

PKK Statement To The United Nations

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) issued the following statement at a press conference in Geneva on January 24, 1995.

Dear members of the press,

May I greet you all on behalf of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Before the eyes of the world there is a war of annihilation being conducted in our homeland, Kurdistan. The Turkish Republic, since its foundation, has denied the existence of our people with systematic state policies. The Turkish state, which has forbidden the culture, language, and the identity of the Kurdish people, is conducting a war of genocide and mobilising every possible military means and all its forces.

The PKK, honouring the universal values of humanity, is fighting for the national and democratic rights of our people. The war is a consequence of Turkish state policy. In this filthy and bloody adventure, Turkey has declared the Kurdish people as the prime legitimate military target.

The Turkish state has depopulated Kurdistan: 3,000 villages have been burned down and millions of people have been forced to flee. The state's military force, unable to vanquish the guerrilla army, is revenging itself on the civilians with unprecedented severity. 15,000 members of our party are now facing the death penalty in prisons.

Turkey, as well as disregarding the international conventions that it is signatory to, also prevents the press, the OSCE, and international human rights observers from visiting Kurdistan and monitoring the situation for themselves. The state has refused the ICRC's humanitarian endeavour to visit Kurdistan. Turkey, even though it is a signatory, has never complied with the August 12, 1949 Geneva Convention and has refused to sign the First Protocol of 1977.

The 10-year war has claimed the lives of 34,000 people. The war has never been the choice of our party. It was imposed on our people. We state categorically: We want this war to end and we are in favour of a democratic, equitable, and legal solution. This demand was demonstrated by the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire in 1993 which lasted for 83 days.

Turkey continues to persist in its dirty war.

We will continue to fight until we compel Turkey to seek a political solution. We call on Turkey to comply with international laws and to cease its attacks on civilians. The PKK, as a party in this conflict, has always observed the conventions on war. The relevant application denoting such acceptance was submitted to the ICRC and other concerned bodies on January 23, 1995 on behalf of PKK General Secretary Abdullah Ocalan.

The declaration, moreover, also contains the following points:

1. In its conflict with the Turkish state forces, the PKK undertakes to respect the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the First Protocol of 1977 regarding the conduct of hostilities and the protection of the victims of war and to treat those obligations as having the force of law within its own forces and the areas within its control.
2. To end any doubt, the PKK regards the following groups as part of the Turkish security forces and, therefore, as legitimate targets of attack:
 - o a - members of the Turkish armed forces;
 - o b - members of the Turkish contra-guerrilla forces;
 - o c - members of the Turkish Intelligence Service (MIT);
 - o d - members of the Turkish gendarmerie;
 - o e - village guards.

The PKK does not regard civil servants as members of the security forces, unless they come within one of the above categories.

3. The PKK will treat captured members of the Turkish security forces as prisoners of war.
4. The PKK will disseminate this statement and the rules of the Geneva Convention of 1949 and First Protocol of 1977 to its forces and asks for the assistance of the ICRC. It has adopted a system of discipline to ensure respect for these rules and the punishment of those who break them. It accepts the principle of command responsibility.

The PKK would accept an offer of services from the ICRC.

5. The PKK calls upon the Turkish government to give the same undertakings and to accept an offer for services from the ICRC.

Finally, the PKK calls upon all parties to the Geneva Convention, the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the ICEC to take the necessary steps to end the war or ensure that the Turkish state and the PKK respect their obligations under international law.

On behalf of PKK General Secretary Abdullah Ocalan. January 24, 1995