The image features a portrait of Abdullah Öcalan, a man with a beard and mustache, smiling and resting his chin on his hand. The background is a vibrant, abstract collage of colors and textures, including shades of teal, yellow, orange, and purple, with some elements resembling a cityscape or architectural structures. The overall style is artistic and expressive.

FREEDOM SHALL PREVAIL

A Short
Political
Biography of

Abdullah Öcalan



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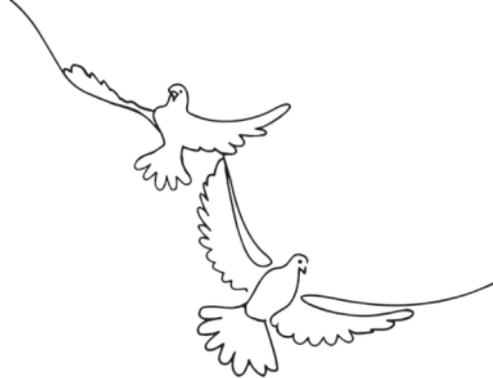
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Freedom Shall Prevail
A Short Political Biography of Abdullah Öcalan
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Introduction

Freedom Shall Prevail

Abdullah Öcalan was forced out of Syria on 9 October 1998. He came to Europe in search of a political and peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. Instead, more than twenty-two years ago, on 15 February 1999, in an international clandestine operation, Abdullah Öcalan was kidnapped in Nairobi, Kenya's capital, and brought to Turkey. Before that, Öcalan was known in Kurdistan, but he and the Kurds were hardly known to the world at large. This changed when Kurds in all four parts of Kurdistan and worldwide took to the streets to protest this clandestine operation and his abduction, raising his profile both internationally and at home.

Despite being sentenced first to death and later to aggravated life imprisonment—without the possibility of parole—Abdullah Öcalan continued to play a major role in shaping the future of the Kurdish Freedom Movement, Kurdistan, and the Middle East at large.

Since 9 October 1998, when Öcalan was forced out of Syria,

much has changed. Although his jailers hoped to remove him from the equation, he continued to hold the ideals that make the PKK what it is—solidarity among peoples and freedom for all—while readying the Kurdish people and those who would heed them for what was to come.

The abduction of Abdullah Öcalan was an early example of what would soon become known as “unlawful renditions” and marked a new string of interventions into Middle East. İmralı Island thus became a precursor of the infamous Guantanamo detention center. In 1999, the Kosovo war ended with NATO collectively attacking a sovereign country for the first time. After the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Bush declared a “War on Terror” in October, invoking Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Beginning with the invasion of Afghanistan, interventions in the Middle East and North Africa continue until today.

Amid continuous bloodbaths and ongoing environmental disaster, the status quo in the Middle East has been gutted and the chaos in the region and throughout the world is consistently deepening. The US and its allies pulled out of Afghanistan, leaving a multitude of misogynist and racist imperial religious structures to unleash fascist rule in the territories under their control. Turkey, among others, is a prominent sponsor and coordination point. The Turkish state has invaded and occupied parts of Iraq and Syria, primarily the Kurdish areas.

Almost nonexistent and little known twenty-five years ago, the Kurds and Abdullah Öcalan are an increasingly recognized force that represents hope around the world. They have not treated

their captivity at the hands of a number of occupying powers as a source of resentment but, on the contrary, have used it to demonstrate that the only way out of the existing quagmire is solidarity and the freedom of women and of peoples; the freedom of one is simultaneously the freedom of the other. They have dealt a heavy blow to the Dark Ages that ISIS, the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and the Turkish state, among others, hopes to unleash in the Middle East. In the process, they have shown the possibility of a path out of the crisis to another, brighter future based on women's freedom, an ecological economy and a democratic society. Embodied in and primarily known as the revolution in Rojava, they inspire and give hope to millions around the world.

This is why today it is more important than ever to demand freedom for Abdullah Öcalan. For Abdullah Öcalan's continued incarceration has become the symbol of a Middle East drowning in dark times, and his release has become the symbol of freedom, even in a place most unexpected.

This short political biography of Abdullah Öcalan attempts to provide an outline of his life. Even in this brief text you will see time and again that over a period of more than forty years Öcalan, Kurdish women and the people in general have used their words and actions to show that freedom shall prevail. Please join them by raising your voices and join us in our efforts to make freedom prevail both for Kurds and for Abdullah Öcalan.

Cologne, 1 September 2021

International Initiative

“Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan”



A Short Political Biography of Abdullah Öcalan

Abdullah Öcalan was born on April 4, 1948, in the village of Amara, in the Xelfetî district of Riha (Urfa). He graduated from Ankara Anatolian Land Registry and Cadastre Vocational High School in 1968. In 1970, while working as a civil servant, he enrolled in the Faculty of Law at Istanbul University.



During these years, he met with the Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocağı (Revolutionary Cultural Eastern Hearths; DDKO) and the youth leaders of the 1968 generation about the Kurdish question. He later quit the Faculty of Law and enrolled in the Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University. There he led a student strike protesting the March 1972 massacre of the Turkish revolutionary leader Mahir Çayan—whose ideas greatly influenced Öcalan and whom he commemorates to this day—and nine of his comrades in Kızıldere. On April 7, 1972, Abdullah Öcalan was imprisoned for seven months for his role in the protests.



Following his release from prison, having failed to introduce the Kurdish problem onto the agenda of Turkish revolutionaries, he started working on establishing a separate group around the idea that “Kurdistan is a colony.” The historically important first meeting of this group took place in 1973, in Ankara. Kemal Pir’s assertion that “the liberation of the Turkish people depends upon the liberation of the Kurdish people” provided the group’s theoretical framework, and, in 1975, Abdullah Öcalan and Mehmet Hayri Durmuş penned the group’s first written document titled “Analyses of Imperialism and Colonialism.”¹

In 1977, Öcalan and his friends traveled to Kurdistan to engage a campaign to raise awareness of the newly forming group and its ideas. Speeches Öcalan gave during this Kurdistan campaign were transcribed. He visited Bazîd (Elazığ), Qers (Kars),

Dugor (Digor), Dersim, Çewlîg (Bingöl), Xarpêt (Harput), Amed (Diyarbakır), Mêrdin (Mardin), Riha (Urfa), and Dîlok (Antep). Abdullah Öcalan's "The Way of the Kurdistan Revolution," also known as the "Manifesto," was written in the summer of 1978 and published in the first issue of the journal *Serxwebûn* (Independence). Abdullah Öcalan wrote the "Party Program" in memory of Haki Karer, who was from the Black Sea Region and had been murdered in Dîlok, and declared the foundation of Partîya Karkerên Kurdîstan (Kurdistan Workers' Party; PKK) at a congress in the village of Fis, in Amed, on November 26–27, 1978. In the wake of the declaration, the Turkish state carried out massacres in Maraş and Meletî (Malatya) and attacks in Semsûr (Adiyaman) and Xarpêt, and then declared martial law and detained numerous people.² In 1979, foreseeing a military coup, which would indeed occur in 1980, Abdullah Öcalan and several of his friends passed through the border town Pîrsus (Suruç) into the city of Kobanî, in Syria.

After leaving Turkey, from 1979 to 1998, Öcalan organized and led the political education of the PKK's rank and file, which





he considered more important than military training. At the same time, he also led the movement as a whole, conducted foreign relations and was responsible for diplomatic meetings, while doing his best to stay in touch with Kurds and allies in Lebanon, Syria, and, increasingly, around the world. Going back and forth between Syria and Lebanon, where he cooperated with the Palestinian Liberation Organization and met with new and old cadres for the coming struggle, Abdullah Öcalan began making the preparations for a revolutionary people's war against junta set up after the September 12, 1980, coup d'état. During the same period, he published the brochure *United Front of Resistance against Fascism*. In 1981, he wrote the books *The Role of Force in Kurdistan*, *The Question of Personality in Kurdistan*, *Life in the Party and the Characteristics of the Revolutionary Militant*, and *The Problem of National Liberation and the Road Map to its Resolution*, as well as his political report to the party's first conference. In the following two years, he also penned the works *On Organization* (1982) and *On Gallows and the Culture of the Barracks* (1983). The military coup resulted in thousands of people being impris-

oned and severely tortured, as a wave of severe repression was unleashed against society. News of disappearances and executions were leaked despite intense censorship. As a result, Öcalan's writings in this period focused on how to build an armed organization against fascism, how to fight against the Kurdish landowners and aristocracy who collaborated with the state, and how to transform the Kurdish militants, with their oppressed and colonized personalities, into freedom fighters. He also made several attempts to build a coalition with the Turkish revolutionary organizations that had succeeded in crossing into other countries in the region. However, internal disputes in the Turkish left, among other things, prevented the emergence of such a coalition. Then, on August 15, 1984, the PKK carried out its first armed offensive against two military posts, one in Dih (Eruh) and the other in Şemzînan (Şemdinli).

Thereafter, the PKK began to grow exponentially. As the organization continued to grow steadily from 1987 to 1990, gaining popularity among Kurds and extending its regional influence,





new problems emerged. A series of documents with the title “Analyses” assembled Öcalan’s intense discussion of the existing problems. These documents were later published as brochures, including *The Revolutionary Approach to Religion* and *The Question of Woman and the Family*, and as books titled *The Liquidation of Liquidationism*, *The Fascism of September 12 and the PKK’s Resistance; Betrayal and Collaboration in Kurdistan*, and *Selected Writings*, vols. 1–4. The PKK’s armed struggle against the Turkish state continued even after the military coup was nominally ended. In terms of the repression that Kurds faced in the region, the banning of their language and their organizations and the denial of their existence, the transition to democracy in 1984 was a nonevent. Indeed, not only the PKK but the entire left in Turkey defined the post–military coup period as the institutionalization of fascism and neoliberalism in Turkey. From 1990 to 1992, the armed struggle Öcalan led, which he called “a war for the protection of existence,” gained massive popular support. During this period, Öcalan became convinced that the political solutions to the Kurdish question that the PKK proposed and the strategies it had adopted needed to be revised.

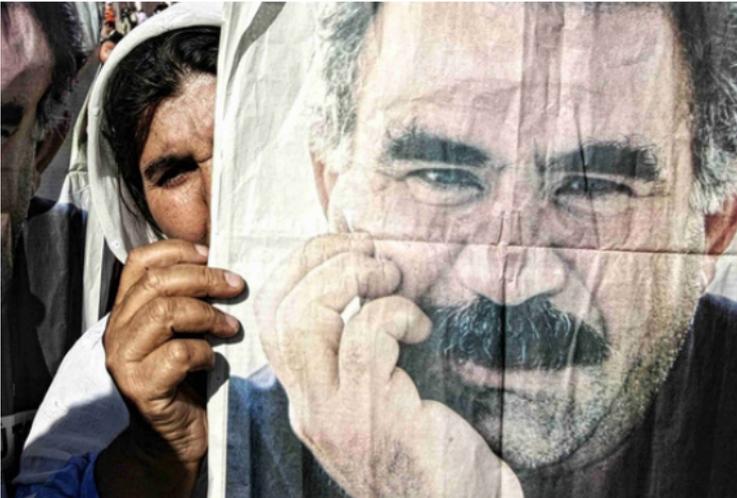


This phase saw Öcalan's *Resurrection Is Complete, Now It's Time for Liberation* and the 1993 book-length interview with Yalçın Küçük titled *The Story of the Resurrection*. In these books, Öcalan started to conceptualize a radical form of democracy that could liberate Kurds, women, and other oppressed groups.

In the early 1990s, Öcalan gave several interviews to Turkish journalists and leftists regarding his search for a democratic solution and efforts to achieve peace, which were published as the following books: *Meetings with Abdullah Öcalan* (Doğu Perinçek, 1990); *Apo and the PKK* (Mehmet Ali Birand, 1992); *Interview in a Kurdish Garden* (Yalçın Küçük, 1993); *The Kurdish Question with Öcalan and Burkay* (Oral Çalışlar, 1993); *I am Looking for a Collocutor: Ceasefire Talks* (1994); *Killing the Man* (Mahir Sayın, 1997). During those years, his analysis of communality also left its mark on the Kurdish community, and he published *Problems of Revolution and Socialism, Insisting on Socialism Is Insisting on Being Human, The Language and Action of Revolution, History Is Hidden in Our Day and We are Hidden at History's Beginning, How to Live*, vols. 1 and 2, and *Kurdish Love*.³

As can be deduced from the titles of the books, at this point, Öcalan was primarily concentrating on two aspects of the struggle: first, how to center on women's freedom and transform the PKK into an organization that can provide freedom to its militants and to the people; second, how to deal with the shortcomings of the Soviet real socialist model without giving up the ideals of a socialist revolution. He also started developing his ideas about history, which he would later return to in much greater detail in his prison writings. Öcalan states that the second half of 1990s was when he obtained his own freedom, in the sense of freeing himself from dogmatic thinking. During this period, he tried to open up a venue for dialogue between the PKK and the Turkish state.

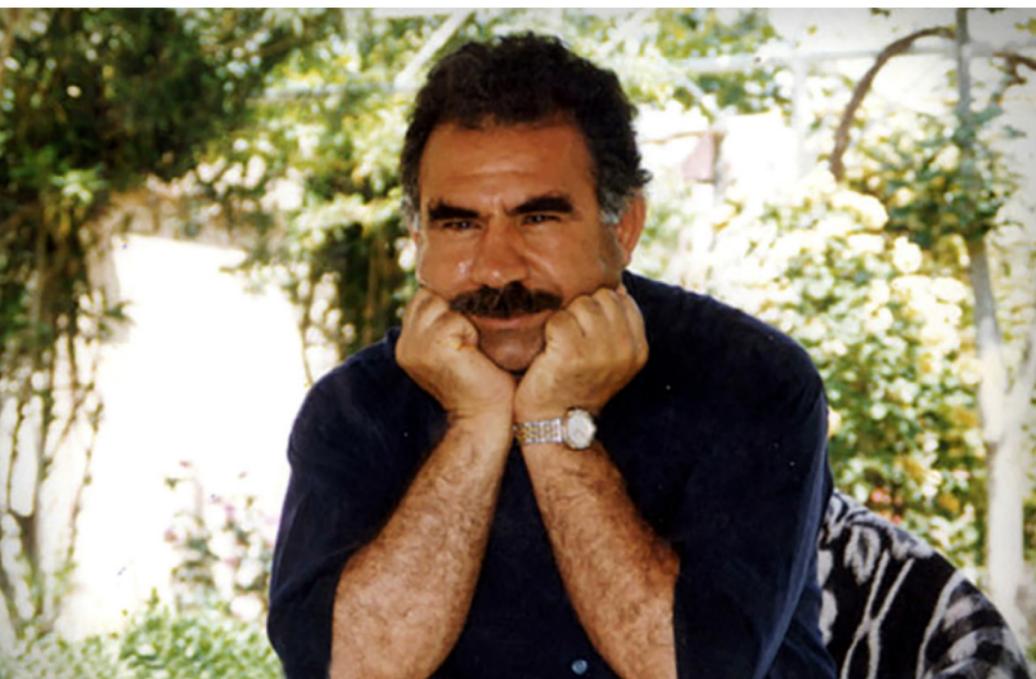
The book *Dialogues, Ceasefire Statements, and Press Releases, 1993, 1995, and 1998* is a compilation of Öcalan's analyses in the



context of the attempts made at dialogue with the governments of President Turgut Özal (1993) and Prime Ministers Necmettin Erbakan (1995) and Bülent Ecevit (1998). All of these efforts were sabotaged by events that the Kurdish Movement and Öcalan have a strong suspicion were the work of NATO/Gladio units.⁴ Major examples of such events are the massacre of thirty-three unarmed Turkish soldiers by a PKK guerrilla group, the suspicious death of Özal, and the attacks, bombings, and assassination attempts targeting Abdullah Öcalan.

The attacks against Öcalan and his ideas by forces that aimed to prevent peace and democracy in Kurdistan culminated in Öcalan's exile from the Middle East and his eventual abduction. The US's multidimensional diplomatic and military pressure on the Syrian state, including Turkey's open threat of war against Damascus, meant Abdullah Öcalan had to leave Syria on October 9, 1998.





Abduction and Detention

After leaving Syria, Öcalan looked for a new place where he could continue the political struggle. The details of the international diplomacy he conducted for a democratic solution to the Kurdish question and peace in Turkey during this period are published as a book titled *Towards Peace: The Rome Talks*. During this period, the CIA and Mossad pursued him relentlessly, and, as a result of the intense pressure applied by NATO and Turkey, different governments forced him to leave. After an odyssey through several European countries, Öcalan set off for South Africa, but he was never to arrive. On February 15, 1999, in a plot that involved several secret services, including the CIA, Mossad, and Turkish and Greek intelligence agencies, he was abducted while leaving the Greek embassy in Kenya, Nairobi, and handed over to Turkey. The abduction caused protests and uprisings by Kurds in all four parts of Kurdistan and worldwide.



A Trial and the Death Penalty

On June 29, 1999, Abdullah Öcalan was sentenced to death after a short show trial on İmralı Island in Turkey. The trial was later ruled as not fair and impartial by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Meanwhile, Kurdish protest reached its peak, and Turkey declared that as part of the negotiations for its ascension to member state status in the EU, it was considering abolishing the death penalty. Indeed, in 2002, the death penalty was abolished, and, as a result, the judiciary commuted Öcalan's sentence to "aggravated life imprisonment," without any possibility of early release—in other words: imprisonment until death. The ECtHR condemned this inhumane punishment in 2013, but its ruling has not had any tangible consequence as of yet.







Prison Conditions on the Prison Island of İmralı

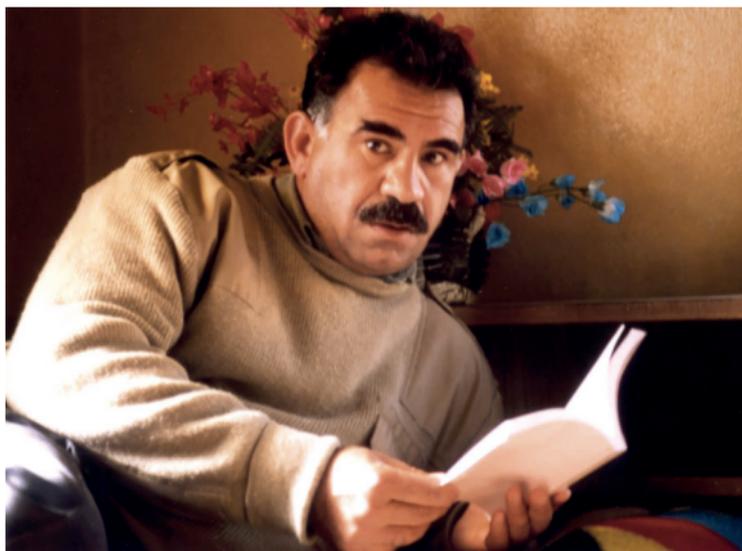
Abdullah Öcalan's prison conditions are grim, and he is confronted with an arbitrary regime of total isolation. İmralı Island, where he is imprisoned, is a restricted military zone located in the Sea of Marmara. Öcalan spent the first ten years of his sentence as the only prisoner on the island, guarded by more than one thousand soldiers. In 2009, a new prison was built for him, and there are now three other prisoners on the island. All cells in this new prison are designed for solitary confinement. Each of the prisoners has his own tiny courtyard for fresh air, but due to the extreme height of the walls these yards look like well shafts.





Öcalan still cannot receive letters and is the only prisoner in Turkey without access to a telephone. In the last ten years, the authorities have only permitted five meetings with his lawyers and five family visits, and these were only made possible by the protracted hunger strikes of several thousand Kurdish political prisoners spread across Turkey. Despite these conditions, Öcalan has produced a major corpus of writings while in prison.⁵ Starting with his defense speech in the show trial on İmralı Island, *The Declaration on the Democratic Solution of the Kurdish Question* (1999), these writings outline the new strategy that the PKK and other actors in the Kurdish freedom movement should adopt to transform Kurdistan, Turkey, and the broader region without changing existing political borders. *Prison Writings: The Roots of Civilization* is an extensive historical and philosophical study that lays the groundwork for all of the following books, while its second volume, *The PKK and the Kurdish Question in*

the 21st Century (both 2001), extensively evaluated and critiqued the PKK's shortcomings and failures, in order to improve its social impact and increase its political capacity. His submission to the Greek courts, *Defense of the Free Human* (2003), shed more light on his abduction and the role of various powers and further developed the ideas he had previously addressed. Öcalan's subsequent writings further delved into and developed his thesis about history and began to map out his alternative paradigm, first in *Beyond State, Power, and Violence* (2004).⁶ This book played a major role in forming what he calls a "new kind of revolutionary party." Bringing together ideas from prominent Western and non-Western scholars, he argued for an understanding of history as an antagonism between state formation and society formation. Since revolution is for the empowerment of society, it also should be against the state, organizing in a way that renders the state redundant. While capitalism, patriarchy, and the nation-state build capitalist modernity, he argues that the people's resistance against these systems should build upon the history of democratic





modernity, of which the world's revolutionary struggles are the heir. Finally, in his writings, Öcalan also revisited and further developed his ideas on women's freedom and revolution—which he called his “unfinished project.” Putting women's freedom and revolution at the center of all democratic revolutions, he emphasized that women's autonomous organization and ideological production will transform society into a state of equality, peace, and freedom. All these ideas are mapped out in the five volume *Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization* (2008–2011).⁷

The ideas that Öcalan formulated in prison have greatly influenced and inspired three revolutionary projects. The Northeast Syria project, more commonly known as the Rojava revolution, under the leadership of Kurds, with the participation of different peoples, including Arabs and Assyrians, is a revolution where the role of women and the youth continues to determine the direction, and which serves as beacon of hope for the region. The *Halkların Demokratik Partisi* (Peoples' Democratic Party; HDP), which was founded in 2012 and brings the Kurdish movement

together with other freedom movements in Turkey, including socialist, women's, ecological, and LGBTQI+ movements, Alevi, Armenians, and other opposition movements led by the peoples themselves, and which has received the support of 12 percent of the electorate in Turkey, is also shaped by Öcalan's ideas. Another example, the Kurdish Yazidi people's autonomous council, formed in the aftermath of attacks, is oriented toward self-defense and self-government, so that Yazidis can continue to flourish on their land. For its part, the Kurdish women's movement, equipped with Öcalan's analysis, not only set a precedent in self-organization and self-defense under the current conditions but also showed how to translate this into political mechanisms that allow women to exert their weight for a lasting transformation in the Middle East. All of these political actors aim to build democratic autonomous regions in the Middle East where radical democracy is exercised and to unite in a confederal structure on the basis of an ecological, feminist, and decolonial constitution.

Struggle for Peace



While in prison, Öcalan further developed and augmented the strategy that the Kurdish movement adopted during the second half of 1990s to achieve peace with the Turkish state. In 2009, he announced that he intended to write a document outlining a “road map” to peace and encouraged people to share their thoughts on the subject with him. This triggered an extensive debate in Turkey and abroad, which energized different sections of society. He completed the “road map” on August 15, 2009, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the launching of the armed struggle. This road map served as a basis for a process of dialogue with the state.

From 2009 to mid-2011, a delegation appointed by the Turkish government engaged in secret negotiations with Abdullah Öcalan on İmralı Island and with leading PKK members in Oslo (the so-called “Oslo process”). The parties involved agreed on several protocols. These protocols contained a step-by-step plan to end the armed conflict and make the necessary institution-



al transformation to resolve the Kurdish question. However, the Turkish government decided not to implement this plan, instead extending the waves of arrests of Kurdish politicians and activists and starting massive military operations in June 2011.

In another series of talks, Turkish state authorities conducted a direct dialogue with Öcalan on İmralı Island (the “İmralı process”). In late 2012, the state acknowledged that these talks had taken place. The assassination of three Kurdish female politicians, including PKK founding member Sakine Cansız, by the Turkish secret service, the MİT, in Paris on January 9, 2013, threatened to quickly bring the talks to a standstill, but Öcalan stuck with them.

At the Newroz festivities in March 2013, Öcalan called for the withdrawal of the armed groups from Turkey and expressed his hope for democratization in Turkey. The call was heeded, and hopes for peace resurfaced. That year, Time magazine named Öcalan as one of the one hundred most influential people in the world, and he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

In the following months, however, it became clear that the Turkish state's sole objective was to disarm the PKK, and that it had no interest in a political solution. The last pinnacle in the so-called "peace process" was the Dolmabahçe Declaration in February 2015, when an agreed protocol on peace was read in the presence of the vice prime minister, who was acting on the directive of then prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and HDP lawmakers, who represented Öcalan.



However, soon afterward, then prime minister and later president of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan shifted strategy, scrapped the entire dialogue process, and renewed military escalation.

Protests and Campaigns

Since Abdullah Öcalan left Syria in 1998 and his subsequent arrest in 1999, there have been countless protests in Kurdistan, in Turkey, and internationally against his abduction, the death penalty, incommunicado detention on İmralı Island, targeted damage to his health, against total isolation, and in support of his political role and his freedom. On several occasions, the isolation could only be broken through protracted widespread hunger strike actions.

In a signature campaign conducted in 2005–2006, around 3.5 million people from all parts of Kurdistan signed a statement affirming that they regard Öcalan as their political representative.



The number of signatures was remarkable considering that the campaign was conducted under immense restrictions—Turkey, Syria, and Iran declared it illegal. Several people were convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison in connection with the campaign.

In 2007, a hunger strike began in Strasbourg, France, to protest the ongoing poisoning of Öcalan, which had been substantiated by a laboratory.⁸ A wave of protests quickly spread across Kurdistan, Turkey, and Europe. In a second hunger strike, which began in Strasbourg and Turkey, in 2012, more than seven hundred Kurdish prisoners and many ordinary Kurds all over the world demanded the right to speak their mother tongue and insisted that the Turkish state negotiate with Öcalan. Again, from late 2018 to early 2019, a hunger strike led by imprisoned HDP MP Leyla Güven and joined by thousands of people in prisons and outside of Turkey, demanded that isolation be lifted and Öcalan freed. On June 25, 2012, Kurds began holding a daily vigil in front of the Council of Europe building in Strasbourg that continues to date. They are calling for Öcalan to be freed and are determined to continue the vigil until that goal is achieved.





On September 6, 2012, a signature campaign began, demanding “freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and the political prisoners in Turkey.” The document states that “Öcalan’s freedom will mark a breakthrough for the democratization of Turkey and peace in Kurdistan.” More than 10.3 million people had signed by 2015.

Over the years, but especially since 2015, Abdullah Öcalan has received much recognition and a number of awards, including honorary citizenship in numerous Italian cities and towns, Palermo and Naples among them. On April 25, 2016, the GMB, a general trade union in the UK, with more than 622 thousand members, and Unite the Union, a British and Irish trade union with more than 1.2 million members, joined forces to launch the



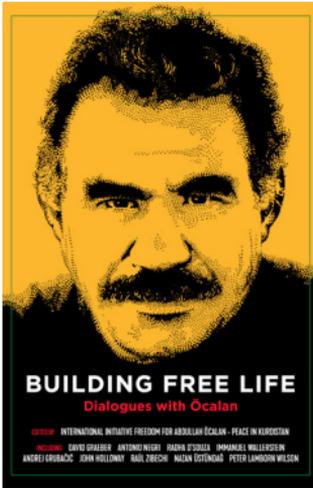
Freedom for Öcalan UK trade union campaign. The campaign was officially endorsed by the UK Trade Union Congress in September 2017, and more than fourteen of the largest trade unions in the UK have affiliated with the campaign.⁹

In early 2019, fifty Nobel laureates called for the end of the solitary confinement of Abdullah Öcalan and of all political prisoners in Turkey.

Meanwhile, leading intellectuals whose work Öcalan follows in spite of the challenges, including Immanuel Wallerstein, Barry K. Gills, Antonio Negri, John Holloway, and David Graeber,

to name but a few, entered into a dialogue with Öcalan's ideas in the book *Building Free Life: Dialogues with Öcalan*, edited by the International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan."¹⁰ While he probably could not access the book, in the last visit that the lawyers were permitted with Öcalan, in 2019, he expressed his gratitude and declared his comradeship with all movements and people in the world who practice and fight for freedom.

As of today, Öcalan and the whole of İmralı Island remain in total isolation, with no possibility of communication whatsoever. Meanwhile, both support for his ideas and the chorus of voices calling for his freedom is growing every day.



Notes

1 Kemal Pir, a founding member of the PKK, in 1978, was a revolutionary from the Black Sea region of Turkey and ethnically a Laz. He lost his life on hunger strike in 1982 in the infamous Diyarbakır Military Prison. Mehmet Hayri Durmuş, a Kurdish revolutionary and member of the PKK also lost his life during this hunger strike.

2 The greatest massacre occurred in Maraş, where over one hundred members of the leftist oriented Alevi religious community were murdered by ultra-nationalists in a pogrom that lasted from December 19 to December 26, 1978.

3 In general, these books were informally published abroad and smuggled into Turkey and Kurdistan.

4 Operation Gladio is the codename for clandestine “stay-behind” operations that were organized by the Western Union (WU), and, subsequently, by NATO during the Cold War. All NATO member states built up units that were connected with anti-communist and far-right groups and politicians. In Turkey, these units became extremely influential as counter guerrilla forces. The counter-guerrilla targets various leftist organizations, especially the PKK in Turkey and around Europe.

5 These books were written as submissions to various courts, mainly the European Court of Human Rights, where his case was being discussed.

6 PM Press will publish *Beyond State, Power, and Violence* in 2022.

7 Civilization: The Age of Masked Gods and Disguised Kings, vol. 1; Capitalism: The Age of Unmasked Gods and Naked Kings, vol. 2; Sociology of Freedom, vol. 3; The Civilizational Crisis in the Middle East and the Democratic Civilization Solution, vol. 4; The Manifesto of the Kurdistan Revolution: Kurdish Question and the Solution of Democratic Nation, vol. 5. All his books can be found at ocalanbooks.com.

8 Mahmut Şakar, “Press Statement by Öcalan’s Lawyers: Öcalan Is Intoxicated,” March 1, 2007, accessed December 15, 2020, <http://www.freeocalan.org/articles/english/press-statement-by-ocalans-lawyers-ocalan-is-intoxicated>; Pascal Kintz, “Statement of Dr. Pascal Kintz on Roj TV about His Analysis of the Ocalan Intoxication Results,” March 1, 2007, accessed December 15, 2020, <http://www.freeocalan.org/articles/english/analysis-of-ocalanintoxication-results-by-dr-kintz>.

9 For more details, see “Biography,” International Initiative “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan—Peace in Kurdistan,” accessed February 7, 2021, <https://freeocalan.org/biography>.

10 International Initiative, ed., Building Free Life: Dialogues with Öcalan (Oakland: PM Press, 2020).

On the International Initiative

On 15 February 1999, the President of the Kurdistan Workers Party, Abdullah Öcalan, was handed over to the Republic of Turkey following a clandestine operation backed by an alliance of secret services directed by their corresponding governments. Disgusted by this outrageous violation of international law, several intellectuals and representatives of civil organizations launched an initiative calling for the release of Abdullah Öcalan. With the opening of a central coordination office in March 1999, the International Initiative “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan – Peace in Kurdistan” started its work.

The International Initiative regards itself as a multinational peace initiative working for a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish question. Even after long years of imprisonment, Abdullah Öcalan is still regarded as an undisputed leader by the majority of the Kurdish people. Hence, the solution of the Kurdish question in Turkey will be closely linked to his fate. As the main architect of the peace process, he is viewed by all sides as key to its successful conclusion, which puts Öcalan’s freedom increasingly firmly on the agenda.

The International Initiative is committed to play its part to this end. It does this through disseminating objective information, lobbying and public relations work, including running campaigns. By publishing translations of Öcalan’s prison writings it hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the origins of the conflicts and the possible solutions.

Publications by Abdullah Öcalan

Books

Declaration on the Democratic Solution of the Kurdish Question (1999)

Prison Writings I: The Roots of Civilisation, Pluto Press (2007)

Prison Writings II: The PKK and the Kurdish Question in the 21st Century, Pluto Press (2011)

Prison Writings III: The Road Map to Negotiations, International Initiative Edition (2012)

Civilization: The Age of Masked Gods and Disguised Kings, Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization, Volume I, New Compass Press (2015)

Capitalism: The Age of Unmasked Gods and Naked Kings, Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization, Volume II, New Compass Press (2017)

The Political Thought of Abdullah Öcalan, Pluto Press (2017)

Sociology of Freedom , Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization, Volume III), PM Press (2020)

Upcoming and Untranslated

Beyond State, Power and Violence, PM Press (Spring 2022)

Ortadoğu'da Uygarlık Krizi ve Demokratik Uygarlık Çözümü (Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization, Volume IV) (Turkish 2010)

Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Ulus Çözümü (Manifesto of the Democratic Civilization, Volume V) (Turkish 2012)

Özgür İnsan Savunması [Defence of the Free Human] (2003)

Brochures

War and Peace in Kurdistan (2008)

Democratic Confederalism (2011)

Liberating Life: Woman's Revolution (2013)

Democratic Nation (2016)

All these brochures are compiled predominantly from the translated and untranslated works of Abdullah Öcalan after 1999.

Other Publications

Building Free Life: Dialogues with Abdullah Öcalan, PM Press (2019)

Freedom Poems for Öcalan, Peace in Kurdistan Campaign (2019)

Art of Freedom, A Brief History of Kurdish Liberation Struggle, PM Press (2021)



More information and translations in other languages:

www.ocalanbooks.com



The International Initiative “Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan — Peace in Kurdistan” is a multinational peace initiative for the release of Abdullah Öcalan and a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. It was established immediately after Öcalan was abducted in Kenya, Nairobi, and handed over to the Republic of Turkey on February 15, 1999, following a clandestine operation by an alliance of secret services. Part of its activity is the publication of Abdullah Öcalan’s works.