conflicts we mentioned earlier will continue as long as this system exists, as long as we don't get rid of power and state and don't overcome the system of capitalist modernity and as long as we don't weaken this system through our organized struggle. It is very important for everybody to recognize this. Here, I would like to return to something I mentioned earlier: Those who act like the old world that was divided into two poles still exists and who therefore think that it is possible to take sides with one block and provoke the other have always lost. Therefore, in no way could a revolutionary democrat follow a policy of supporting the Ukrainian government. This government does not really worry about protecting Ukraine from an occupation. It has always been a government of collaborators and lackeys. Whose government has this really been? Has it really been representing the interests of Ukrainian society. All this talk about independent states and sovereign rights...What sovereign or independent state? Ukraine has been a system of exploitation and robbery, of gangsters. Now these gangsters are being pushed aside and attempts are being made to replace them with new ones. This is what some forces are trying to do. But it does not make any sense to say: ‘Your gangsters are bad, but mine are good.’ Gangsters are gangsters. All of them are bad. Exploitation is exploitation. It is always bad. So what kind of attitude is

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necessary? We need to take sides with society and the people. We need to be in support of democracy, freedom and equality. The war in Ukraine has once again proven that Önder Apo's [Abdullah Öcalan] ideas are right. If the world does not work on rescuing itself from the system of state and power, if it does not overcome the sick system of capitalist modernity and if it does not establish the system of Democratic Confederalism and Democratic Autonomy, wars, occupations, invasions and massacres will continue to happen."

"In many different ways the Turkish state depends economically on other countries. It has been trying to keep itself on its feet with the help of these kinds of relations. Therefore, right after Ukraine it will be Turkey who will suffer the biggest economic harm due to this war. A lot of people are saying that the AKP-MHP government will suffer huge economic harm from the current war. So even at such an early point, we can already say that as a result of the war Ukraine will be harmed the most. And it is very likely that the second biggest harm will be dealt to the fascist AKP-MHP government. It will be harmed in many different ways, economically and politically. There will be increased pressure on the AKP-MHP government. Until now, it was able to stay on its feet by constantly trying to keep both sides happy, by selling its own resources to both sides and thus provoking conflicts between them and by doing business with both of them. But now, the AKP-MHP government won't be able to do this anymore. On the contrary, everybody will use the relations of this government to put pressure on it. NATO will do this and so will Russia. Ukraine is doing it already. The question of the Bosphorus [Montreaux Convention] is already on the agenda. The more this war takes and the more it intensifies, the less will Turkey even be able to stay outside of the war. It is even likely that it will get directly involved in the war. Currently, the AKP-MHP government is primarily worried about how it can strike deals in order to overcome this kind of situation. They seem to be trying to limit the damage and basically rescue themselves. But now that the war in Ukraine has started, all this has become even more difficult for the AKP-MHP government. There is no doubt that the war in the North [North Kurdistan/East Turkey] puts a lot of strain on the government, too. So it will have to try to act more carefully. But it is a fact that this government cannot survive without war. The issue of Ukraine is not enough for the AKP-MHP government to navigate through this phase. Therefore, it will have to put new issues on the agenda or change the given agenda. Additionally, this government is at the point of collapse. The opposition in the country is constantly gaining strength, the revolutionary resistance is increasing and is threatening to bring an end to this government. In order to stay on its feet, AKP-MHP fascism needs to carry out new attacks. It is likely that it will use the war in Ukraine as an opportunity for itself to start new attacks. This is an issue that we need to take very seriously and that we need to follow very closely – always and everywhere.

The AKP-MHP government can carry out all sorts of attacks and it can do so everywhere. If it has enough power, it will attack. So this really only is a question of how much power this government has."

## Dangerous Collaboration of the KDP with the Turkish State

"The stance of the Turkish state is clear. Hulusi Akar [Turkish defense minister] has said openly that they [Turkish state and KDP] have agreed on fighting the PKK together and that they were very happy about their common attitude regarding this issue. So we need to ask: Is the KDP forging alliances with other forces against the PKK? Has the KDP decided to destroy the PKK? Has it agreed on a common plan with the fascist AKP-MHP government to destroy the PKK? A minister of the current government of Turkey has said so. Therefore, the Kurdish public is of course demanding an official statement from the KDP. Who is the ally that it calls its friend? The KDP needs to explain its relations with the AKP-MHP, [Hulusi] Akar and Hakan Fidan [head of Turkish secret service MIT]. All of them have regular secret meetings with the Barzani leadership of the KDP. The KDP needs to publicly explain whether or not these meetings revolve around things that harm the Kurdish people and the PKK or if they benefit them. If they don't make such a public statement, the words of Hulusi Akar will be considered as true. This would constitute a huge danger for the KDP. In this context, the KDP leadership always talks about pressure by the Turkish state, economic hardships and how it is forced to act the way it is. This is the kind of propaganda it makes for the South Kurdish public. But all of this is wrong. They are not really this economically dependent. The society of South Kurdistan and its parties need to recognize this. They need to see that there are only certain people who benefit from the relations with the Turkish state and use them only to fill their own pockets."

## Unclear Political Program of Turkish Opposition Parties

"It is really still a huge question what these six parties [e.g. CHP, İyi Parti, Deva, Gelecek Parti] want to do. What will they support? Will they support a coup or democratization? What kind of stance will they take? We sincerely hope that they will decide to support democracy and freedom. Especially the attitude of the CHP and the İyi Parti have so far not been very promising. And the other parties are very frightened and shy. Why did they decide to split from the AKP? What kind of policy do they pursue now that they are not part of the AKP anymore? So far, we have not been able to understand what kind of stance all of these parties will really take regarding the democratization [of Turkey] and the Kurdish question. Actually, if they had opted for a new start, Kurdish politics would have responded positively.

But so far they have not made any convincing and clear initiatives in this regard. So what kind of initiatives will the six parties make? Of course, it is their right to form such an alliance. Some have criticized that the HDP has not been included in this alliance. But this is not such a huge issue. So they want this coalition to be an alternative to the AKP-MHP government...But will they be a real alternative or just replace the current government? We will see soon whether they will just criticize the AKP-MHP policy a little bit and then simply continue with the same kind of policy or whether they will really fundamentally democratize Turkey. Whether they will really make the state more sensitive and open for democracy and allow the society to organize itself democratically and to deal with its issues by itself. Whether they will accept the establishment of democratic institutions and freedom of expression. We hope that they will opt for the second option. And we will react positively, if they do. So we are following their meetings very closely."

## Need for Broadening the Democracy Alliance in Turkey

"The HDP will increase its own strength if it develops the Democracy Alliance further. This would actually be the best response the HDP could give to the current developments. The fact that this has not been done so far is a deficit that needs to be criticized. The left and socialist forces, the revolutionary forces, the real democratic forces and the forces of radical democracy need to be criticized for this. Because all of them together constitute the core of the Democracy Alliance. They need to lead this alliance. But instead they have not even been able to come together. There is fascism and an anti-fascist war needs to be waged. Now people are talking about an alliance of all revolutionary, democratic, left and socialist forces. All of them can indeed play a leading role in this alliance but the alliance itself needs to be broader. The Democracy Alliance needs to encompass all anti-fascist and anti-capitalist actors. They might not be left and socialist. This might include Islamic circles or liberal circles. It is not wrong for the democratic forces to form a

coalition among themselves but this coalition needs to be much broader. It is important to bring an end to the AKP-MHP. It will definitely collapse. For this to happen, six parties have united. But the Democracy Alliance is the one that really needs to fill the empty space that will occur."

## Support for Resistance in Turkey's Prisons

"There are many sick prisoners who are still in prison and who are subjected to pressure and torture. We are well aware of this. Every moment in prison is difficult. Every moment of the life in prison constitutes a huge revolutionary resistance. The [political] prisoners know this very well and consequently continue their resistance. And we are absolutely sure that they will continue to do so in the future. The support and sensitivity from outside the prisons had been weak. But especially the sit-in of the prisoners' families to protest [the situation in the prisons] has changed this to a certain extent. The lawyers have also shown more interest recently. Thus, outside the prisons a certain sensitivity for the issue has developed lately. This should happen even more. There is a need for more support from the outside for the resistance in the prisons, a need for moral support and for giving the resistance strength from the outside. Everybody who supports freedom and democracy, all intellectuals and artists need to play a bigger role in this regard."

You can read the original interview here:

<https://kck-info.com/interview-mar0722-kalkan/>

## KCK - Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union

Supporting and building structures of self-administration in Kurdistan, the Middle East and beyond.

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Peace in Kurdistan is involved in a collaborative project in which, together, we are trying to envisage what self-determination can and must mean in the 21st century. We are interested in making connections between struggles for self-determination around the globe. We take our inspiration from Abdullah Öcalan's re-articulation of self-determination. Öcalan has emphasised that "the propagation of grass roots democracy is elementary." We encourage people to send relevant original articles for inclusion in this new series.

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