

TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF TORTURE

As Kurdish women, together with our people and friends, we have been repeating the same thing tirelessly since October 10, 2023. For more than five months, Kurds and their friends have uttered a single sentence in every country of the world, in every language, in every form and at every opportunity: Freedom for Öcalan, political solution to the Kurdish problem.

This is not just a slogan. It is also a strategy of struggle that will guarantee the freedom of us Kurdish women. And the realization of our demand in this slogan depends on your organization fulfilling its responsibility.

We Kurds have almost memorized the genocide system that has been developed step by step in İmralı for 25 years, and how the

'incomunicado' situation, as you call it, has been reached during our struggle for a quarter of a century. None of the practices included in Turkey's legal legislation have been fulfilled. Only 366 of the approximately 2,300 out of 2,300 requests for meetings made by his lawyers and family for Kurdish People's Leader Mr. Abdullah Öcalan since 1999 have been granted. In the last 15 years, only 2 phone calls were made with him.

We do not see it necessary to tell you at length how the genocide system was developed step by step. Because you know much better than we do that law, human rights and international standards are trampled on a daily basis there. The fact that we have not heard from Mr. Öcalan for three years has made us 'unable to sit at home'. As if this absolute lack of communication was not enough, the earthquake that affected İmralı Island in December 2023, the frequent and unconfirmed reports in the Turkish media, etc., increase our concerns on a daily basis.

The only interlocutor who can address our justified and impatient concerns in some way is your organization, the CPT, which works on behalf of the Council of Europe as a 'torture prevention' mechanism. This is because your organization is primarily responsible for sanctioning states party to the convention to fulfill their responsibilities.

We would like to ask what it means for your organization that Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan has benefited from the right to visit 18 percent of the time for 25 years, that he has not been allowed to meet with his lawyers since July 2011, that he was the only prisoner for the first 10 years of his captivity, that he was kept in solitary confinement for 23 hours on weekdays and 24 hours on weekends to prevent him from meeting with other prisoners brought to the island in 2009? Do you consider the initiatives against this unlawfulness sufficient?

While visiting İmralı only 9 times in 25 years is an insufficient approach in itself, we would like to add to our questions the fact that the results of the visit to İmralı on September 22, 2022 have not been made public. We would like to state in advance that a response such as 'the report cannot be made public without the consent of the states parties to the conventions' will not satisfy us. In this context, we would like to emphasize Article 10/2 of your Convention. We find it difficult to understand why you do not use your authority to make a public statement in the event of non-compliance with recommendations, especially at this dramatic stage of isolation. We believe that we have the right to know the reasons that prevent you from making the same explanations for Turkey that you made for Russia in 2001-2003, Greece in 2011, Bulgaria in 2015, Belgium in 2017, Russia in 2019 and Bulgaria in 2021.

You are aware of the protests in almost every continent of the world demanding the end of isolation and freedom for Öcalan. Despite this, the fact that you did not include İmralı in your visit to prisons in Turkey between February 12-22 has caused a serious reaction in our people, in us.

As Kurdish Women, we are aware that there is a system of genocide operating in İmralı. We are writing this letter in order for you to address our concerns, which we have been raising with our friends and people for the last five months in the squares, conferences and meetings we have held.

Our question is simple. Will the CPT make a statement on the health and safety of Kurdish People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan that will satisfy us, the Kurdish women and people? Will you take any initiative to fulfill the demands of the tens of thousands of political prisoners who see the guarantee of their freedom in the end of the isolation in İmralı and the mothers who continue their vigils in Turkey and Kurdistan in solidarity with them?

Sincerely yours