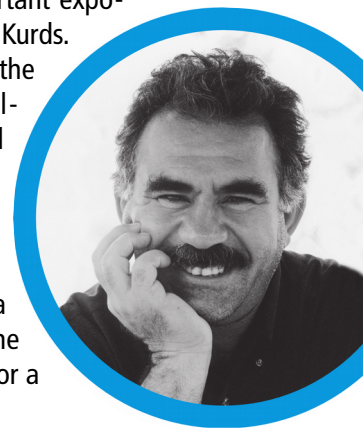


On the 15th anniversary of his abduction we demand: **Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan**

Who is Abdullah Öcalan?

Millions of Kurds regard Abdullah Öcalan as their political representative. He is the most important exponent of their struggle for 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. The ongoing worldwide signature campaign for his freedom has collected 2.4 million signatures. TIME Magazine has elected him among the 100 most influential leaders in 2013.



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. For years he has been leading talks with the Turkish government. In 2009 he presented his "Road Map for Negotiations". In 2013 he called for a withdrawal of the guerilla forces, effectively stopping the armed conflict.

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. July 2011 marked the beginning of a renewed complete isolation of the prison island. Many of Öcalan's lawyers are imprisoned. No lawyer can visit the island. This is a Europe-wide record—the longest ban on contacts with lawyers: more than 2½ years! These isolation conditions make Imrali the worst prison among the already bad prisons in Turkey. Meanwhile, the talks between Öcalan and the Turkish government about a solution continue. The government, however, is avoiding any serious commitment and tries to gain time. Thousands of Kurdish politicians are still in prisons. Turkey today is the country with the highest number of imprisoned journalists, most of them Kurds. Without a political solution of the conflict, democratisation of Turkey remains impossible. This lack of democracy will deepen the crisis in Turkey and the Middle East.

Öcalan must be free

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'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. He has to be free and able to communicate with all parties concerned.

Continuing repression in Europe

Europe is still not supporting the Kurdish efforts for a political solution of the conflict. Several EU member states continue their repression against the Kurdish community and Kurdish politicians. France has done little to shed light onto the murder of three Kurdish women politicians in Paris. The perpetrators of the Paris massacre and all their connections must be exposed and those responsible brought to justice. Europe should actively help pave the way for a resolution of the Kurdish question instead of criminalising the Kurdish community. Bans on Kurdish organisations must be lifted.

Why are we here?

15 years ago, on 15 February 1999 Öcalan was illegally abducted. We are protesting against the international cooperation in this act of piracy. 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! We ask you to add support to the worldwide "FREE ÖCALAN" campaign with your signature.

Therefore:

- Freedom for all political prisoners in Turkey! Stop torture and isolation! Shut down Imrali prison!
- Support a democratic solution! Lift the bans on Kurdish organisations!
- Only free men can negotiate: Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan!

Peace in Kurdistan



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

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