

Internationale Initiative
Freiheit für Abdullah Öcalan
Frieden in Kurdistan
Pf.: 100511, D-50445 Köln
Tel: +49 221 130 15 59
Fax: +49 221 139 30 71
E-Mail: info@freedom-for-ocalan.com
Url: www.freedom-for-ocalan.com

in cooperation with

Iniziativa Italiana
Libertà per Abdullah Öcalan
c/o UIKI-Onlus
Via Gregorio VII 278, int.18
00165 Roma-Italia
e-mail: Liberta_per_Ocalan@hotmail.com

ASRIN HUKUK BÜROSU
Tel: +90 212 292 9551
Fax: +90 212 292 9553
Asmalimescit mah.
Seyhbender Sok
18/3 Tünel
Beyoglu / ISTANBUL

Peace in Kurdistan Campaign
44 Ainger Road
London NW3 3AT, Great Britain
E-mail: estella24@tiscali.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE - SPECIAL - Dossier No. 2:

CONTENT

- *Final Decision in Ocalan Trial expected in March 2005*
- *3-Step-Action-Plan Against the PKK and Ocalan: Interview with US-military expert Paul McCarthy*
- *The Solution of the Kurdish Question and Freedom of Abdullah Ocalan, by Mahmut Sakar, defence lawyer of Abdullah Ocalan*
- *Ocalan's Solitary Confinement is constant Torture, Briefing by the International Initiative*
- *'Not even Mandela was as isolated as Ocalan': Interview with Members of a South African-German Human Rights Delegation visiting Turkey to enquire into Conditions of Ocalan's Imprisonment*
- *Imrali 2005: Touchstone for Human Rights and Democracy, Documentation of a Call of the International Initiative*

FINAL DECISION IN OCALAN TRIAL EXPECTED IN MARCH

Strasbourg, France, MHA, 26 January 2005, Huseyin Elmali, translation by Susanne Kempe

According to the president of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), Paul Mahoney, a decision of the court regarding the appeal of Abdullah Ocalan will be reached within the next two months. The final judgement on the court case of Ocalan is to be expected by March 2005.

If the second chamber of the European Court of Human Rights decides in the second instance that the Turkish court case against Ocalan was not conducted fairly, the possibility of a new trial for Ocalan in Turkey arises. However, there are still many obstacles. Recently introduced legal reforms in Turkey stipulate that court cases which were not conducted fairly can be taken up and given a retrial. However, this new law is only applicable to cases opened and closed after 4 February 2003. The trial of the Kurdish leader finished before that date.

At the end of the first court case with the European Court of Human Rights the judges ruled that Ocalan did not get a fair trial with an independent court in Turkey. Furthermore, the first judgement also confirmed that Ocalan's legal defence and representation was restricted and that he received inhuman treatment due to death sentence.

Not being convinced by the sufficiency of the ruling, Ocalan's team of defence lawyers issued an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights. Two central points of appeal have not been accepted by the court: the illegal circumstances of Ocalan's abduction and the inhuman conditions of his imprisonment including solitary confinement.

In its current report on progress of Turkey's democratic reforms and transformation the European Commission highlighted critical and controversial points of the legal reforms calling on Turkey to address these amending its laws. The European Commission stressed that there have been no retrials in many cases, such as Ocalan's, standing in stark contrast to the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights.

3-STEP-ACTION-PLAN AGAINST THE PKK AND OCALAN

An Interview with US-military expert Paul McCarthy

Basel, Switzerland, 19 November 2004, interview conducted by Ali Ongan, translation by Susanne Kempe

Turkey and the USA have been cooperating closely implementing a 3-Step-Action-Plan aimed at confronting, fighting and destroying the Kurdish liberation movement and its leader Abdullah Ocalan. According to information revealed by US-military expert Paul McCarthy, Ocalan's handing over was the first step.

In order to weaken the political strength and popular support of the PKK, in the course of the second step, the Kurdish liberation movement was supposed to be split and divided. Therefore, McCarthy outlines, Turkey has played a key part in the second phase of the operation. Being interviewed by the Kurdish newspaper Ozgur Politika, McCarthy explains that the aim of third step of the US-Turkish operation was to break and diminish the influence and standing of Abdullah Ocalan within the PKK and with the Kurdish people.

Ocalan's handing over to Turkey had been organised by the USA which aimed at initiating and marking a period of radical change for the Kurdish movement, an objective which the US has reached to a certain extent. McCarthy recalls the particular situation and circumstances at the time of the Ocalan operation; a time in which scenarios of an US-led attack on Iraq were looming large. There have been extensive networks of cooperation based on common interests between various countries. With respect to US plans to attack Iraq, issues such as the negotiation between Russia and the International Monetary Fund, the question of Cyprus and Greek politics, the relationship between the European Union and Turkey and European concessions have played a major part. For example, Turkish support for the rebels in Chechnya declined significantly after the Ocalan operation. McCarthy also points to improved relations between Turkey and Greece manifested in the progress regarding the question of Cyprus. However, the relationship between the USA and Syria remains tense.

In the context of this 3-Step-Action-Plan, McCarthy stresses that the USA rather than Turkey gave the 'go-ahead' for the arrest and extradition of Ocalan. It was not an coincidence that after Ocalan's arrest economic relations and cooperation between Turkey and Israel improved. According to McCarthy, such increased cooperation is laid out in various political and military agreements. The only country suffering political damage at the end of the Ocalan operation was Italy.

The 3-Step-Action-Plan

The American military expert has come to the conclusion that the handing over of Ocalan is the first step in a wider, complex political plan. The second step of the action plan is to split the Kurdish liberation movement in order to isolate it from the Kurdish people and weaken its political organisation. With the beginning of this second phase, Turkey has become closely involved in the implementation of the action plan.

McCarthy explains that at this stage military confrontation and attacks on the PKK are not on the agenda which the American government confirmed indirectly. Rather the focus of attention of the action plan is directed against the inner cohesion of the PKK. This overall strategy is not due to lacking military resources but the nature of the Kurdish movement.

Regarding political movements which are deeply rooted in society and enjoy high levels of popular support such as the PKK, it seems more promising to undermine and destroy their inner unity, credibility and legitimacy. Turkey lacks the military resources to confront the PKK on its own. In the light of current tensions in the region, such a military approach is also not supported by the USA.

The Third Step

Aimed at Ocalan and the Kurdish liberation movement, the third step in the action plan is to break Ocalan's influence within the PKK and with the Kurdish people as a whole. Ocalan remains in a unique and crucial position enjoying vast support of the Kurdish people in Turkey and within the PKK. As well as weakening the inner cohesion of the PKK, the destruction of Ocalan's influential position within the PKK and with the Kurdish people remains the focus. That is why Ocalan was handed over to Turkey and why he is still allowed to live.

According to McCarthy, there is agreement between the USA and Turkey on this point. Military confrontation or attacks on the PKK would be counterproductive at this point in time as they would only contribute to the strength and powerful position of Ocalan within the Kurdish movement. Therefore, the main aim of the third step of the action plan is to paralyse and break-down Ocalan's influence. Should this be successful then the PKK will vanish in the sea of history and the world will forget Ocalan. This is the main goal of the action plan, McCarthy maintains.

However, whether the 3-Step-Action-Plan will be successful in achieving its aims is highly doubtful. Drawing parallels to the case of Arafat and attempts by the USA and Israel to remove him, McCarthy also points towards Mandela who received similar treatment for over 22 years. The example of Gaddafi also illustrates how he was able to resist comparable conditions and attacks. American invasions in countries of Latin America have proven to be counterproductive and are therefore discredited.

Paul McCarthy

Study of political sciences at the National University of California; adviser to various US military courts; study of military strategy at the military institute of Virginia; long-term stays in several countries of the Middle East and Latin America; co-founder and editor of the American press club; at the moment adviser for international politics at the A&M University of Florida.

THE SOLUTION OF THE KURDISH QUESTION AND FREEDOM OF ABDULLAH OCALAN

Mahmut Sakar, Defence Lawyer of Abdullah Ocalan, translation by Susanne Kempe

Looking back at the last 30 years of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, also without considering the historical and societal background of the conflict, there are some obvious conclusions to draw: In a bloody war tens of thousands have lost their lives, nature was destroyed, the inner cohesion of society undermined, in a war that led into an economic catastrophe. Many have written about it, discussed it. Irrespective of political stance, attitude and perspective towards the conflict, there is agreement that the causes of the conflict are rooted in the negation of Kurdish identity and the lack of democratic channels and ways of expressing that identity. Both the PKK and its leader Abdullah Ocalan have referred frequently to Turkey's destructive policy of negating and suppressing Kurdish identity as the fundamental reason for their political activities and military resistance. They have demonstrated their willingness and commitment to find new and peaceful ways to address the conflict including numerous (unilateral) ceasefires.

This kind of approach did not change with the handing over of Abdullah Ocalan to Turkey on 15 February 1999. Several of Ocalan's statements, speeches of defence in court and practical, political efforts give testimony to his continued commitment to a peaceful solution of the conflict. Therefore, I believe that this date marks the beginning of a crucially new time period for Turkey, a date on which the foundation for a new future had been built. Already in February 1999 efforts began to emerge in Turkey and Europe calling for a peaceful solution of the crisis. It was Abdullah Ocalan himself who called for an end to violent protests against his unlawful abduction and following arrest. It was him who enabled and ensured that the Kurdish population agreed to take a peaceful approach. Commanding armed guerrilla forces, Ocalan issued the order to withdraw Kurdish forces to territory outside Turkey in August 1999, a strong move seeking to deescalate military confrontations. This step offered new momentum for the efforts of democratic, political and civil rights initiatives and organisations working, arguing, for a peaceful ending of the conflict. A strong discussion about democratisation emerged and flourished as a result of these efforts, a discussion undermining dominant racist and chauvinistic attitudes in Turkey. Interestingly, also in exactly this time period, Turkey became officially recognised as accession candidate working towards EU membership by the European summit in December 1999. A new historical period started in the relationship between Turkey and the EU. Therefore, in my opinion, the attitude of Ocalan and the Kurds supporting a political solution of the problems contributed positively to the final decision-making of the European Union.

There have been a few improvements and changes regarding democracy and human rights in Turkey since 1999, but a solution to the Kurdish question is still a long way off. Signs of true change of attitude and thinking of the state towards the Kurds are not in sight. The language of confrontation is still prevailing. Abdullah Ocalan's solitary confinement and general isolation should be seen and understood in this context. This isolation and the issues raised are not just limited to the violation of human rights. His situation is an expression and manifestation of the dominant political attitude in Turkey which is willing to solve the Kurdish question by means of escalation and confrontation. That is why many Kurds perceive Ocalan's inhumane treatment as an attack on themselves. Many Turkish authorities believe they have found in him an instrument against the Kurdish people which creates further tensions. In the end, this form of on-going political negation of Kurdish identity and reality culminated in and continues to

fuel new military confrontations and clashes between Kurdish forces and Turkish military since June 2004.

Especially in the last few weeks the work of Abdullah Ocalan's defence lawyers has been strongly restricted. Arranged visits by lawyers and family members have been cancelled randomly; his lawyers are prosecuted and confronted with arrest. Only recently, the lawyer's office defending Ocalan's court case was searched by the police all documents being confiscated. These forms of intimidation create various limitations for a proper defence of Abdullah Ocalan's rights.

Ocalan's case is directly connected to and interwoven with the policy towards Kurds in the Turkish state. This context shapes possibilities and ways to reach a peaceful solution of the Kurdish question. Abdullah Ocalan is a public figure and personality who has played a vital role bringing the Kurdish question back onto the international agenda over the last 20 years. His constructive suggestions prepared the way for a peaceful solution; his efforts are still indispensable for the on-going process searching for peace.

This context and background need to be taken into account when assessing Ocalan's isolation. If Turkish bids for future EU membership want to be successful, it will be impossible to ignore a modern, democratic approach to the Kurdish question. Discussions over Cyprus seem to occupy centre stage in Turkish-European relationships, but also these can not hide the fact that the Kurdish question remains one of the key problems for Turkey which still awaits a proper awareness and a peaceful solution.

In order to achieve genuine progress certain conditions have to be provided. Turkey has to end the solitary confinement and general isolation of Abdullah Ocalan immediately. Random measures such as the restriction and prevention of family visits and meetings with his lawyers have to be refrained from. Access to information in form of radio, newspapers, and TV has to be provided without limitations. The right to exchange letters and mail has to be offered. All unlawful measures have to be lifted. Abdullah Ocalan's health problems have to be assessed and diagnosed seriously and medical treatment provided. The proposal issued by the Anti-Torture Committee of the Council of Europe calling on Turkey to transfer prisoners to Imrali that are trusted by Ocalan has to be implemented. Such measures and specific steps will significantly deescalate tensions between the Kurdish movement and the Turkish state reducing the confrontational potential of conflict. At the same time, this will give Abdullah Ocalan the opportunity to contribute more effectively and powerfully to a peaceful solution. Additionally, part of the discussion about these issues should be the suggestion to transfer Ocalan to house arrest due to his ill health. Such trust-building measures have shown to have a positive impact on the peaceful solution of other conflicts as cases such as Xanana Guzman testify. In the end, Abdullah Ocalan can not be denied the right to freedom of expression and political activity. Because of Ocalan's role and influential position in Turkey's political life, only his release will bring a lasting solution to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict.

Such proactive steps in Ocalan's case will speed up a solution to the Kurdish question. That is why this topic must not be excluded from the current political debate. It is time that Turkey started to consider and discuss these questions leaving all restrictions behind. Conservative, dogmatic and confrontational attitudes have to be overcome. For this challenge, the support and cooperation of all those who welcome an accelerated process of Turkish accession to the European Union is needed.

ABDULLAH OCALAN'S SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IS CONTSTANT TORTURE

International Initiative, DIHA, 19 January 2005, translation by Susanne Kempe

Arriving in the middle of February 2005, a German-South African human rights delegation visited Turkey in order to enquire into the conditions of imprisonment and solitary confinement of Abdullah Ocalan. At a joint press conference with lawyers defending Ocalan and the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD) in Istanbul, German lawyer Prof Dr Norman Paech explained the motivation and objectives of the delegation.

Due to the on-going contradictory reports about Ocalan's health and conditions of imprisonment and isolation which have been spreading through the international press in the last few years, it was decided to send a delegation to gain first-hand impressions and conduct neutral, objective investigations into those issues. However, the German-South African human rights delegation was not granted permission to visit Abdullah Ocalan on the prison island of Imrali. The Turkish ministry of justice did not explain its decision of refusal. Nevertheless, the delegation was able to discuss Ocalan's problems with his defence lawyers, human rights groups and political parties. Paech described the conditions of imprisonment and on-going solitary confinement that Ocalan is facing comparing them to forms of constant torture. This constitutes a violation of Ocalan's basic human rights which is not acceptable, according to Paech. Furthermore, he argued that Ocalan's case must be understood and solved in the wider context of the Kurdish question. This political context has also been touched upon during the current conversations. Once the members of the delegation have returned to their home countries, the results of the visit will be analysed and an extensive report published.

Members of the delegation include:

- *Essa Moosa, Judge at the Supreme Court of South Africa*
- *Jacobens Johann Moses, National Association of Democratic Lawyers, South Africa*
- *Prof Dr Norman Paech, Professor of International Law, Germany*
- *Dr Rolf Goessner, Lawyer, International League for Human Rights, Germany*
- *Rainer Ahues, Lawyer, Republican Association of Lawyers, Germany*
- *Heide Schneider-Sonnemann, Lawyer, Germany*

'NOT EVEN MANDELA WAS AS ISOLATED AS OCALAN': INTERVIEW WITH MEMBERS OF A SOUTH AFRICAN-GERMAN HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATION VISITING TURKEY

Interview with Essa Moosa, judge at the Supreme Court of South Africa and former defence lawyer of Nelson Mandela, and Prof Dr Norman Paech, German lawyer and expert for international law and human rights; Istanbul; MHA; 23 January 2005; translation by Susanne Kempe

Mrs Moosa, as lawyer of defence in the 1980s you have legally represented and fought for Nelson Mandela. Later on, the two of you have been closely working together on the political level. How did you get to know Nelson Mandela? Can you tell us about this process?

Moosa: At the time when the white government was in power the culture of nationalism was dominant in South Africa. The basics of this world view are apartheid and racism. Nelson Mandela stood up against this ideology. He founded the African National Congress (ANC) in 1952 and referred to the ANC's resolutions calling on the public issuing a manifest of freedom. In this call, Mandela formulated democratic principles of a new and free South Africa. Shortly after, legal prosecution of members and organisers of the ANC, including Nelson Mandela, began. The South African state characterised Mandela's democratic principles as betraying the state and branded him a traitor to the country. Some years later, the ANC along with other political parties was banned and excluded from legal political activities. Responding to this pressure and exclusion, the ANC decided to take up armed struggle which was fought for as long as the ANC remained outside of the political arena in South Africa.

At this time many members of the ANC left the country to receive military training in Palestine and Algeria. On their return they convinced a wide part of the black population of the necessity for armed struggle. Acts of sabotage, bomb attacks and attacks on state security forces followed. In the context of these actions leading members of the ANC, including Mandela, were arrested and put on trial. Other ANC members who the state was not able to arrest managed to leave the country. During the course of his trial, Mandela only spoke once. In this speech he explained the reasoning behind the armed struggle and resistance as well as the long-term goals and objectives of the black movement and the ANC. In 1989 Mandela got in touch with the government calling for a ceasefire and a peaceful solution of the conflict.

What was the state's response to Mandela's call for a truce and a peaceful approach to the conflict? How did Mandela manage to successfully press for peace being confined to prison?

Moosa: At the beginning the state categorically rejected these offers of peace. Many were against a peaceful solution. Mandela started to re-establish contact with other ANC leaders and members living in exile. He was able to convince them that peace does not have to imply the sell-out of ideals and aims. He called on the leadership of the ANC to return to South Africa and to put down weapons enabling them to participate in political life of the country again. The government then responded with the release of many political prisoners, later also Nelson Mandela himself. Leading the peace negotiations, Mandela convinced the ANC to agree to his approach. There were no written agreements with the state; rather, this process of rapprochement developed independently.

Mandela, who had been transferred to various different prisons, wrote many letters to the president as well as the minister president. The first couple of letters were not taken seriously. Changing his strategy, Mandela then continued his efforts writing to the department of the ministry of

justice responsible for the penal system. He understood how to use these contacts and establish a direct connection with the government.

Meeting Mandela on various occasions on the prison island having in-depth discussions about the conflict, the state secretary responsible for the penal system passed on his impressions to the minister president. At this time, large-scale protests, attacks and resistance against apartheid continued as did the state's policy of extra-judicial and illegal executions and killings.

After some time, Mandela was allowed to receive visits from and have debates with some members of the ANC which sped up the peace process immensely. These members of the ANC were not yet convinced of Mandela's strategy of peace. Subsequently various changes occurred. Banned organisations and political movements were re-legalised. The rest is history: The ANC won the first democratic elections in 1994 with an absolute majority. Mandela became president and a democratic constitution was adopted.

Do you see similarities between the cases of Nelson Mandela and Abdullah Ocalan?

Moosa: Nelson Mandela did not face such harsh conditions of imprisonment, such solitary confinement as Abdullah Ocalan is subjected to. Nevertheless, it is possible that also in Ocalan's and the Kurd's case similar developments might occur. This, however, is dependent upon whether and to what extent Ocalan is able and willing to establish direct contact with the Turkish government. I can not see why it should be impossible. It is true that Mandela was also confined to a prison island. But he had the opportunities to have and develop contact with other prisoners which are not given in Ocalan's case. In the past, the ANC was banned and its leaders were discredited as terrorists. Some key freedom fighters and leaders of national liberation movements that were called terrorists in the past are nowadays presidents of their own countries. Nothing is impossible.

Mr Paech, you have been critically observing and analysing the Turkish-Kurdish conflict and the chances for a peaceful solution for a long time. What is your assessment of the current developments?

Paech: Two years ago I came to Turkey and visited the areas of Van and Hakkari, at a time when election campaigns put people under an immense amount of pressure. A similar atmosphere of repression and fear dominated also the most recent elections in Turkey. Democratic practices, dealings and measures were none existent. The first impression I have gained through conversations with members of civil rights organisations is that the current government adopts a more positive attitude. Human rights violations carry on, but the current governmental party seems to be attempting to learn from mistakes of the past and seems to act accordingly. However, unfortunately, I have to report that reasoning, attitude and mentality of the Turkish government have not truly changed.

What is your reaction towards the refusal of the Turkish ministry of justice to give your delegation permission to visit Imrali?

Paech: At the beginning we did hope that the authorities would allow us to meet Abdullah Ocalan. We are sad and disappointed that such a meeting was not granted. On the one hand, the ministry of justice claims to adhere to international standards. On the other, many human rights and civil rights organisations talk about massive isolation and solitary confinement of Ocalan. It is self-understood that solitary confinement is contrary to international human rights. Such measures are not acceptable. In the case of meeting Ocalan and seeing his imprisonment conditions with our own eyes,

we could have been able to write and publish a balanced report. The government did not only refuse us a visit to Ocalan, it also was not able or willing to arrange a date for us to have discussions with governmental officials.

The behaviour of the minister of justice does not conform to his official positions, it was immature and superficial. I do not think that the causes of that are to be found in the ministry of justice but rather with authorities instructing the ministry of justice accordingly. There is a significant gap between the attitudes and claims of members of the AKP and members of human rights organisations regarding the current situation. The AKP is keen to emphasise positive steps and achievements on the road to democracy and human rights with human rights organisations protesting strongly in turn.

What are your thoughts about the political background of Ocalan's imprisonment and treatment?

Paech: Isolation is a method separating leaders of the opposition from their people over a long period of time. At the same time, it is expected that this enforced, long-term separation will cause and facilitate the break-down of the leader's political organisation. These measures are designed to break the personality of the leader; that is why I am referring to solitary confinement as 'white torture'.

Are you going to continue with your investigations?

Paech: Yes, we are going to continue with our work to collect facts on these matters. In my opinion, the trial and sentence Ocalan received are violating international law as his abduction, the basis for the trial, was illegal. Such moves are not covered by international law. If such human rights violations are to be tolerated, then each state can feel free to go around in the world, kidnap, arrest and try people.

The first ruling of the European Court of Human Rights did not take into account Ocalan's abduction; the circumstances of him being kidnapped did not feature. Therefore, we want to continue our investigations to shed some light onto these issues. There has been a similar case in South Africa in the past. Es Ibrahim was one of the leaders of the ANC in exile in Swaziland. He was kidnapped and taken to South Africa where a trial was awaiting him sending him to prison for 18 years. In the end, Ibrahim was released as another court came to the conclusion that the trial against him was illegal as his abduction had been illegal in the first place.

IMRALI 2005: TOUCHSTONE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY. CALL OF THE INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE

International Initiative 'Freedom for Abdullah Ocalan - Freedom for Kurdistan', translation by Susanne Kempe

Since his illegal abduction from Kenya in February 1999, Abdullah Ocalan has been held on the prison island of Imrali in the Marmara Sea. He is the only prisoners in this fortress. The visits of family members and lawyers are often randomly restricted or forbidden. Access to information material rarely exists for him. The conditions on Imrali are unprecedented in any other Turkish prison. Spending many long years in solitary confinement, Ocalan's health is weakened.

In this light, the Anti-Torture Committee of the Council of Europe recommended an immediate stop to solitary confinement and significant improvements of conditions that Ocalan has to live in. However, neither Turkey nor the Council of Europe have followed this call. To the opposite, Ocalan's imprisonment has become even more restrictive and oppressive. His rights as a political prisoner have been negated systematically. Abdullah Ocalan seems not to be entitled to universal human rights.

Abdullah Ocalan is widely respected and supported within Kurdish society as leading national personality. His constructive efforts for peace in the last few years have illustrated that he plays a crucial role in the search for a peaceful solution of the conflict. A lasting peaceful solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey is closely tied to the fate of the Kurdish leader.

Moving closer towards the European Union, Turkey introduced some measures for democratic transformation. These are positive developments. Theoretically, current reforms also provide the Kurds with certain limited cultural and linguistic rights. In reality, however, this has proven to be not the case. Disastrous violations of human rights are still committed on a broad scale. People of the political opposition are still subject to on-going repression and persecution.

The appalling conditions on Imrali and in other Turkish prisons mirror the general situation in the country itself. They give testimony to how far away Turkey still is from true European democracy and rule of law. Imrali is also a symbol for Europe's ambiguous attitude towards human rights. European silence facilitates the continuation of this unacceptable situation.

This silence has to be broken. Being critical observers of the Kurdish question, we plan to visit Imrali in order to highlight these issues as well as document and analyse Abdullah Ocalan's situation. We want this visit to be understood as a contribution to the support of democracy in Turkey. We are calling on you to join us being committed to human rights and their defence and protection. Human rights must be safeguarded without any restrictions everywhere including Imrali. We are convinced that democratisation in Turkey can only flourish and be successful if it is based on agreement of all citizens. Without any doubt, Kurds are part of this citizenry. We hope that our initiative will contribute to such a democratic dialogue that is so vital for a true solution of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict.