

# Erdo?an calls for “Turkish-Kurdish-Arab” alliance, as PKK holds disarmament ceremony in Iraq

Bar?? Demir, Ula? Ate?çi  
13 July 2025

On Friday, July 11, a group from the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) held a disarmament ceremony in the countryside of Sulaymaniyah in the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq. The PKK has been in armed conflict with Turkey since 1984. Around 250 people from Kurdish political movements in Turkey and Iraq, as well as an international delegation, attended the ceremony, during which around 30 PKK fighters burned their weapons.

“In the spirit of goodwill and determination to ensure the practical success of the Peace and Democratic Society process, and to advance our struggle for freedom, democracy, and socialism through democratic politics and law, we hereby voluntarily relinquish our weapons in your presence,” read the statement issued by the Peace and Democratic Society Group at the ceremony.

They continued: “In this environment of increasing fascist oppression and exploitation worldwide, and in our region of the Middle East, which is turning into a bloodbath, we see and feel the great importance, correctness, and urgency of this historic step we have taken. Our people need a free, equal, and democratic life in peace more than ever.”

After the statement was read, Bese Hozat, co-chair of the executive council of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), to which the PKK belongs, said, “There is no doubt that serious legal reforms [in Turkey] are necessary for this historic initiative to succeed. Legal and constitutional reforms are a necessity.”

The process of the PKK laying down arms began on October 22 with a call by Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of the fascist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and an ally of President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an. Bahçeli declared that Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK, could speak in parliament and be released if he disbanded his organization.

After negotiating with a delegation from the Kurdish nationalist Peoples’ Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), Öcalan called on the PKK to disarm and disband on February 27. In his letter, Öcalan declared his party’s historical and political bankruptcy and proposed “integration with the state.” At a congress held on May 5-7, the PKK responded to this call by deciding to dissolve itself and end the armed struggle.

Ahead of the disarmament ceremony on Wednesday, the Erdo?an government allowed the release of a video statement by Öcalan. In his first video statement since his 1999 trial, Öcalan said, “The establishment of the disarmament mechanism will advance the process. This is a voluntary transition from a stage of armed struggle to a stage of democratic politics and law. This should not be considered a loss, but rather a historical gain.”

In his speech on Saturday, President Erdo?an confirmed the *World Socialist Web Site*’s analysis that the deepening imperialist war of redivision in the Middle East and the Turkish bourgeoisie’s expansionist

ambitions are behind the deal with the PKK.

“Today, a new page in history has been opened. The doors to a great, strong Turkey have been thrown wide open,” said Erdo?an, outlining a bourgeois perspective based on a “Turkish-Kurdish-Arab alliance.” After claiming that these three peoples had won victories in history when they united on the basis of Islam, he continued, “Damascus is our common city. Diyarbak?r is our common city. Mardin, Mosul, Kirkuk, Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, Aleppo, Hatay, and Istanbul are our common cities.”

Erdo?an added, “Our operations on the ground in Iraq and the December 8 revolution in Syria strengthened our hand in the fight against terrorism. We managed a very sensitive and cautious process to take advantage of the opportunity that opened before our country.”

These remarks reveal that the agreement with the PKK has nothing to do with solving the Kurdish issue based on “peace and democracy.” Instead, the stated perspective aims to provide a political basis for the Turkish elite’s claim to the borders of the “National Oath” or “Mîsâk-? Millî,” which the Turkish elite established in 1920 amid the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. These borders included northern Syria and Iraq, which are inhabited by Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmens.

The Turkish bourgeoisie is preparing to lay claim to Syria, Iraq, and the wider region by assuming the patronage of the Kurds and Arabs amid the imperialist war, which aims to ensure the total domination of the US, together with Israel, over the Middle East, and to redraw the maps.

Notably, the Persians, the dominant ethnic group in Iran which the US sees as an obstacle to its domination in the Middle East, are not included in Erdo?an’s “Muslim alliance” even though they are Muslims. Erdo?an’s statement came only one month after Turkey’s allies, the US and Israel, militarily attacked Iran.

In his speech, Erdo?an also said that a parliamentary commission would be established to determine the next steps and signalled legal and constitutional changes. He announced that they will work together with the DEM Party, as well as with the MHP, a partner of his People’s Alliance: “As the People’s Alliance, we, the AK Party and the MHP, will carry this process forward by working with the DEM [Party] delegation... The AK Party, the MHP, and the DEM have now decided to walk together on this path, at least as a trio.” These possible constitutional changes will be guided by the same reactionary ambitions. The bourgeoisie in Turkey and its imperialist allies are, in fact, by their very nature, hostile to the democratic rights and peace aspirations of all peoples, including the Kurds.

Özgür Özel, leader of the Republican People’s Party (CHP), which has been under mounting state oppression from the Erdo?an government, again expressed his support for the deal, saying, “We welcome the terrorist organization’s symbolic step of laying down arms today.”

However, Özel had to point out the contradiction between eliminating

even limited democratic rights and claiming to be “democratizing” Turkey. He did so by supporting Erdoğan’s concept of the “internal front,” stating: “An environment in which trustees are appointed to replace mayors, investigations criminalizing Kurdish participation in municipal councils continue, elected politicians are imprisoned unlawfully, and democratic competition is crippled is the main enemy of social peace and the biggest obstacle to fortifying our internal front.”

In fact, the “fortification of the internal front” means subordinating the working class to the Turkish bourgeoisie’s class interests and reactionary ambitions in the Middle East. In the ruling class’s agenda of waging war abroad and class warfare at home, democratic and social rights are under attack, and there is no room for any “democratization” or social reform.

The claim that this process will bring peace and democracy to the Kurdish and Turkish peoples, to the Middle East and even to the global population, as advanced by Erdoğan and Öcalan, is a deception. The agreement between Ankara and the PKK comes as the US and Israel are reshaping the Middle East through war and Erdoğan is consolidating a presidential dictatorship in Turkey that eliminates basic democratic rights.

As the epicenter of the global crisis of the capitalist system, the United States seeks to maintain world domination through military aggression. Since 2022, the US has been at war with Russia in Ukraine. In January, then President-elect Donald Trump announced a program of global conquest and hegemony targeting China and its allies.

In December, the seizure of power in Syria by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) jihadists, backed by Turkey, the US, and other NATO powers, increased the influence of both Ankara and Tel Aviv in this country. This regime-change operation overthrowing Russian- and Iranian-backed President Bashar al-Assad was part of wider US operations in the Middle East targeting Iran and its allies. Since October 2023, Israel has continued its genocide of Palestinians in Gaza while also attacking Hezbollah in Lebanon and launching airstrikes against Iran.

The prospect of redrawing borders in the Middle East, the growing influence of Israel, and the possibility of establishing a state or granting a status to the divided Kurdish population in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran have set Ankara in motion. These factors have largely shaped the agreement between Ankara and the PKK.

At the beginning of the process last October, Erdoğan declared: “While the maps are being redrawn in blood, while the war that Israel has waged from Gaza to Lebanon is approaching our borders, we are trying to strengthen our internal front.” However, as Erdoğan’s remarks reveal, the Ankara-PKK deal is not a defensive measure, but rather a reactionary response aimed at ensuring the Turkish bourgeoisie receives its share of the spoils from the imperialist war in the Middle East.

An accomplice to US and Israeli crimes, Ankara is also engaged in a serious competition for regional hegemony with Tel Aviv. Erdoğan claimed that Israel’s genocide in Gaza, aided by Ankara with war material supplies, oil shipments and intelligence coming from bases in Turkey, was possible because “Turks, Kurds and Arabs cannot come together and form an alliance as they have done throughout history.” In this way, he deliberately misrepresented the role of the Turkish and Arab regimes and the Kurdish nationalist movement, each of which is a collaborator of US-NATO imperialism behind Israel.

While Ankara seeks to force the PKK to lay down its arms through Öcalan, it is pushing its sister organization in Syria to come to terms with its HTS allies in Damascus. The Kurdish nationalist People’s Protection Units (YPG) control northeastern Syria alongside US forces and are considered “natural allies” by Israel. Ankara is trying to make the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)—which includes the YPG, which leads a de facto autonomous administration in Syria—part of the Syrian army by reaching an agreement with the HTS regime and putting an end to the autonomous structure.

On Wednesday, an SDF delegation met with officials from the Syrian

“transitional government” at the Tishrin Palace in Damascus. The talks, held under the auspices of the United States and France, reportedly failed due to fundamental disagreements. During the meeting, the HTS regime rejected the SDF’s three main demands (changing the name of the Syrian Arab Republic, implementing a decentralized governance system, and recognizing SDF forces as an independent bloc within the Syrian army). Ankara also opposes these demands.

In an interview with North Press in northeastern Syria, US Ambassador to Turkey Thomas Barrack said, “I’m elated to see what’s happening in Turkey. It’s a huge step,” adding, “It affects what’s happening here. Because we see the entire region changing... SDF, who has been a valued partner for America in the fight against ISIS, well-respected, bright, articulate, has to come to the conclusion that there’s one country, there’s one nation, there’s one people, and there’s one army.”

“They [Barrack-led Americans] also held talks and meetings in Syria, and the messages from there were very positive and pleasing to us,” President Erdoğan said in his Saturday remarks, referring to US support for the Ankara-PKK deal.

While the Kurdish movement claims to establish a “democratic regime” in Syria with Islamists originated from al-Qaeda, in Turkey the Erdoğan government is violating basic democratic rights, including the right to a fair trial, the right to vote, freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly. Moreover, all over the world the ruling class is turning to authoritarian regimes under the pressure of growing international and class tensions. The sharpest expression of this is the Trump administration in the US, which is seeking to establish a presidential dictatorship. Trump’s return to the White House has further emboldened these tendencies all over the world.

The Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu (Socialist Equality Group), Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) has identified the pro-imperialist and reactionary nature of the agreement between the Turkish and Kurdish elites, who are both US allies.

A democratic solution to the Kurdish question, as well as peace in the Middle East and around the world, requires the unification and mobilization of workers of all nationalities and ethnicities with the aim of overthrowing imperialism and the capitalist nation-state system and building workers’ power in the struggle for socialism in the Middle East and around the world. This is the perspective for which the Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu and the ICFI are fighting.



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**