

LIFT THE BAN ON THE PKK

Since 2005 the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has been on the Australian government's list of terrorist organisations. This means it is illegal for Australian citizens to belong to the PKK or raise funds for it.

Our government says it is waging a "war on terror" but this ban criminalises the most effective force actually fighting the inhuman "Islamic State" gangs on the ground in Iraq and Syria. PKK fighters have died defending Kurdish, Arab Assyrian, Yazidi and Christian communities across the region.

In Turkey the PKK is a widely-supported national liberation movement. But it no longer calls for independence but for self-government and democratisation. The PKK sought to engage in peace negotiations with the Turkish government until Erdogan junked the whole process and turned instead to re-starting the war on the Kurds.

Resistance is not terrorism

Australia's ban on the PKK is completely perverse and should be removed. This would be a strong signal to the Turkish government that Australia wants an end to Erdogan's bloody war and a return to meaningful settlement talks with the Kurds.

Endorse the online open letter to the Australian government.

www.liftthebanonthepkk.org



**SUPPORT THE KURDISH FREEDOM STRUGGLE
SOLIDARITY WITH ROJAVA REVOLUTION**

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STOP TURKEY'S WAR ON THE KURDS

RE-START THE PEACE PROCESS!

The eruption of the brutal fundamentalist 'Islamic State' in the Middle East has placed the Kurdish people at the centre of the political stage. The Kurdish communities in Iraq and Syria have faced the full weight of the IS assault. The Kurdish people in Turkey have also been inescapably affected by the struggle over the border. It has even had an impact on the Kurdish population in Iran.

The most effective opposition to the Islamic State killers has come from the revolutionary democratic wing of the Kurdish freedom movement. That is, from the Turkish Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), and the People's Protection Units (YPG) and Women's Protection Units (YPJ), the defence forces of Rojava, the Kurdish-majority liberated territory in northern Syria.

The Kurdish people have long been denied their own country. But in Turkey and Syria they are fighting, not for independence, but for real self-government and democracy. This simple but profound aspiration places them at odds with all the various regimes in the region and, ultimately, with Western imperialism which wants domination, not people's power.

The Rojava Revolution has attracted increasing interest and admiration around the world because of its unyielding resistance to the Islamic State and the heavy and unprecedented participation of women in the fighting forces.

There is also a growing awareness that Rojava is trying to build a new society, one in which all ethnic and religious groups can live together amicably and cooperatively, in which women are empowered, and which is based on grassroots democracy and a communal economy.

The Middle East is a tremendously rich mosaic of different ethnic and religious communities.

This diversity is anathema for the IS fanatics and Islamist fundamentalists of all stripes. They want to destroy it and impose their brand of uniformity and control on it — they seek to tear up the actual living fabric of society. As we have seen in recent years especially, such madness can only be a recipe for inhuman suffering.

Rojava, on the other hand, wants to make this diversity one of the foundation stones of its society. This is the only way forward for humanity.

With its embrace of diversity, nonsectarianism, grassroots democracy, feminism and ecology, Rojava is a model for the whole Middle East.

In Turkey the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and the outlawed PKK are struggling, in different conditions, for the same thing. The great success of the HDP in the June 7, 2015 parliamentary elections was based on an appeal, not only to the downtrodden Kurdish population, but to all those across the country suffering oppression, discrimination and exploitation.

Now the regime of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is mounting a fresh assault on the Kurds to win over hard right nationalist voters as it struggles to regain unfettered power.

Erdogan scrapped the promising peace process involving the government together with jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK and the HDP. Instead he has unleashed the security forces on villages, towns and cities across the Kurdish-majority southeast.