

FREEDOM FOR ÖCALAN



Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan and the political prisoners in Turkey.
Öcalan's freedom will mark a breakthrough for the democratization
of Turkey and peace in Kurdistan.
www.freeocalan.org

**Building solidarity with the Kurdish struggle
for democracy, equality and freedom**

TUC 2016 Fringe Meeting

Monday 12 September, 12.30 Hilton Hotel

Speakers

Simon Dubbins – Unite Director of International

Christine Blower – International Secretary of NUT

Elif Sarican – Kurdish Students Union

Huseyin Olan – Co-Mayor of Bitlis in South-East Turkey

In Chair – Bert Schouwenburg GMB International Officer



Peace in Kurdistan

**All TUC delegates
and friends welcome**

Light lunch provided



Turkey's policy of war against the Kurds in Turkey and Rojava

From early 2015 the Turkish government has engaged in a policy of violence and harassment against the Kurdish population.

The success of the pro-Kurdish Peoples Democratic Party (HDP) in the June elections and the success of the People's and Women's Defence Units (YPG and YPJ) in Rojava in Northern Syria was seen as a threat to Erdogan's aims for greater Presidential power at home and greater influence in the region. Thousands of people have been killed by government forces in the Kurdish areas of Turkey.

Thousands have been arrested and detained for speaking against government policy. Following the recent attempted coup Erdogan has cracked down on anyone he believes is against him. Not just those involved in the coup but those academics, journalists, trade unionists, and others who have spoken against his policies in relation to human and democratic rights, academic and journalistic freedom and his policies against the Kurds.

This policy of intimidation, violence and destruction allowed his party, the AKP, to regain a majority in the re-run election in November following their refusal to work in a coalition with any of the opposition parties.

In response to Daesh attacks against civilian targets, including the trade union demonstration in Ankara in October 2015, Erdogan has reacted by declaring war on terrorism. However instead of going after the Daesh forces that he has been supporting he has focussed his fire on Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) targets in Turkey and Iraq. After the recent attack on the Kurdish wedding in Gaziantep he launched an invasion of northern Syria where his main objective was not to fight Daesh but to stop the mainly Kurdish forces from gaining any other territory.

Earlier this year **GMB and Unite launched the Freedom for Ocalan Campaign**. The release of Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan is critical to re-starting peace negotiations in Turkey. For the 17 years of his solitary confinement he has argued for democratic solutions to the Kurdish Question. His leadership was recognised by the Turkish government who negotiated with him for 2 years and were on the brink of agreeing a peace deal when Erdogan took the decision that war was a better prospect for his ambitions than peace and ended the talks.

The trade union speakers at the fringe meeting have all visited Kurdistan and Turkey in recent times and will speak to their experiences and understanding of the situation.

Our Kurdish speakers will explain the situation on the ground today and the importance of trade union solidarity to the struggle for peace and democracy in Kurdistan and the freedom of Ocalan.

For more information contact Peace in Kurdistan – trade union group.

Contact: estella24@tiscali.com or Trade Union Liaison stephen_fs59@hotmail.com Website: www.peaceinkurdistan.com