

# PROPOSALS FOR A SOLUTION

## **Ocalan: My proposals for a solution are under 6 headings**

Abdullah Öcalan, imprisoned leader of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), has composed a 160 pages "road map" of what he believes will lead to a solution of the Kurdish question. In this week's meeting with his lawyers Öcalan reported that he submitted his road map to the İmralı Prison management, together with another 600 pages on "Democratization of Middle East Culture."

According to the lawyers' notes\* released by Fırat News Agency (ANF), Öcalan demands Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to take back a couple of threats. He says that since the loss of support from the USA, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) turned against the process of a "democratic initiative". Öcalan sees a solution for the Kurdish question in the democratization of Turkey. He claims freedom of the expression and the practice of culture for all cultural groups, also the possibilities for networks should be provided. Furthermore he asks for a democratic constitution. The concept of "self defense forces" created a controversial discussion, Öcalan puts forward a form of municipal police force as a principle instead of an army within the army.

### **Here is a summary of a number of issues noted down during the meeting.**

**Kurdish language:** They declare respect for cultural differences but the state's official language is Turkish. Yet, what will be the language of 20 million people living in this state? These 20 million people are not animals. How can you enhance a language if you do not organize the language, if you do not practice the language, if you do not teach the language, if you are not exposed to the language everyday by newspapers, radio or television, if you do not use it in education? How is this language going to survive? Culture grows with its language. A language needs a certain organization. In the context of individual and common rights this is a gratuitous discrimination we cannot accept. It is an absurd situation meaning that we know the individual but not the community. There is no individual without a community. The individual can only exist within a community. This is what the Kurds want. The culture of the Kurdish people has to be free. We need freedom for organizing the cultures. This is also valid for the other cultures.

### **The Kurdish question cannot be solved without a democratic constitution:**

For a solution of the Kurdish question the Kurds have to gain the ability to express themselves with a democratic-universal phraseology. Furthermore, a democratic constitution is needed. For a solution of this question we need a democratic mentality, a democratic discussion, a democratic implementation, democratic politics, a democratic organization and a democratic constitution. Without a democratic constitution this issue cannot be solved.

### **Turkey and Kurdistan as a common home land:**

Kurds will agree to appreciate both Turkey and Kurdistan as their common home land. Also the Turks will recognize both Turkey and Kurdistan as their common home land. The word 'Kurdistan' does not belong to me. I do not use this term. It was introduced by the Seljuk Sultan Sencer. It is a historic concept which was also used by Ottoman sultans in their letters. Today's form of government is the republic anyways. Now it is time to equip the republic with democracy.

### **Problems have to be solved by a democratization of Turkey:**

We are facing democratization problems in all fields in Turkey. These problems must be solved by all means. In order to solve today's problems we certainly need to be aware of historic reasons, perspectives and of the past. Also today's problems have a historic past. You will not be able to solve today's problems without knowing their past history. The solution is to provide a possibility for the Kurdish people to express and practice their culture freely. Those cultural differences will be recognized and accepted.

### **The road map does not separate, it unites:**

This road map is not only for the Kurds. It is also very important for the process of democratization in Turkey and in the Middle East. This road map is democracy, it is unifying, it is complete. It is definitely not separating as MHP has criticized. To the contrary, this roadmap is complete as a duty for the Turkish people, for Turkey and for Turkey's democracy.

The minister of the interior even calls Turkey a role model and this road map is the model for the solution in Turkey. I prepared a road map of 160 pages. Moreover, I wrote further 600 pages on the part of defense, namely "Democratization of the Middle East Culture." This makes a total of 760 pages. I handed everything to the prison administration. My approach is to lead an honorable life and to voice the truth for the benefit of the peoples. Nobody can stop me from telling the truth. I am and I will be very clear about this.

### **"Self defense" does not mean an army within the army:**

My views on self defense were interpreted negatively in the press. I do not suggest having an army within the army, nor do I ask for a separate army. There are 200,000 private security companies in Turkey. What I suggest is a kind of municipal police in the cities which is elected by the inhabitants of the district. For the rural areas this could be a kind of militia elected by the people. A number of accredited people could form a security unit, let's call it a security system. This has to be selected by the people themselves. There are 86,000 village policemen but they do not provide security. The village policemen system is a bad system. The old system does not work and the new system will come to this position as I have foreseen it before. This is an issue to be dealt with in the future. I am not pushing this issue right now, but it is an essential topic. So nobody should be angry with me for putting it forward now, ultimately we will come to this point. Security cannot be provided by village policemen.

\* When Öcalan meets with his lawyers, he is not permitted to hand them any texts or recordings. The lawyers are allowed to take notes, but cannot take them with them. They have to hand them over to the prison management, and it takes up to three months for them to get them back. *Bursa - BIA News Center - 31 August 2009, Monday*

**Kurdish Info - 05.09.2009-** The following is an assessment made by Kurdish Leader Abdullah Öcalan regarding the latest political developments and his Road Map to his lawyers on September 2nd 2009. It has been compiled from a news item in ANF.

Indicating that he has prepared his suggestions for a solution under six headings, Öcalan said, “The solution I am offering is a project to save Turkey’s long term future. We will not be an obstacle in the solution of this problem. The opposite is true and we are saying that we will do whatever we can (to support the solution). If something is being requested of me then I must be given space.”

### **The government is struggling**

Öcalan continued, “The statements from the government show that there isn’t anything concrete at the moment. The government is struggling; in fact they are struggling a lot. It is early for the Road Map to reach the prison director. It is still in the hands of the state, they are probably still examining it. Everyone is waiting for me to say or do something. Not only the DTP, but the others as well, it seems that this matter at some point will surpass them too. What do they expect of me, it seems they expect me to undertake responsibility from here on. If something is being requested of me, if responsibility is being put upon my shoulders then I must be given the right conditions.”

### **We will not be an obstacle in the way of the solution**

If the government do not take the right steps they will crumble like the governments before them warned Öcalan, the PKK can protect themselves he noted: Öcalan “I know the PKK and guerrilla. They will protect themselves well. However there may be unexpected developments for them. If the AKP do not take serious steps (for a solution) they will crumble in a few months just like the governments before them. This is what the MHP and CHP want any way. If a Democratic Solution is not developed, Turkey may face a war eclipsing the 1990s and 2005 period. This will not be in the form of passive or active defence as before. There is probably a rise in the recruitment of the PKK, they are probably stronger. They are educating themselves well, preparing, if a solution is not reached then there may be unpreventable eruptions by the guerrilla forces. The problem of the Kurds is not a Nation problem; it is a problem regarding existence. The war they are waging is a war of existence, to exist; it is a war for freedom. It is a problem pertaining to life. Furthermore Turkey’s problem is not a problem of a unitary State. Some members of the DTP also do not fathom the problem. One side is saying ‘the country is being divided; they are going to divide us’ the other is saying ‘separation, dividing can be discussed’.

No it is not like this, it is neither. The solution I am proposing is a project to save Turkey’s long term future. I am appealing to Mr Erdogan. We will not be a barrier on the way to a solution, we will support it however we can.”

### **Three models for a solution are prominent**

Öcalan, “My proposals for a solution come under six headings in the Road Map. The first heading is an introduction where the principles are stated. The others are ‘what needs to be done in Turkey’, ‘what needs to be done in Kurdistan’ and then the conclusion. Last week I proposed 9 principles regarding the Road Map. There is a 10th principle. The Democratic Constitution principle. Turkey’s fundamental problems can be solved with a Democratic Constitution. It is of vital importance. Furthermore in the section ‘The Democratisation of Turkey, the solution of the problem in Kurdistan’ I have written three models for a solution.

The First is the total eradication model currently being implemented in Turkey. This means wholesale annihilation, eradication and assimilation. This model has been and continues to be implemented in Turkey and is an ‘assimilationist’ model. The results of this model are very apparent, it has brought huge loss.

The Second is the small nation-state model. It is Israel and the USA’s tactic. Like in Southern Kurdistan it is aimed at imprisoning everything in a small State. This model creates a small nation-state and imprisons the problem in there. In this plan there is the KDP, the USA, Turkey and the AKP. Similar to Israel’s role (in the Middle-East), a small nation-state will be formed and will work for the Imperialist system.

The Third is the Democratic Solution model that we are proposing. The problem will be handled on the basis of comprehension. It is based on unity. In my model everyone will express themselves freely. It will be this way for women and young people also.”

### **Agriculture and energy confederation at the Tigris –Euphrates basin**

“Referring to suggestions he had made earlier regarding an agriculture, water and energy confederation at the basin of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Öcalan said that Turkey Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was bringing these suggestions to life. Öcalan “There is Davutoglu, he is trying to bring to fruition a suggestion I had made earlier about the formation of a confederation at the basin of the Tigris and Euphrates.”

### **I won’t go into details, they have to be honest**

Regarding the Road Map Öcalan also added, “There is a three article action plan in the Road Map. However I won’t go into details now. I can see that my statements are being distorted and used against me in the press. They shouldn’t resort to such tactics, they have to be honest. Their approach shouldn’t be so cheap.”

At a critical stage before announcing its road map for the solution to the Kurdish issue, the government has once again made clear its "sine qua non" conditions on the issue.

"Our government has always emphasized this: one nation, one country, one flag, one state," Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said in his address to the nation Thursday. Erdoğan's red lines are very similar to those of the military's, which were announced Tuesday 28 August 2009. *Hürriyet Daily News* - 28.8.2009

#### **Presentation of the "State Democracy Package" after 1 October**

Last month, the Turkish government announced that it was working on a plan to expand the rights of its Kurdish community and secure an end to the fighting with the PKK.

Turkish Minister of the Interior Besir Atalay hold a press conference on the 31st August. The Minister of the Interior Beşir Atalay talked about the course of the government's "democratic initiative" as an attempt to work out a solution for the Kurdish question.

The government has released no details on the package, but Interior Minister Besir Atalay said Monday that they had no plans for an amnesty for the rebels or constitutional amendments. Opposition parties remain hostile to the government's plan, arguing that broader rights for the country's Kurds would pave the way for Turkey's disintegration.

The Turkish army meanwhile has warned that the planned reforms must not endanger unity, underlining a constitutional article that describes Turkey as being an indivisible whole with Turkish as its language.

Minister Atalay announced on Monday (31 August) said that when Parliament reopens on Oct. 1 their suggestions for solving the decades-long Kurdish problem will be ready and after the approval of the Cabinet, will be opened up to parliamentary debate. However, when Atalay was answering questions yesterday at the press conference, he said they were not envisaging constitutional amendments within the framework of what the government is calling the "democratization initiative," although almost everyone they had talked to had underlined the need for it.

Atalay also said that they preferred not to talk about "concepts" and thus didn't have any plans for an "amnesty" for the members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the US and the EU. But, he added, the important thing was to ensure the laying down of arms, saying they are working together with the Ministry of Justice on a variety of different options.

Atalay also underlined that the official and language of education in Turkey is Turkish and that they are not working on the idea of education in Kurdish. The aim is to stop bloodshed and to increase democracy and welfare Atalay summarized the targeted results of the "project to end terrorism after 25 years": "At the end of this initiative terror will be brought to an end. There will be peace in Turkey again. Bloodshed and tears will end. [...] Vitrally important projects of the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) will be realized, just as the Konya Plain Project. [...] Everybody will feel like an equal and free citizen. Differences will not be a source of separation but of richness and unity. Standards of our democracy will increase. The Copenhagen criteria are still ahead of us. Turkey will be an example for the world for solving the terror problem by democratization and widening the area of freedom. After solving internal issues Turkey will be attractive in many aspects and a more influential global player in the region. Our efforts aim to heighten democratic standards and increase welfare. [...] We do not have a hidden agenda or any political account beyond these issues."

Atalay said that throughout the process discussion on any of the topics and suggestions of even the most travers considerations are appreciated. He also mentioned a couple of limits of the initiative.

**Get rid of the fear of division:** Atalay claimed that the opposition blames the ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party for not revealing their full contents. "On the other hand they say it will divide the country, destroy the unity of the nation and create further minorities. [...] We have to get rid of the division syndrome." He emphasized that AK Party neither has the intention nor does anybody have the power to divide a nation that has been living together for a thousand years. "They have to leave the grinder of the lobby for conflict behind. [...] We are not discussing the state's entirety, the nations unity, the crescent flag, the anthem or Turkish to be the official language. We agree with that. Turkish is our official language and the language of our education. [...] We are working on these issues very carefully."

**Wrong expectations:** In Atalays opinion the ones who doubt the realization of the initiative oppose the process as a whole, especially addressing the opposition. He said that a realization of the initiative is possible as well as the surveillance of Turkey's dynamics and its sensitivities.

**Pardon for PKK militants:** "We did not mention the concept of pardon and we will not do so. But a starting point is to put down the weapons and get rid of them. We have to work a lot for that. In this context we work on all possible alternatives."

**Announcement by Erdoğan:** According to Atalay's statement the process is going to work as follows:

- In some sections the talks about proposals for a solution are still continuing. Additionally, there will be meetings with universities that are working on the topic.
- Diplomatic talks will be held especially with Iran, Iraq and Syria.
- Under the special direction of Atalay a team will work on the proposal, the conception and the original data.
- A solution with short, middle and long-term steps will be handed to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.
- Erdoğan will present the government's "proposals" with Atalay's statements to the parliament after the opening on 1 October.

## DPT's Response

After Atalay's statement, pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) Chairman Ahmet Türk said it was impossible to achieve any improvement in democratization with the existing Constitution. "The mountain did not even give birth to a mouse," he said, meaning Atalay's remarks were far from meeting their expectations.

### **Peace rally in Amed (Diyarbakir) on Peace Day**

The "Yes to an Honorable Peace" rally, organized by the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party, or DTP, in Diyarbakir, served both to mark the Sept. 1 Peace Day and as a medium to voice the party's demands.

The rally came one day after Interior Minister Beşir Atalay's press conference about the government's "Kurdish move," which the DTP said was unsatisfying for Kurds.

The DTP co-leader Ahmet Türk greeted the crowd in Kurdish and continued his speech in Turkish. "We are rallying for peace today because we know what fighting is," he said. "Kurds will not be the side to end the peace process."

Türk criticized Atalay's remarks. "The interior minister talked as if there are no Kurds," he said. "We expect freedom, equality and brotherhood. This is not the way leading there."

The politician said the genuine is out of the bottle and the process cannot be stopped.

The Kurds do not have a problem with the unitary state, said Türk. "Spain was a unitary state under the dictator Franco, and it is still a unitary state where the Catalans enjoy freedom," he said. "It is not the words, but the actual situation that matters."

Türk reiterated that the outlawed PKK should be included in the efforts. "You cannot ignore a side that has lost thousands of lives in the struggle, not at a time when its leader says he is ready to contribute. Our people know that the key is there." The pro-Kurdish party co-leader recalled the Irish solution, where the Irish Republican Army, or IRA, was on the table. Another example he gave was South African Nelson Mandela, who led the country to peace while he was still in prison. "Just like Mandela did, Sayın Öcalan must be allowed to meet his friends in the prison," he said.

## The KCK Statement on September 1, 2009

The KCK (Democratic Communities of Kurdistan) said on Tuesday they were extending a unilateral truce until September 22 and would keep a close eye on the Turkish government's plan to end to the conflict, a pro-Kurdish news agency reported.

The truce, first announced by the KCK in April, had been due to expire on Tuesday.

"Our movement has seen it appropriate to extend the non-action period until the end of" the Eid ul-Fitr festival marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan on September 22, the PKK said in a statement carried by the Fırat news agency.

"In the meantime, we will watch closely the attitude of the Turkish state ... and make an evaluation," it added, accusing Ankara of failing to take any "concrete or satisfactory" step so far in its bid to address Kurdish grievances.

The KCK also urged the government to allow for the announcement of a separate road map drawn up by KCK leader Abdullah Öcalan on the Turkish prison island of İmralı where he is serving a life sentence for treason.

Öcalan's lawyers said last month that their client had handed the document to prison authorities and they would make a formal application to be given a copy.

Ankara has never formally recognized KCK's unilateral truces and military operations against the rebels have continued.

## Writers convicted over Kurdish issue skeptical about initiative

A number of intellectuals imprisoned during the years when even speaking about the Kurdish issue was taboo don't hold out much hope for the government's recently announced initiative to find a lasting solution to the problem.

**Haluk Gerger** says the government's sincerity in its initiative will be measured not by the importance they attach to the views of "external forces" but to the requests of the main parties to the issue. Fikret Başkaya comments that a solution to the Kurdish problem needs to be discussed not just among Turks but among Kurds as well, while İsmail Beşikçi argues that before anything else, the judiciary and university system in Turkey need to undergo some serious self-criticism.

Gerger was fired from his faculty post at the Ankara University faculty of political science by the Higher Education Board (YÖK). One of the founding members of the Human Rights Association (İHD), Gerger got in trouble for voicing his views on the Kurdish issue, was prosecuted under the Counterterrorism Law and incarcerated from 1994-95 and 1998-99 at Haymana Prison. In evaluating the government initiative, recently announced by Interior Minister Beşir Atalay, Gerger said Turkey needs to recognize the existence of the Kurdish people. He said refusal to recognize Kurds as a people was a stubborn struggle with reality.

"Turkey has [so struggled] from every way you look at it, and it's paid a heavy price; Kurds have been made to pay heavily as well, but Turkey has suffered also," he said, asserting that Turkey's efforts to overcome its own congestive problems have been thwarted because it hasn't addressed the main problem, the Kurdish issue. The Kurdish issue has clogged up Turkey's economy, politics, social life, military and international relations, he said.

"Turkey is creating maneuvers to fight against this congestion caused by its denial of Kurds. To tell the truth, I'm opposed to this. There's also a request for a solution and for reform coming from external forces. [US President Barack] Obama came to Turkey and said this quite clearly in Parliament, also demonstrating it physically by meeting with Ahmet Türk," he said.

Başkaya, known for views that contradict the official ideology, spent 20 months in jail under the Counterterrorism Law. He served his time along with Gerger at Haymana Prison. Başkaya reacted to the government initiative by saying it was positive that the problem was beginning to be discussed, but that the manner in which the topic is being approached is incorrect. The state needs to accept that it has been in the wrong, he said. “Firstly, those wielding power in Turkey, the authorities, need to appear on television and say: ‘For 80 years we were doing wrong, and continued to do so insistently. Now we are turning back from this error.’ In this way a stance needs to be put out there. That’s not what [the government] is doing right now,” he said.

**Başkaya** also stated that Interior Minister Atalay had consulted with the “Turkish side,” saying: “Why are you talking to the Turkish side? Isn’t it clear what they have to say? What’s the point in going and asking columnists whose essays are read every day, or going and speaking with the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association [TÜSİAD]?” Kurds need to be consulted with directly, and the representatives of the many Kurdish interest associations must be spoken with, he said. Başkaya also said the jailed leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) should be included in the government’s discussions on plans for a solution.

**Beşikçi**, incarcerated for years for his views, is also no stranger to the Kurdish problem. Known for his research on the Kurdish problem, Beşikçi was imprisoned eight times, for a total of 17 years. Thirty-two of the 36 books he has published have been banned at one point or another in Turkey. He evaluated the government’s latest initiative in an article written for Web site Kurdistan-post.com. Beşikçi noted that the interior minister had met with representatives of various political parties and NGOs along with journalists and academics, but added: “The most important and striking characteristic of what’s going on is that the state and the government are not engaging in any self-criticism; they’re not facing up to the past. I believe that the state and government have intended it this way; they’re just planning to institute some small changes without facing the past.”

Nevertheless, Beşikçi called the attitudes of President Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with regard to the issue positive. “It can be said that the president, prime minister and interior minister do not resemble their predecessors,” he said. “Every type of law and regulation has been passed to ensure the destruction of the Kurdish language and culture. In the announcements made regarding the Kurdish initiative, these topics aren’t addressed at all. But the speakers still have the gall to tell the Kurds, do this and don’t do that.” *21.08.2009 News, TODAY’S ZAMAN*