



Kongreya Neteweyî ya Kurdistanê
Kurdistan National Congress
Congrès National du Kurdistan
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KNK

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Mr. President

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In May of this year, from the so-called University Observatory of Terrorism (OUT), which is part of the Department of Security and Defense of the International Relations Institute (IRI) of the National University of La Plata (UNLP), also part of the Federal Council for International Studies (CoFEI), a series of reports were published and presented as 'academic research, one of them under the name: "PKK in Europe: past, present, and future?", whose content was adapted and replicated on its social networks between last May 24th and 26th. Such material is signed by Mr. Ignacio Teruel and Mrs. Mara Samantha Cruz García, both Graduates in International Relations and Researchers in the European Area of the OUT, and by Lic. International Relations, Maria Fernanda Alarcón in charge of Design and editorial correction.

We must say that we consider offensive and irresponsible the statements made in this "research" since they not only involve an organization and its members and adherents - in this case, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), member of our Congress next to other 46 political parties and civil society organizations - but rather to a people that have decided to organize and establish itself as an authentic National Liberation Movement through its various parties and hundreds of organizations. We are referring to a Movement that since 2005 has been organized in the Union of Kurdistan Communities (KCK), arising from the vital need to exist and defend the identity, historical, cultural, social, and political rights of a nation close to 45 million people, but that his political project of peace and democracy is not exclusively restricted to ethnic background. We are talking about a native people settled thousands of years ago in Upper Mesopotamia, which during the 20th century has been successively fragmented, into the four parts into which its territory was divided and which today is under the colonial rule of the States of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. A Movement whose diaspora is estimated to exceed one and a half million people spread across all continents but for many factors, a large majority have found refuge in Europe, after being forced to emigrate due to the persecution, the war, and the extermination to which they were and are exposed due to their origin and/or their political ideas, and who also in their great majority decided to exercise their right to organize themselves.

Even in this context, we must say that there is an imperative will and need in our peoples to build autonomous and democratic societies that allow us to have a dignified life in peace.

We believe it necessary to remember that by these days and since 2012, in the Middle East, specifically in Rojava (western Kurdistan), the Kurdish movement has been leading a process-oriented in this sense, whose inalienable basis is the liberation of women, the participative

democracy, environment care, and ecology and peaceful coexistence among the peoples that inhabit the region.

It is a complex process, which is neither far removed nor exempt from difficulties and contradictions, since it is being carried out in a war scenario and multiple disputes originating in colonial and transnational interests, which requires organizing and guaranteeing the defense not only of the territory but the lives of its inhabitants, exposed to continuous attacks by jihadist factions that have been infiltrated in the area again and to the constant bombardments of the Turkish aviation on the civilian population, including on refugee camps, in clear violation of the International human right.

In Rojava, there are millions of Kurds - among whom due to a long history of common struggles, there are members and supporters of the Kurdistan Workers' Party too, of course - along with Arabs, Assyrians, Turkmen, Armenians, Persians and Chechens, Arameans, Circassians, Muslims, Christians, Alevi and Yezidis among others, those who have been respected for the first time and included in the paradigm of Democratic Confederalism, the reason for why, they have decided to adopt it as an ethical model for their lives and as a political model for the government of their territories, very far removed and even in the antipodes of any fundamentalist thought and practice that is tried to impute to them and even less, based on the terror that this "investigation" attributes to them.

Call our attention that all this process, its actors and their circumstances are omitted in the aforementioned "investigation", which inevitably falls into historical and analytical errors whose only purpose seems to be the outright justification of the decision of the United States and the European Union - at the express request of Turkey in 2004 - to include the Kurdistan Workers' Party in the 'terrorist organizations' list; a decision that has cost thousands of lives, which continues to be upheld despite repeated national and international requests - even by several countries within EU itself - to be excluded from that list. In this regard, there is a vast accumulated case-law based on the rulings of the International Courts that consider this measure unfounded, not only because of the characteristics and geographical setting of the conflict but also because it is considered a decision that responds to specific objectives of the Turkish state's internal policy and geostrategic objectives in the context of the wars that the main Western powers are indirectly waging in the region.

Both the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), based in Luxembourg, and the Court of Cassation in Brussels, Belgium, dismissed the judicial prosecutions that accused the PKK of being a terrorist organization, a rejection shared repeatedly and through different actions and resources, by other competent international organizations in the matter. This information is publicly accessible and can be obtained through a simple internet search. We regret that in the case of an "academic research" which was made public and produced no less than within the framework of a "Terrorism Observatory", a superficial mention is just made of it in a small footnote without any other specification.

Claiming that the Kurdistan Workers' Party is a "terrorist organization", based on "violence and terror", that "has intimidated and eliminated any other political entity that does not share its proposals" and that to get money and financing it commits a series of "illicit" actions that qualify as a "criminal economy", we plain and simple consider it infamous. But not satisfied with this, in other paragraphs of the "investigation" they insist on characterizing the PKK as a "radical ethnic-nationalist terrorist organization", whose tactics are "the kidnapping of foreign

tourists, attacks on diplomatic offices and Turkish NGOs in Europe and suicidal attacks". The Observatory directly accused the Party of "intimidating foreign governments, trafficking in people, being linked to drug trafficking" and "having training camps in Germany, Switzerland, and Belgium."

We are perplexed by such accusations. It's usual - although no less outrageous - to receive them from the States and governments that submit us and use those same arguments to assassinate our people, but we cannot accept or stop expressing our repudiation, when these same claims masked in a university "research" are generated from a High House of Studies and endorsed by a National University that stands out not only for its academic prestige but for the promotion of democratic values, critical thinking and the unrestricted defense of Human Rights. A University that in many ways has received us with open arms and has given us its spaces and infrastructure to make our situation known, strengthen fraternal ties with its community, and that even, from different Faculties, through its directive members, has publicly expressed their solidarity and support for the cause of our people.

We understand that addressing the Kurdish issue and analyzing the actions and political guidelines of the wide range of organizations that currently participate in political life in the Middle East is not an easy task. But we consider that the content and information that is generated and disseminated from this and any other academic sphere, on such delicate and sensitive subject which the Academy has decided to turn it into an object of study, deserve to redouble the effort in understanding and on the use of reliable, verifiable and trustworthy information sources.

We wonder what the motivations for this "investigation" could be, which begins by alluding among others, to an episode that recently occurred at the headquarters of the Turkish Society of Switzerland (ITT) in the commune of Rümlang, in which the Kurdistan Workers' Party directly links and incriminated on the exclusive basis of journalistic publications made in foreign media, the vast majority related to the Turkish government, but in no case are they based on either the recognition of those actions by the indicated organization or any evidence offered to the Swiss police or to the judicial investigation initiated, that it can determine with such a degree of forcefulness that the PKK was involved in the events directed against Mr. Şeref Yıldız, current Director of the ITT. Likewise, it is categorically stated that the reasons why the organization committed this and other previous attacks against the material and physical integrity of Mr. Yıldız are due to the ongoing judicial process initiated by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey against the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP).

In that regard, it is necessary to point out that since its formation in 2012, there have been many attempts by the AKP to outlaw and dissolve the Democratic Party, which is not surprising in the context of the political reality of Turkey, in the case of the third political force in the Turkish Parliament and the only real opposition to the ruling party and the legitimate representative of all minorities in the country. HDP is a progressive alliance of diverse and democratic social parties and organizations that today faces the imprisonment of more than ten thousand of its members and adherents, among them its highest representatives, all of them indicted in an identical way under the charges of "propaganda and belonging to a terrorist organization" what is being understood in the Turkish official discourse, as a direct accusation of acting as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party.

The attacks against the Democratic Party and its political activists consist of illegal raids and destruction of their offices and homes, simultaneous raids in different parts of the country, mainly at night, and the murder of its members, the most recent one occurred on June 18. that ended the life of our political friend Deniz Poyraz, whose murderer, with strong ties to the ruling Party and trained militarily by Turkey to fight against the Kurds, in the areas occupied by the Turkish army since January 2018 in eastern and northern Syria, declared to the police that he committed this act because he "hates the PKK ". That is a part of the truth, in a much more complex background where the murder of Deniz Poyraz embodies the atrocious consequences of promoting and sustaining these discourses which only benefit those who oppose the democratization and pacification of the country.

Concerning the above, we ask, which are the basis to affirm that HDP and DBP (Party of Kurdish Democratic Regions) "are two political branches of the PKK"? What would be this "important information" that alleged "former members of the PKK" would have "handed over to the Turkish authorities" to demonstrate the organization's links "with both parties?"

We are struck by the fact that the "Observatory" under on your orbit, is promoted as a space that calls "to open debate and reflection on the phenomenon of terrorism" and to carry out "periodic reports based on a mapping of open sources", nevertheless in this "investigation" it only mentions classified information proper to the secret intelligence services and not of an academic investigation about an international conflict.

From a deep reading of the presented work, we have observed with great concern and also with curiosity that all these series of statements, pointing and conclusions, were practically done without quoting any reference to written or oral sources or ad hoc bibliography that allows checking the origin and veracity of the information provided, except for a study that we have been able to access on the web - not without difficulty - after resorting to multiple search parameters and which would correspond to a work carried out by a former chief of criminal intelligence and anti-terrorism police in Turkey, on which this "research" seems to have been structured; work to which it has been assigned category of truth.

The clear and orderly quotes of the different sources used and consulted should be required not only by the academic rigor that a publication of this type should present but also by the gravity of the categorizations that are held there.

We want to point out with some minor examples perhaps, the lack of knowledge about the organization that is decidedly identified as "terrorist": in principle, PKK never "proclaimed itself as the spokesperson for the Turkish people" (p. 3); on the other hand, in the Party of Kurdistan Workers, there is no figure of "General Secretary" much less that can be attributed to Mr. Abdullah Öcalan.

About Mr. Öcalan's situation, who has been in solitary confinement at the Imrali Prison Island for the last 22 years and who is prevented from even contacting his closest family and even his lawyers, we can say a lot, but we are going to focus on its political guidelines, which have been of enormous influence for the struggle of the Kurdish people organized in the Kurdistan Liberation Movement and which are presented absolutely misrepresented and distorted here.

It is inaccurate and anachronistic to affirm that Abdullah Öcalan's objective is "to obtain the independence of Kurdistan" and that the PKK seeks "to become independent from a state to form its own, or to annex territory from one state to another." Following this, several arguments are expressed which contradict everything previously stated, and that could even be valid to

reject outright the classification of "terrorist organization" attributed to the PKK. But in the manner expressed, it only accounts for the inconsistency of the factual theory outlined in this work and the rest of related publications.

It is alarming to us that in an "investigation" that recognizes the existence of repressive policies by the Turkish state, imprisonment, torture, persecution, people forced into exile, elimination of the Kurds in parliamentary representation and the banning of their political parties, internal forced displacement of millions of people, in addition of the use of chemical weapons against the guerrillas, violation of International Law and illegal actions in Iran and Iraq (Syria is missing), and at the same time it recognizes that despite "the organization's goodwill samples towards dialogue and peace, the Turkish government maintains its position of seeking the extermination of the PKK", after to say all this, how is it possible that they continue bent on affirm that the Kurdistan Workers' Party, which emerged from the heart of its own people, a people which is attacked and threatened constantly with massacres, genocides and policies of "ethnic cleansing", how can they say that is a terrorist organization similar to Al Qaeda or the Islamic State?

Faced with all these acts perpetrated by the Turkish State against the Kurdish people, we ask them: In which place would befit the right of self-determination of the peoples, contemplated in the International Covenants on Human Rights and adopted in the General Assembly of the United Nations more than 50 years ago? And where then, the self-defense right for the peoples who are victims of these policies and the illegal occupation of their territories have?

We invite all of you to read Abdullah Öcalan's books –many of them freely circulated and easily accessible in Spanish - or just trace the hundreds of analyzes and articles –also in Spanish- that address Democratic Confederalism, the history of the PKK, and the current struggle of the peoples of Kurdistan. International solidarity initiatives, campaigns, and actions carried out around the world are also publicly known, in the same way as public statements made by renowned intellectuals and academics, artists, leaders, and political activists from all continents committed to the defense of Human Rights, the cause of the Kurdish people and in favor of a peaceful, sustained and real solution to the conflict.

We do not consider that it is necessary to agree on ideological terms in this matter, much less than our concern and our demand affects the freedom of expression and information right in any way or interfere with the due academic freedom that assists them. We simply appeal to ethical responsibility at the time to make public this type of works, to avoid generating irreparable damage caused by the generation and reproduction of biased, maliciously misrepresented, and even erroneous information, which ends up responding to distant and even opposed interests, to an Institution of the academic excellence that characterizes the entity that you preside.

Given the aforementioned facts, we request specific answers about the "investigation" in question, and consequently, we hope that this University adopts the necessary measures and actions to compensate for the damage and repair in some way, what we consider a grievance.

We request that the University, through its representation and channels provided for this purpose, publicly and peremptorily state its position about the sayings given in this and other related publications elaborated by the "Observatory", an integral part of International Relations Institute dependent on this University, without prejudice to the persons responsible for the

"investigation" answering to the academic authorities, about the motivations and specific objectives of this work which have not been stated in the body of itself.

On the deep conviction that only union and brotherhood between peoples will bring us closer to the possibility of transforming the world in which we live, punished by extreme violence, injustices, and exploitation in all aspects of life, is that We make this request since we consider that the publications that have been made on this subject lead us exactly to the opposite way.

Sincerely greet you,

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