

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Külliyesi 06560 Beştepe – Ankara, Türkiye
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July 26, 2024

Re: the case of Abdullah Öcalan & resuming negotiations for Peace

Dear President Erdoğan,

In January of 2019 some 50 Nobel Laureates of all disciplines wrote you about our concerns about the treatment of prisoners in Turkish prisons, including Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan. We, 69 Nobel Laureates, are writing again to express our deepened concern about the worsened conditions under which Mr. Öcalan is being held since his complete isolation from the outside world after his last communication with his brother, a two-minute phone call before it was cut off, on March 21, 2021.

In a world increasingly plagued with violence, death, destruction and war, including the terrifying Russian threats to use nuclear weapons as a result of their invasion of Ukraine, all life on this planet is facing an extremely unclear future. We need leaders now more than ever who have the courage to pursue different paths and believe that any action that signals a different course is possible should be pursued. It is in this context that we are appealing to you, President Erdoğan, to again pursue a path of peace.

We believe that you think peace is possible even as we all know it is not an easy path to follow. You demonstrated that with the Oslo talks (2009-2011) and the Imrali process (2013-2015) during which, under your guidance and supervision, government representatives met and discussed the potential for reconciliation with Mr. Abdullah Öcalan. While the long desired possibility of peace did not emerge from those talks, it does not mean that peace and reconciliation are impossible.

It is in the search for peace - which would send a much needed message of hope for possible different futures to people around the world - that we ask that you to rekindle the efforts you began with the Oslo talks and the Imrali process and send your representatives to begin new talks with Mr. Öcalan and that you end his isolation on Imrali Island.

The world needs new, enlightened leadership and an end to violence and war.

Sincerely,
Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Prize (1997)

Peter AGRE, Chemistry, USA, 2003

Martin CHALFIE, Chemistry, USA, 2008

Johann DEISENHOFER, Chemistry, German, 1988

Joachim FRANK, Chemistry, USA/GER, 2017

Alan HEEGER, Chemistry, USA, 2000

Thomas R. Cech, Chemistry USA, 1989

Aaron CIECHANOVER, Chemistry, Israel, 2004

Gerhard ERTL, Chemistry, Germany, 2007

Walter GILBERT, Chemistry USA, 1980

Richard henderson, Chemistry, UK, 2017

Robert HUBER, Chemistry, Germany, 1988	Martin karplus, Chemistry, USA, 2013
Roger D. KORNBERG, Chemistry, USA, 2006	Yuan t. Lee, Chemistry, Japan, 1986
Michael LEVITT, Chemistry, US/ISRAEL/UK, 2013	Hartmut MICHEL, Chemistry, Germany, 1988
Paul L. MODRICH, Chemistry, USA, 2015	John C. POLANYI, Chemistry, Canada, 1986
Jean-Pierre SAUVAGE, Chemistry, France, 2016	Richard R. SCHROCK, Chemistry, USA, 2005
Sir james Fraser STODDART, Chemistry, US/UK, 2016	Arieh WARSHEL, Chemistry, israel, 2013
Sir Oliver HART, Economics, US/UK, 2016	Finn e. KYDLAND, Economics, Norway, 2004
Eric S. MASKIN, Economics, USA, 2007	Edmund S. PHELPS, Economics, USA, 2006
J. M. COETZEE, Literature, South Africa, 2003	Elfriede JELINEK, Literature, Austria, 2004
Herta MÜLLER, Literature, German, 2009	Orhan PAMUK, Literature, Turkey, 2006
Wole SOYINKA, Literature, Nigeria, 1986	Harvey J. ALTER, Medicine, USA, 2020
Andrew Z. FIRE, Medicine, USA, 2006	H. Robert HORVITZ, Medicine, USA, 2002
Tim HUNT, Medicine, UK, 2001	Louis J. IGNARRO, Medicine, USA, 1998
Barry J. MARSHALL, Medicine, Australia, 2005	Ardem PATAPOUTIAN, Medicine, Lebnan/USA, 2021
Sir Peter J. RATCLIFFE, Medicine, UK, 2019	Charles M. RICE, Medicine, USA, 2020
Sir Richard J. ROBERTS, Medicine, US/UK, 1993	Michael ROSBASH, Medicine, USA, 2017
Gregg L. SEMENZA, Medicine, USA, 2019	Jack W. SZOSTAK, Medicine, UK/USA, 2009
Mairead CORRIGAN-MAGUIRE, Peace, Ireland, 1976	Shirin EBADI, Peace, USA, 2003
Adolfo Perez ESQUIVEL, Peace, Argentina, 1980	Dmitry MURATOV, Peace, Russia, 2021
Oscar Arias SANCHEZ, Peace, Costa Rica, 1987	Kailash SATYARTHI, Peace, India, 2014
Rigoberta Menchu TUM, Peace, Guatemala, 1992	Jody WILLIAMS, Peace, USA, 1997
Barry Clark BARISH, Physics, USA, 2017	J. Georg BEDNORZ, Physics, Germany, 1987
Steven CHU, Physics, USA, 1997	Albert FERT, Physics, France, 2007
Sheldon GLASHOW, Physics, USA, 1979	David J. GROSS, Physics, USA, 2004
Serge HAROCHE, Physics, France, 2012	Gerardus 't HOOFT, Physics, Netherland, 1999
Takaaki KAJITA, Physics, Japan, 2015	Ferenc KRAUSZ, Physics, Austria, 2023
John C. MATHER, Physics, USA, 2006	Michel MAYOR, Physics, Switzerland, 2019
Konstantin NOVOSELOV, Physics, UK, 2010	Giorgio PARISI, Physics, Italy, 2021
Roger PENROSE, Physics, UK, 2020	Robert Woodrow WILSON, Physics, USA, 1978
David J. WINELAND, Physics, USA, 2012	

cc: The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, and the UN Human Rights Committee