



Paris April 05, 2018

Ref. Successful session of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal on Turkey and the Kurds.

Dear Colleagues and Friends

On 15 and 16 March 2018 the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal convened a session in Paris (France) on Turkey and the Kurds. More than 400 interested people attended.

In an introductory session the panel composed of 7 judges heard witnesses on the Turkish state's denial of political, cultural, social, economic rights to the Kurds living in Turkey. It was argued by the prosecution that these violations of the right to self-determination of the Kurds are the source of the conflict that is fought between the Turkish State and the Kurdish insurgency for many decades.

During the further debates, witnesses were heard about 2 categories of crimes allegedly committed by the Turkish state: war crimes (and possibly crimes against humanity) during the military assault by the Turkish army and security forces on the main Kurdish cities between September 2015 and June 2017 on the one hand and state crimes such as targeted killings, kidnappings, arson and bomb attacks, committed over several decades both in Turkey and beyond its borders. The latter crimes were obviously committed to intimidate Kurdish activists and to sow confusion and fear in the Kurdish organisations.

During the debates on the assault on the cities, witnesses from *Cizre*, *Sur (Diyarbakir)*, *Nusaybin* and *Sirnak* were heard, some of them physically present in Paris, others by Skype. The witnesses described how the Turkish army and security forces had bombed the cities with artillery, how snipers targeted civilians, how civilians seeking refuge in basements were deliberately attacked and killed etc. The Prosecution demonstrated how all these attacks were deliberately planned and executed and asked the Tribunal to find that these constituted war crimes.

During the second day of debates several witnesses were heard regarding the assassination in Paris in January 2013 of three Kurdish female activists by an agent of the Turkish secret service MIT.

At the end of the session the President of the Tribunal, *M. Philippe Texier*, former judge in the French Court of Cassation announced a few preliminary conclusions made by the panel of judges. He said that the panel had already agreed that the violation of the right to self-determination of the Kurdish people was indeed

the root cause of the conflict which is indeed to be considered as a non-international armed conflict as defined by international law and not a police operation against terrorism as argued by the Turkish State.

He also said that it was obvious for the panel that war crimes and state crimes had been committed by the Turkish State. The President of the Tribunal further stated that the full reasoned decision of the panel would be announced on the 24 May 2018 in the premises of the European Parliament (Room A3G-2 from 12.30 till 14:30).

During the session a group of 52 observers attended with representatives of various civil society organisations. These observers were invited to share with the public through articles, short reports etc. their findings and impressions about the session of the PPT. Some observers will also speak at the event during which the decision of the Tribunal will be announced.

The initiators of the Tribunal would especially like to thank the judges for their participation in proceedings and to thank all those who contributed with evidence and observations that made the Tribunal such a successful event.

All will be invited to the conference at the European Parliament in late May. We are grateful to all who attended and observed the Tribunal.

We encourage you to view and share the website where a video of the entire proceedings of the Tribunal is available.

The list of endorsers is published on the website of the session <http://tribunal-turkey-kurds.org/index.php/endorsers/>

For any additional information, please contact the Conference's secretariat:

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For the Coordination Tribunal Team,

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