



## Trade Union policy on solidarity with the Kurds

Scottish Solidarity with Kurdistan, working with other organisations such as Peace in Kurdistan and the Freedom for Öcalan Campaign have worked with trade union activists to raise awareness within the trade union movement of the situation in Kurdistan. Trade unions have adopted progressive policies in support of the Kurds and condemning the attacks on them.

### STUC 2016- Resolution 120 - Solidarity with the Kurds

That this Congress condemns the recent violence carried out against the Kurdish community in Turkey and the use of curfews to terrorise inhabitants. Reports by the Turkish Human Rights Foundation confirm that civilians (among them women, children and people over the age of 60) have been killed in the districts in South East Turkey where curfews have been declared.

Congress notes that the peace negotiations between Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan, Kurdish politicians and Turkish government officials, which had taken place during a 2 year ceasefire by the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), were ended in early 2015 by the Turkish President Erdogan and that since then there has been rising violence.

Congress also notes that the Kurdish people in Rojava in Syria have heroically defended themselves and pushed back the barbarians of Daesh/ISIS, whilst establishing democratic, secular and gender-equal administrations, while the Turkish government allowed Daesh fighters, supplies and stolen oil to cross their borders and refused to do anything to stop the siege of Kobane.

In south Kurdistan in Iraq, it has been PKK and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters who pushed Daesh out of Sinjar, rescuing hundreds of Ezidi women, whilst the Turkish Government has bombed PKK bases, killing civilians.

Congress agrees to:

- Make links with Scottish Solidarity with Kurdistan and the Kurdish community in Scotland;
- Support and encourage links with trade unions, women's and youth groups in Turkey and Kurdistan, offering support in their efforts to build peace;
- Support the efforts to rebuild Kobane and support the struggle against Daesh; and
- Write to the Turkish Government, calling on them to put a stop to the curfews and violence and to restart peace negotiations with Kurdish leaders.

### STUC Annual Congress 2017 - Emergency Motion A – Turkey

“That this Congress notes:-

- The outcome of the referendum in Turkey on 16 April, which gave a narrow majority to the proposal to change the constitution giving more powers to the president and believes this is deeply worrying news;
- That the Council of Europe election observers reported that the Referendum process did not meet Council of Europe standards, was not a genuinely democratic process and that the mass arrests of journalists and the closure of media outlets denied the Turkish people a real choice;
- That the second and third largest parties in the Turkish parliament, CHP and HDP, are mounting legal challenges to the result following alleged electoral abuses;
- The forthcoming report of the Education International/ETUCE delegation (including UCU, EIS and NAS/UWT members) of their visit to Ankara in February 2017, where they saw first-hand the way school teachers, academics, journalists and public servants in Turkey are being victimised and the attacks on the education trade union, Egitim-Sen; and
- That public servants, including teachers and academics, including signatories of the Academics for Peace petition, have faced persecution, including imprisonment and dismissal, and further notes that dismissal in this instance does not simply mean that they have lost their employment, but rather that they are blacklisted from future employment, unable to get medical assistance or any form of social security, and have had their passports rescinded. Over 100,000 public servants have been dismissed in this way. Congress

believes these actions are indefensible and wholly inconsistent with the principles of natural justice, workers' rights and academic freedom.

“Congress condemns the lack of democracy in Turkey and calls on the STUC General Council to call:

- For the release from prison of political opponents, such as the MPs and co-leaders of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksekdag, journalists and campaigners for women's freedom and human rights;
- On the Turkish Government to reinstate teachers, academic staff and public servants, who have been dismissed from their jobs and to allow them full access to public services and the same rights as other citizens;
- On the Turkish Government to stop the persecution of 'Academics for Peace' and ensure signatories are protected against public threats;
- On the UK and Scottish Governments to demand the reinstatement of democratic freedoms in Turkey;
- For a cessation of the talks relating to Turkey joining the EU;
- For an end to all British arms sales to Turkey, particularly in the context of Turkish weapons being used against the Turkish people;
- On the UK Government to use Turkey's membership of NATO as a way of pressing for reforms to allow democratic engagement in Turkey; and
- For an end to any deals with Turkey where the rights of refugees are used as bargaining chips.”

### **TUC 2017 Resolution - Solidarity with all progressive forces and the Kurdish population of Turkey**

Conference is appalled at the continuing repression and massive human rights abuses taking place at the hands of the Turkish government. It's clear that since President Erdogan failed to achieve an electoral majority in the June 2015 election, his government has embarked on a war against the Kurdish population, criminalisation of opposition groups, closing down the free press and intimidation and threats against anyone who challenges his rule. The failed coup attempt has been used as an excuse to radically speed up this process.

Conference is further appalled at the international actions of the Turkish government, its actions in Syria demonstrate clearly it's more intent on fighting the progressive Kurdish led administration in Rojava rather than defeating so called Islamic State.

Conference calls on the Turkish government to:

- Immediately end the state of emergency, restore all democratic and press freedoms and restart the peace process with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK);
- Release all political prisoners, including the imprisoned HDP leaders and members of parliament and jailed Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan;
- Withdraw its forces from Syria, and stop attacking Kurdish led forces;
- Immediately cease support and backing of Jihadi groups.

Conference calls on the UK government to maximise pressure on the Turkish government to comply with the actions listed above and calls on all unions to affiliate and support the work of the Peace in Kurdistan and Freedom for Öcalan campaigns. Conference calls on the TUC to organise a solidarity delegation to Turkey including a visit to the Kurdish areas.

## **Join Scottish Solidarity with Kurdistan**

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