

End the Oppression of the Kurdish People

Rights and Freedom for the Kurds – Peace for Kurdistan

The popular uprisings that started with Tunisia followed by Egypt and spreading to other Middle Eastern countries came as a surprise to much of the world. With these uprisings, the people of the Middle East are saying "No" to anti-democratic, neo-colonial, and despotic regimes supported by the US and European powers.

However, the uprising of the Kurdish people has received little attention in the media in Britain and Europe. This year, the celebration of the Kurdish New Year (Newroz) has been accompanied by widespread political demonstrations and agitation for language rights, democracy and freedom. The Kurdish people are a part of the spring 2011 jasmine revolution and it is about time that the world should hear their voices for liberation and the underlying reasons for their demands for justice.

The existential threat to Kurdish life, security and culture

Today there are 40 million Kurdish people who live in Middle Asia across Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. Following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the great powers drawing the boundaries of the Middle East countries denied them the right to their national homeland. Since then the Kurdish people have been condemned to live under oppression, tyranny, death and massacres. Besides the genocide that took place in Qamislo, Halapja and Dersim, the Kurdish people have also faced cultural erasure through assimilation policies.

The repression of Kurdish resistance and struggle

Over the last half century, the Kurds have been involved in 29 uprisings against repression and denial of their rights. These uprisings have suppressed violently with many killings, displacement by destruction of villages and imprisonment. In Turkey, for the last 30 years, the state has been waging a cruel and dirty war in order to suppress the struggle of Kurds for language rights, democracy and freedom. Over 4,000 Kurdish settlements have been destroyed, millions of Kurds have been internally displaced, tens of thousands have been tortured in prison, and again ten thousands have been massacred by secret militias sponsored by the state. In Syria, 300,000 Kurds live without citizenship. In Iran, any agitation for political rights and freedom are met with execution. Although these tyrannical policies have well documented by international human rights organisations, the mainstream media has turned a blind eye to these violations because of the economic, cultural and military alliance of Western powers. This shows shameful double standards of morality and the use of international human rights laws.

The Kurdish aspiration for peace and democracy

The Kurdish Liberation Movement and its people have been insisting on a peaceful resolution to the question for the last 18 years. Based on the perspectives of Kurdish Popular Leader Mr Abdullah Ocalan, Kurds have been demonstrating their sincerity by way of initiatives that involved ceasefires and proposals for a resolution in 2011. Since August 2010, eight unilateral ceasefires have been declared by the PKK. During the 21st March Newroz celebrations, millions of Kurdish people, who came together in meetings and marches, have been reiterating the message that they will never abandon their demands for universal political and cultural rights. They have also affirmed that they seek a political resolution with the boundaries of the state.

However, these constructive initiatives have been met with repression by the AKP government and the Turkish. Around 2000 Kurdish politicians, including elected mayors, party officials as well as NGO representatives, have been detained for the last two years. The Kurdish language is still banned. Only in the last week, despite the ceasefire, the Turkish armed forces killed eight Kurdish guerrillas during a military operation. Thus the 2011 Newroz celebrations have been accompanied by uncalled for state oppression and violence. The government forces have stopped hundreds of thousands of people from participating peacefully in 'peace tents'. Many people have been injured during these assaults.

We, the Kurds living in Europe, condemn the repressive policies and actions perpetrated on the Kurdish people by the states of Turkey, Iran and Syria. We would also like to state that we do not accept the EU policies that regard the legitimate resistance of the Kurdish people as terrorism. We call upon world democratic public opinion to raise their voices against the oppression of the Kurdish people, and support their legitimate demands.

- End the conditions under which Kurdish people exist without a status by securing their political, cultural and social existence**
- Rights and Freedom for the Kurdish People – Peace for Kurdistan**
- The Kurdish Liberation Movement should be immediately removed from the terror list of the EU**
- Long Live the Honourable Resistance of the Kurdish People!**