

Demirtas condemns Theresa May, invites Corbyn to Turkey

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In an exclusive letter written to Britain's *The Morning Star*, the imprisoned Presidential candidate for the Peoples' Democratic Party in Turkey -- Selahattin Demirtas -- provided his responses to current diplomatic and trade relations between the UK and Turkey, where he also expressed his support for Jeremy Corbyn.

"the Prime Minister needs to know that with a policy that prioritises the rights and economic interests of the British government", Demirtas wrote to the *Morning Star*, "she can't bring peace for the rest of the world."

The HDP party is the only party in Turkey's opposition to condemn Turkey's recent incursions in Kurdish held territory across the border in Syria. Among other things, for condemning Turkey's foreign and domestic policy, the HDP is often targetted by the state. The HDP also argues that all foreign powers providing arms to Turkey are complicit in the human rights abuses that it commits.

"For Turkey to have a meaningful contribution to peace in the Middle East and

globally", Demirtas wrote to the Morning Star, "an alternative needs to come to power that will implement more intelligent policies than we see under the AKP government," he said.

Demirtas is one of many political prisoners targetted by the State of Turkey on allegations of being associated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The HDP, a pro-peace, left-wing alliance between the Turkish and Kurdish left was the main interlocutor and mediator for the now aborted peace process between the PKK and the government of Turkey. The HDP still calls for a political solution to the Kurdish question, which the government of Turkey continues to reject. This has even led President Erdogan of Turkey, who receives financial support from Theresa May's government of the UK in the form of arms deals, to call the imprisoned leader a "terrorist."

Just on Sunday, in a campaign rally, Erdogan threatened to hang Demirtas, alleging that he was personally responsible for the deaths of 53 protesters in a 2014 rally against the IS invasion of Kobane. The protest which saw right-wing Kurds, who are supportive of Erdogan in the upcoming presidential elections, attack pro-HDP Kurds, actually led to the deaths of 43, including 33 HDP supporters, six Free Cause Party supporters, two Syrian refugees and two security forces members.

In response to President Erdogan's statements, Demirtas, a former human rights lawyer, responded that "Erdogan says he wants to hang me if he gets elected.. I would sacrifice my life a thousand times for the people and won't ever take a step back."

Erdogan, who recently said that his Operation Olive Branch would be extended to occupy Kobane, and even northern Iraq, was significantly aided by an arms deal between May and Turkey which entailed that Britain sells £100 million worth of fighter jets to Ankara. Demirtas declared that Britain's approach to Turkey was to its detriment, in a world he hoped, which would advance towards International peace.

"The time of gaining wealth and peace by the exploitation of others is swiftly coming to an end," Demirtas said, "I hope the British government tries to understand this."

His words of condemnation for Theresa May, however, were contrasted with his comments about Jeremy Corbyn.

"We hope", Demirtas said, "that after the election we will be in government and we will be able to host him. But in any case, we would be happy to welcome him as our guest as the HDP in Ankara."