

Defending life in Rojava in times of COVID-19

“Defending life in Rojava in times of COVID-19”, a call for solidarity from Mexico City by the Solidarity Committee with Kurdistan in the framework of the Global Days for Life “The Lockdown does not silence us” (#ElEncierroNoNosCalla).

We want to raise our voices today to talk about the risks of COVID-19 contagion in the North of Syria, a risk brought about by the capitalist, racist and patriarchal system. In solidarity from the continent we live in, we follow the development of the current COVID-19 crisis in the Middle East and Kurdistan, but simultaneously in Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Paraguay, and the whole of Central America, assuming it in terms of how it overlaps with the dynamics of transnational migrations in contexts of war, militarization and spoliation. The effects of the pandemic are unfolding before our eyes at the same time as forced displacement, assassination of community leaders that are engaged in the defence of their territories, and the amount of political prisoners, war refugees as political exiles keeps growing. While in Mexico we defy the isolation imposed by COVID-19's pandemia we also continue with our organizational efforts and creating networks of solidarity and mutual aid. In front of this situation, we declare the following:

- We denounce that last April 4 Abdullah Öcalan, philosopher, anti-capitalist revolutionary, and a critic of so called “real existing socialism”, spent his 71st birthday in the Imrali maximum security prison-island. This day signed also the 21st year of his incarceration after his kidnapping that was carried out without any regard for international law and human rights conventions. Nowadays, more than ever, we recognize the key role he has played -and keeps playing- in the pursuit of a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question and we demand his freedom, as well as that of all political prisoners in Turkey.
- In the context of a war that has left more than 900.000 refugees war and millions of casualties, we denounce the Turkish invasion of Rojava-Kurdistan and the dictatorial role Turkey plays when it comes to controlling migratory flows, which has become evident in the cases of the Syria-Turkey and Greece-Turkey borders. The severe nationalistic escalation of border-closures condemns to death all of those who are trying to escape war, be it because of lack of water, starvation, or the risk of COVID-19 contagion.
- We denounce that, while all the self-defence units confederated in the Syrian Democratic Forces -the YPG (People's Protection Units) and YPJ (Women's Protection Units) included- are ready to abide the UN call for a ceasefire, Turkey continues their shelling and bombing of the villages of Rojava. As the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria struggles to establish an International Tribunal to judge over the crimes of the Islamic State (IS), the non-stop attacks carried on by Turkey, with the complicity of the European Union and other international organizations, facilitate the reorganization of IS as a destabilizing force in the Middle East and a hazard for the whole world. In this sense, we urgently demand a ceasefire in Rojava, in the North and East of Syria.
- We condemn the aggravation of the health crisis provoked by Turkey's shelling and recurring interruptions of water supply in Rojava. Furthermore we condemn the irresponsibility of States and multilateral organizations like the UN and WHO, that prioritize the protection of the dominant economy above life. On the contrary, we appreciate all the autonomous and communitarian dynamics from Mexico to Rojava as examples that show

us how the economical organization of society has to be founded on the benefit of the peoples, and must reorientate productive goals to guarantee the availability of materials and goods that are necessary to face the social, ecological, and economical crisis that was already unfolding even before COVID-19 emerged.

- Among different regional political identities, we appraise the will to leave in peace promoted especially by AANES. We recognize the communal, ecological, and peaceful self-organization among the diversity of peoples in Northern Syria and the perspective of Democratic Confederalism as an intercultural alternative of social organization that aims to supersede both capitalist modernity and patriarchal mentality. This is an alternative based on direct democracy that puts the defence of our Planet at the forefront by showing great respect for Mother Earth. In that sense, we believe it to be one of the only democratic ways out inside the Middle East conflict context, caused by a global war of power.
- We encourage everyone to consider the experience of the indigenous peoples of both Rojava and Mexico- and South and Central America- as referents that relate with political and social contexts other than the dominant social system. When it comes to thinking about strategies for the implementation of communitarian health, these experiences focus on autonomy, take into account an outlook for the collective prevention of illness, and education beyond the repressive and centralistic role of the Nation-State. More than ever, we need to move away from individualistic urbanization and industrialization, and make a turn “back to Earth, to Nature”, to the care of our Planet.
- In Rojava, at a historical phase of resistance against war, even in the middle of the global pandemic, priority is given to the repopulation of rural villages, reforestation, diversification of crops, and other activities of communal work. In such a context we are in the presence of a constant reflection on the meaning of the words “self-defence”, “health”, and “community”. Their example is a call for every one around the world for the systematical and creative enhancement of solidarity in the areas of self-governance, communitarian health, self-defence, and networks of self-managed economy.

Like in the Zapatista Autonomy, the Rojava Revolution has been a milestone in the course of history, pointing towards a way out of the divisory status quo that pretends to impose itself as the only social possibility. Because of that, the words of the autonomous communities in Chiapas resonate to us in the current crisis when they extend the invitation “not lo lose human contact, but rather to temporarily change our forms of relating as compañeros, compañeras, compañeroas, sisters, brothers, and hermanoas”.

Within the current situation, with the intention to deepen our bonds in the face of the capitalistic and patriarchal attacks against Rojava by Turkish state, the persons and organizations that sign this pronouncement reaffirm our solidarity with the struggle of Kurdish women, and the peoples in the North of Syria, because today and always defending Rojava means defending life, Nature, and humanity!

Long live to the Rojava Revolution!

Long live to the resistance of peoples around the world!

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