

# Newroz 2026: Mobilize the working class against imperialist war and for workers' power in the Middle East!

Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal  
22 March 2026

The traditional spring festival of Newroz, celebrated by the peoples of the Middle East and Central Asia, falls this year in the midst of Ramadan and against a backdrop of imperialist barbarism running amok. As the US-Israeli war against Iran enters its fourth week, Israel has invaded Lebanon and continues its genocide in Gaza. In Syria, Kurds and Alawites remain under threat from the new jihadist regime backed by the United States and Türkiye.

The genocide in Gaza—in which officially more than 70,000 Palestinians have been killed, with the true figure estimated to be far higher—has been expanded into a war against Iran and Lebanon. It is made possible not only by the open support of European imperialist powers, but by the explicit or tacit backing of Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Arab regimes across the region. Azerbaijan serves as Israel's principal oil supplier, while the flow of oil to the Zionist state passes through Türkiye with Ankara's full consent. US and NATO military bases on Turkish soil—most notably ?ncirlik and Kürecik—continue to serve the interests of Washington and Tel Aviv and are being used directly against Iran.

The joint statement issued following the “Consultative Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Group of Arab and Islamic Countries on Iranian Aggressions,” held last week in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia—and signed by Türkiye—condemns Iran, the country under attack, without so much as naming the United States, which launched an entirely unlawful and unprovoked imperialist war of aggression against a nation of 90 million people. This statement is irrefutable proof that the struggle against imperialism cannot be separated from the struggle against its collaborator bourgeois regimes.

Even as the United States and Israel continue to bomb Iran, Washington is preparing a ground offensive aimed at seizing the Strait of Hormuz and Kharg Island, through which 90 percent of Iran's oil exports pass. This marks a new and far more dangerous phase in the imperialist wars that have ravaged the region for 35 years. The danger of the war expanding to engulf Türkiye and other countries, and assuming a global dimension, is growing by the day.

The imperialist lies previously deployed against Iraq, Syria and Libya are being recycled once more, with claims that this war of annihilation will bring “democracy and freedom” to the people in Iran—as though the unrelenting wars of imperialist aggression and regime change since 1991 have not already destroyed entire societies, killed millions, displaced tens of millions more and produced catastrophe on a historic scale.

President Donald Trump—who is working to establish a fascist regime in the United States—and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are not concerned with the political rights of Iranians, whether Kurdish, Persian or of any other nationality. They are interested in Iran's energy resources and its strategic position. Workers in Iran and across the Middle East and the world must respond these lies with a single, unambiguous

demand: Hands off Iran! The task of settling accounts with the Islamic Republic belongs to the working class in Iran, which includes Persians, Kurds, Azeris and other nationalities!

What is at stake in this war against Iran is the subjugation of a country that broke free from Washington's grip through the 1979 revolution, and the consummation of 35 years of imperialist warfare aimed at bringing the entire Middle East under full imperial domination. As David North, national chairman of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States, has explained, the strategy of this war is “to abolish the 20th century—to wipe out all the consequences of the national democratic and socialist struggles of the 20th century, to act as if it was all somehow a big mistake, that colonial domination can be restored and imperialism can rule.”

At the same time, this war is an attempt by the American ruling class to resolve—through war and foreign conquest—the irresolvable contradictions it faces at home. The Trump administration is pursuing this policy of global aggression and domination, which now targets Iran, in tandem with its efforts to establish a fascist form of rule within the United States itself. The war abroad and the internal front are inseparable. The Trump administration is demanding a war appropriation of \$200 billion on top of an already staggering \$839 billion defence budget for this year alone. This money will be extracted through cuts to healthcare, food assistance and other social programmes in the United States. The war is an attack not only on the peoples of the Middle East, but on the American working class itself.

The Social Equality Group, predecessor to the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi–Dördüncü Enternasyonal, issued the following warning in its 2013 Newroz statement: “A victory by Western imperialists in Syria ... will open the door to imperialist intervention against Iran.” This warning has been vindicated. The United States that is bombing Iran today is the major power that devastated Syria and brought the Al-Qaeda-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) regime to power.

As in 2013, a “peace process” manoeuvre between Ankara and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) once again stands before us. In that period too, negotiations were developed in subordination to the deepening imperialist war in the Middle East—above all in Syria. And precisely the same dynamics eventually led to thousands of deaths, hundreds of thousands displaced in the Kurdish area and countless Kurdish politicians imprisoned.

The collapse of those negotiations in 2015 was not due to any “lack of will” on the part of either side. The causes were far more deeply rooted in objective conditions. As Leon Trotsky—who co-led the October Revolution of 1917 alongside Vladimir Lenin—explained in his theory of Permanent Revolution: In the epoch of imperialism, the bourgeoisie is incapable of resolving basic democratic tasks; the resolution of these tasks falls to the working class, which unites the oppressed masses behind it,

and requires an international socialist program.

The Turkish and Kurdish bourgeois nationalist leaderships, deeply enmeshed in the imperialist war in the Middle East, cannot construct an “island of peace and democracy” in conditions where working class discontent and resistance are growing and the region is being turned into an inferno. Nor, for that matter, do they have any such aim. Their objective position places them squarely against peace and democratization, not in their favour. They seek to negotiate an agreement of their own reactionary interests with the “new Middle East” ambitions of their ally, US imperialism.

Newroz, which in Kurdish and Persian mythology is associated with legends of resistance against oppression, has become—especially since early 1990s—a day of national rebellion and resistance for the Kurdish people in Türkiye against state repression and the policy of denial of Kurdish identity. This significant day must now be transformed into a day of resistance for all oppressed peoples against the colonial shackles of imperialism is seeking to impose across Iran and the broader Middle East. The Kurdish people’s aspirations for freedom, peace and democracy cannot be realized while genocide continues in Palestine and the peoples of Lebanon and Iran are subjected to a war of annihilation.

The Turkish state’s return to the negotiating table with the PKK is not independent of Washington’s plans for Iran and the Middle East, nor of Israel’s expansionist objectives in the region. The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi underscores that all pseudo-left claims which offer open or “critical” support to the Ankara-PKK negotiations—suggesting that this process can in some way serve the interests of Turkish and Kurdish working people—represent a fraud. As Lenin succinctly explained in 1916, in the midst of the First World War:

Whoever promises the nations a “democratic” peace without at the same time preaching the socialist revolution, or while repudiating the struggle for it—the struggle which must be carried on now, during the war—is deceiving the proletariat.

Turkish and Kurdish workers must refuse to subordinate themselves to the interests of pro-imperialist Turkish and Kurdish bourgeois nationalist leaderships and must unite with their class brothers and sisters across the Middle East and internationally against all these forces. The goal must not be reconciliation with genocidal powers and their collaborators, but the overthrow of capitalist regimes across the region through the mass mobilisation of the working class, the expulsion of imperialist powers, and the establishment of a Socialist Federation of the Middle East.

Placing the burden of war and militarism on the backs of the working class will intensify the class struggle everywhere. In Türkiye, millions of workers struggle against the cost of living and to make ends meet, while a tiny minority at the top—the capitalist oligarchy—continues to multiply its wealth. According to the UBS Global Wealth Report 2025, Türkiye ranks second among European countries in wealth inequality as of 2024. According to 2023 Turkish Statistical Institute report, 7 million children (31.3 percent) live below the poverty line. Türkiye comes first in Europe for child poverty among OECD nations. Every penny spent on armaments and war will be stolen from the health, education and livelihoods of working people.

These facts underscore that the decisive division in society is one of class. Only the international unity of the working class can open the road to the emancipation of all the oppressed. It is for precisely this reason that the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan government is seeking to suppress the emerging independent movement of the working class—free from trade union bureaucracy—through intimidation and repression, as seen most recently in the arrest of B?RTEK-SEN independent union leader Mehmet

Türkmen in Gaziantep.

The trade union confederations, which for decades have assisted the state and corporations in suppressing class struggle, are complicit in these efforts. Workers need to build their own rank-and-file committees. These are the instruments through which workers can organise independently of this bureaucracy, under their own direct control. They are organisational forms that shield strikes and actions from bureaucratic sabotage, link workplaces to one another and give concrete expression to international solidarity.

The claim that the ruling class and its political representatives—who ruthlessly exploit Turkish, Kurdish, and Arab workers, degrade their living conditions, eliminate on their basic democratic rights, and are dragging Türkiye into war in subordination to US-NATO imperialism—can bring the peace and democratization that working people long for, is a manifest lie.

Fulfilling these urgent tasks in Türkiye and across the Middle East requires uniting workers of all nationalities on a socialist program and launching a frontal assault on the wealth and power of the ruling class. This means fighting to establish the political independence of the working class from all establishment parties that serve imperialism and build a new revolutionary leadership. That leadership is the International Committee of the Fourth International and the Socialist Equality Parties affiliated with it.

On Newroz 2026, the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi calls on all workers to unite against imperialist-Zionist aggression, to defend Iran, Lebanon and Palestine—historically oppressed countries—through the methods of class struggle. Build rank-and-file committees in factories, ports, mines, hospitals and schools to mobilize the working class as an independent political force in the struggle against imperialist war, authoritarian rule and social counterrevolution—for workers’ power and socialism. For this fight, we advance the following demands:

- The US and Israeli war against Iran, the invasion of Lebanon, and the genocide in Gaza must be halted immediately and unconditionally.
- All US armed forces in the Middle East must be withdrawn, and the military bases—including those in Türkiye—that form the infrastructure of imperialist domination must be closed.
- The NATO summit scheduled for July in Ankara must be cancelled; Türkiye must withdraw from NATO; NATO must be dissolved; and all resources devoted to militarism and war must be redirected to meet the needs of society.
- All sanctions and economic warfare against Iran and all other countries must be brought to an end.
- All war criminals must be held accountable.
- All political prisoners must be released.
- The fundamental democratic rights of the Kurdish people must be recognised immediately, beginning with mother-tongue education and constitutional recognition of the Kurdish language.



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