

PRESS RELEASE

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1 000 Kurdish public figures are calling for an international mediator for a peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question in Turkey.

In an appeal published today in the *International Herald Tribune* and *Le Monde*, one thousand Kurdish political and cultural public figures, from all walks of life, call for a peaceful settlement of the Kurdish question in Turkey on the basis of the minimum demands of the Kurdish people:

- The Constitution that is being drawn up must not define citizenship on the basis of belonging to Turkish stock, it must put an end to the denial of the Kurdish people's existence and recognise its existence. Kurdish citizens must have a system of public education in their own language, at all levels. Their right to use their language in public, to create and develop media in the Kurdish language, to found associations, institutions and political parties to develop their culture must be guaranteed.
- On this basis, in order to create a climate of peace and confidence and, once and for all, to turn the page of violence and armed confrontation, a non-exclusive political amnesty must be decreed, and the PKK must lay down its arms in accordance with a procedure yet to be defined. In the same way, the system of so-called "village guardian" militias must be suppressed.

The signatories call on Europe and the United States, who have their own share of responsibility for the human tragedy that the Kurds have suffered all through the 20th Century, to appoint an experienced international mediator to make easier the search for a peaceful solution. They specifically mention the names of Bernard Kouchner, Tony Blair, Martti Ahtisaari or Felipe Gonzalez because of their experience in the settlement of the Irish, Basque Catalan and Kosovar questions.

Recalling that the vicious circle of repression-revolt-repression has been rife for two centuries in Kurdistan, the signatories stress that there is no military solution to the Kurdish question and that it is high time to seek a peaceful, political solution.

All the leaders of legal pro-Kurdish parties (DTP, Hak-Par, KADEK), about twenty Members of Parliament, some hundred mayors and ex-mayors, Kurdish artists, writers, academics and intellectuals of a various sympathies are amongst the signatories. The Appeal will then be open to signing by the Kurdish population of Turkey as a whole, in the context of a civic campaign lasting several months.

The coordination of this campaign in Europe and in USA is undertaken by the Paris Kurdish Institute jointly with the principal Kurdish organisations abroad, notably KOMKAR (Union of Kurdistan Associations, Germany), KON-KURD (Confederation of Kurdish Associations, Belgium) and the Washington Kurdish Institute.

POUR LA DÉFENSE D'UNE CULTURE MILLÉNAIRE EN PÉRIL