



## Kurdish National Congress of North America

P.O.Box 50216, Irvine, CA 92619, [www.kncna.org](http://www.kncna.org)

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July 22, 2012

From: Kurdish National Congress of North America  
To: All USA and International media  
Contact information: 805-402-6440, [Info@kncna.net](mailto:Info@kncna.net)

Los Angeles, CA, for immediate release: On Saturday, July 14, 2012 in Diyarbakir, Turkey a peaceful march was organized by Peace and Democratic Party (BDP) and Democratic Society Congress (DTK). This march was organized for the freedom of Ocalan and the democratic solution to the Kurdish question. For a year now the AKP government has banned Kurdish rallies and implemented a policy of mass internment of Kurdish political activists, mayors, MPs, lawyers, journalists and human rights workers.

According to reports obtained many roads leading to Diyarbakir from surrounding cities and towns were blocked by police and army to prevent people from participating in the peace march. The protestors were attacked with tear gas bombs, pressurized water, batons, and other means. As a result three deputies from the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), Batman MP Ayla Akat, Kars MP Mulkiye Birtane and BDP deputy parliamentary group chair Pervin Buldan as well as Diyarbakir Metropolitan Mayor Osman Baydemir were among those injured in the clashes, which lasted several hours. Moreover, many of the wounded and dozens of demonstrators, including journalists, were taken into custody.

During Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's, reign more than four hundred officials from the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) party have been imprisoned, among them thirty-six elected mayors and thirteen deputy mayors, along with six hundred or more Kurdish civil-society activists, including human rights workers, trade unionists and people who did no more than attend their meetings. Many have been held in prison for more than three years while awaiting their trial.

According to Erskine May, "Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively... and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals. When any of these rights and immunities is disregarded or attacked, the offence is called a breach of privilege and is punishable under the law of Parliament".

It appears in Turkey that the above law only applies to the parliamentarians who are ethnically Turks, or are members of the chosen political parties like AKP, CHP, MHP or other ethnic Turkish political parties. Some political parties, specifically BDP, do not seem to enjoy the same privileges. The above mentioned peace march was a clear indication of this. Members of parliament belonging to BDP do not enjoy the same immunity, and were attacked, beaten and have been imprisoned.



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Therefore, we condemn the Turkish government's use of disproportional force against the Kurdish people and their representatives including the co-presidents of BDP party, Mr. Selahattin Demirtas and Ms. Gultan Kisanak.

Furthermore, we ask the Turkish government to abandon this biased political practice and policy of discrimination against the Kurdish people. We ask the Turkish state to cease any forceful action against innocent Kurdish people who are trying to enjoy their natural, legal and democratic rights by marching for peace on any given day. Moreover, we encourage the ruling government AKP to take all necessary steps to negotiate for peace with the Kurdish representatives and their leaders for a lasting peace in the region.

We urge the US President Obama's administration, Congress and Senate, and the American civil society and media not to stand idly by in regards to Turkey's gross human rights violations against the Kurdish people in Turkey. We encourage a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue that includes sincere peace talks with the arrested Kurdish leader Mr. Abdullah Ocalan and the Kurdish political movement, as this appears to be the overwhelming demand of the Kurdish people.

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