

It is time to reaffirm commitment to Rojava rather than wallow in despair

by Hawzhin Azeez - 20/12/2018 07:55



The announcement of a U.S. withdrawal from Rojava (Western Kurdistan) has sent shockwaves across the Kurdish communities. There are bewilderment and genuine confusion. In light of earlier threats by Erdogan of an imminent Turkish invasion of Rojava, there are serious and genuine concerns about approaching ethnic cleansing, as we saw so clearly earlier this year when Turkey occupied Afrin.

However, there are important points to be made.

For starters, the U.S. was never an ally of Rojava's revolution. It repeatedly stated its "temporary alliance" towards the Kurds.

The huge emotional reaction to the alleged withdrawal of the U.S. from Rojava—something which we all knew was an inevitability—should be a source of concern for all of us Kurds. We must ask ourselves at what point are we going to decolonize our minds? Has the ideology of democratic confederalism, the thousands who gave their lives gladly and lovingly, and a leader who has sat in a Turkish island

prison for 19 years taught us nothing?

Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan continues to persevere under the harshest conditions, living and embodying our maxim of “Berxwedan Jiyane” (Resistance is Life). These are the revolutionary symbols that should make us feel calm, and yet determined a sense of continued commitment to all that Rojava embodies, irrespective of what the current crises involve.

While we have legitimate fears of Turkey invading and engaging in ethnic cleansing as it did in Afrin, we must never forget something extremely important here as well: We are engaging in a revolution; no one was ever going to hand over this hard fought freedom to us. This was always going to be an existential fight between Kurdishness and fascism, between oppression and freedom, colonization and emancipation, occupation and liberation.

Who taught you that this was a smooth path? Have we not learned anything from the past history of betrayal? Have we forgotten that no matter what, the sheltering mountains of Kurdistan will always call us back into their defensive embrace? That the freedom fighters sit on the peaks and watch over us, committed to our inevitable liberation? At what point did we give away our power to the neo-colonialists and the imperialists?

Thousands have died to defend the ideology of radical democracy. I personally know families who have given over 17 martyrs in their immediate families for this liberation! These are our people who fight for us. The people of Rojava have lived this revolution and know better than us what this fight involves.

There is a reason why we say “our martyrs light the way.” We no longer say “either freedom or death”. Ocalan taught us that the choice was always “either freedom or freedom” and this freedom requires a fierce, unwavering ideological, loving commitment towards collective liberation. This was never going to be an easy fight. This was never going to be handed to us. America was never committed to our ideology. It lives and embodies the utter and complete antithesis of what Rojava and its martyrs represent.

The second largest army within NATO and the world’s tenth largest military power (Turkey), under Erdogan’s dictatorship was always going to be turned against us. But this does not mean that the fight is over. Yes, Rojava needs urgent solidarity. It needs the international voice of prominent feminist, human rights, environmentalists and others to stand in firm solidarity with it. The evacuation of the US is a green light to Turkey to invade and engage in further and continued the ethnic cleansing of Kurds and all those who share the land of north Syria with them. All those who

believe in humanity must speak up about an inevitable human rights disaster that is on the horizon. But the fight is anything from over. It just means we need to be more committed, active, firm and unwavering in our collective resistance against fascism. But above all, it means we must believe in ourselves and our people.

Yes, the U.S. leaving is a sobering moment, but an inevitable one. A repeated moment in our history as a dispossessed and oppressed people. Yet we are still here, despite all of our occupier's genocides and massacres. We persevere and thrive. We have the guerrillas and the freedom fighters. We have the mountains, our martyrs, and our youth still fighting on the front lines.

Only when the last guerrilla is dead, only when there are no more YPG-YPJ left on the frontlines, only when the mountains are no more, only when Ocalan's solitary resistance no longer lights our way is the day we should say "Kurds are no more".

Until then, our resistance must continue until the last freedom loving Kurd gives their last breath.

Freedom and the struggle for freedom can never die.

If you want freedom you have to take it! You cannot appeal to the conscience of the imperialists, the colonialists, the oppressors, and the creators of your dispossessed marginalized status. Your martyrs did not die for this ideology, they died fighting against it.