

## **SOCIALIST PARTY OF KURDISTAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Today Kurds, one of the most rooted and populous nations of the Near and Middle East, continue their life without their national democratic rights, except in the southern part of their country within the Iraqi territory. Kurdistan, on which our people have lived for thousands of years, has been colonized and divided into parts.

Kurdistan was first shared with the Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin between the Ottoman Empire and the Persian Empire in 1639. Our country was destroyed and its economic, social and cultural development was hampered due to the wars and plunders of these two states on Kurdistan.

Kurdish nation launched a series of national uprisings during the 19<sup>th</sup> century; they were all suppressed with blood by means of the cooperation between the two empires as well as with the support of the Western colonial states.

After the First World War, Kurdistan was divided again and separated into four parts. The British included most of Southern Kurdistan within the borders of Iraq, which was under their mandate. The French annexed the oil-rich and fertile Southwestern Kurdistan to Syria – the country they then ruled. While Iran maintained its share as before, the largest part of Kurdistan was left to the Republic of Turkey founded on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire and was an heir to its legacy.

The Republic of Turkey ignored the ethnic and cultural pluralist characteristics of the territory on which it was established and formed itself based on a monist and racist mentality relying solely upon the Turkish ethnicity. The national oppression and cruelty on the Kurdish people have become even more pronounced. The Kurdish language, identity, and culture were disregarded. The Turkish state resorted to unprecedented methods to assimilate the Kurdish people and to destroy their language and culture. Kurdish language was banned in education, official life, and press. Even speaking Kurdish in private life was prohibited and sanctioned. All legitimate attempts undertaken by the Kurdish people for their rights and freedoms were violently suppressed. The Kurdish population was subjected to forced migration and settlement. This prevented the economic, social and cultural development of the Kurdish society and turned Kurdistan into a fireground.

The policy of rejection, denial, and oppression pursued by the Turkish state against the Kurdish people had devastating consequences for the Turkish society as well. The resources to be allocated to Turkish people's needs of employment, education and health were constrained, chauvinism became a hallmark of political and cultural life in Turkey, and militarism became more and more dominant in governance. The outdated policy pursued against the Kurdish people prevented the development and institutionalization of democracy.

Due to certain recent developments within and outside the country, the outright policy of denying Kurdish identity in Turkey was softened and the prohibitionist approach towards the Kurdish language was somewhat changed. Discussions on the solution of the Kurdish problem came to the top of the agenda in Turkey. However, despite these and similar developments, a solution to Kurdish and Kurdistan issues based on an equitable and equal ground could not be accomplished.

The national oppression and persecution of the Kurdish people continue in other parts of Kurdistan as it was before. Apart from the positive developments that occurred in Southern Kurdistan's free atmosphere since 1991, the Kurds cannot use their national democratic rights in Iran and Syria while Kurdistan is deprived of any status whatsoever.

### **THE HISTORICAL STEP TO BE TAKEN BY THE KURDISH PEOPLE**

The usurpation of the national democratic rights of the Kurdish people and the division and fragmentation of Kurdistan is a historical injustice without any legitimate ground. This situation is the principal reason for the ongoing war and political turmoil in the Middle East. The ongoing conflict for many years, deepening and increasing polarization, and the problematic structure of democracy in Turkey are mainly the results of the fact that Kurdish and Kurdistan issues could not be resolved on a just and egalitarian basis.

The Kurdish people's demand to live freely and with dignity in their own country, Kurdistan, is a fundamental right arising from being a nation. This right is also guaranteed by international documents born from humanity's joint struggle and experience. The establishment of universal peace and justice throughout the world depends on the Kurdish nation's achieving the dignified place it deserves within the world of nations.

In this respect, the historical step to be taken by the Kurdish people is national freedom. The PSK considers the Kurdish people's national freedom to be possible through its right to determine its destiny freely. The Kurdish people must have the liberty to enjoy self-determination and the right to rule themselves.

For our party, the PSK, this can be possible for Northern Kurdistan in two forms: the Kurdish people can break up and establish their own state, or they can choose a democratic union with the peoples of Turkey.

Our preference is for a democratic federation. Turkey must adopt a federal system and Kurdistan should be a part of federal Turkey through its federated status. Federated Kurdistan should have its own parliament, government, and legislative bodies; The Kurdish people should enjoy equal rights as Turkish people in federal Turkey.

The realization of national freedom will essentially be the work of the Kurdish people.

To this end, it is necessary to unite all national forces, all classes and strata supporting freedom, various segments of the society with different beliefs and ideologies, and the patriotic parties and institutions representing these segments of society on a common ground for struggle.

## **PSK: ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND APPROACH TO STRUGGLE**

The name of the party is *Partiya Sosyalist a Kurdistan*. It is "*Kürdistan Sosyalist Partisi*" in Turkish and "Socialist Party of Kurdistan" in English. Its abbreviation is PSK. Its emblem consists of a figure of sun with 21 rays against a red background and the abbreviated name of the party in the middle of the sun. Party Headquarters is officially in Ankara. In actuality, its activities are mainly centered in Diyarbakır.

The PSK embraces the Kurdish people's experience of struggle for freedom and equality lasted for almost two centuries.

It upholds the peaceful, democratic, and legitimate struggle experience of the political tradition PSK-Freedom Path (*Özgürlük Yolu*), which had been established in late-1974 and have resorted to various means of struggle under new conditions.

The field of struggle for PSK is essentially Northern Kurdistan within Turkey's territory.

The PSK is a libertarian, patriotic, democratic, and socialist party. The PSK is the party of Kurdistan's workers, middle class, low-income and vulnerable strata, intellectuals, and of all those who support democracy, freedom, and equality. It fights for the fundamental rights and freedoms of all ethnic and religious minorities living in Kurdistan.

Like any people, the Kurdish people, as the last resort, have the right to resist cruelty and brutal and outdated practices targeting human dignity. Experiences, however, in our country and region have shown that war and violence deepen the problems rather than solving them. The PSK supports the solution of all kinds of problems through dialogue, mutual negotiation, and peaceful methods. Its principal form of struggle is based on realistic, effective, and peaceful ways and methods that take into account the current conditions. It uses open, civil, democratic, and legitimate means and methods in its struggle.

The PSK adopts open, democratic and pluralistic processes to the maximum extent in its internal mechanism. It exerts maximum effort for the participation of the party base in important decision-making processes. Depending on the situation, the party may apply an internal referendum mechanism. It adheres to the principle of openness, transparency, and accountability vis-à-vis its base and the public.

The PSK places great value on the rule of law, the principles of democracy, human rights, and human dignity in the political struggle.

Our party attaches great importance to international conventions on human rights and freedoms such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights, OSCE, Paris Charter, EU Accession Partnership Document, Copenhagen Criteria, etc.

Our party embraces the ideal of direct democracy, which enables people to participate in decisions about their own lives at all levels. It aims to establish a participatory democracy in which local politics and local participation in decisions are decisive.

Our party is against all forms of violence, principally, those stemming from war, militarism, and the state.

The PSK claims and maintains the universal common values of humanity such as freedom, equality, justice, peace, and solidarity as well as the historical struggle for this cause.

The PSK considers the long-term future of humanity to be in socialism. It believes in this for the emancipation and versatile development of human beings. Socialism is the end of all kinds of relations of exploitation and oppression in social life, and it means real freedom and equality.

Socialism is not a close target for Kurdistan at the moment. Following national freedom, the establishment of a democratic society, the flourishing of the national economy and culture, and the maturation of the society for socialism will take an unpredictable time.

## **THE DEMOCRACY ISSUE**

The PSK sees a close relationship between the struggle for rights and freedoms of the Kurdish people and the democratization of Turkey. The consolidation of democracy with universal standards in Turkey will create an important opportunity in terms of the national liberation struggle of the Kurdish people. The liberation of the Kurdish nation will facilitate the democratization of Turkey.

In this regard, our party considers the peoples of Turkey and the supporters of democracy and change as friendly forces in the national struggle for freedom and cherishes solidarity and joint struggle with them.

Federalism is the most realistic and workable system for Turkey. The federal system fits well into the multinational, multicultural and multilingual structure of the country. It will enable different regions and ethnic and religious communities to participate more effectively in the governance of the country. A federal system will not only resolve the Kurdistan problem but also prepare the ground for the institutionalization of democracy in a participatory and pluralistic manner.

Our party attaches great value to

- ending racist and authoritarian structure in Turkey,
- building a democracy in line with universal standards,
- ending the militarist tutelage,
- fundamental rights and freedoms for all ethnic minorities and religious belief groups,
- establishing a decentralized administrative structure instead of a strict centralized political system,
- making a new constitution in line with the country's multilingual, multinational, multicultural and multi-religious structure,
- recognizing the existence of the Kurdish people, granting a federated status to Kurdistan,
- providing a fair solution to the Alevi issue in the context of freedom of thought, religion, belief, and conscience and,
- the struggle for the restructuring of Turkey in a federal form.

To this end, it defends a common and effective struggle with the forces supporting democracy and change

## **KURDS LIVING IN TURKEY**

As a result of the policies of oppression, destruction, denial, and deportation pursued against the Kurdish people for centuries, Kurds were forced to leave Kurdistan *en masse* and migrate to western provinces. The policy of forced migration not only weakened the social base of the Kurdish movement but also accelerated the assimilation process of the Kurds.

Today, a quite large Kurdish population living in Turkey's central and western regions is deprived of national democratic rights, also like those in Kurdistan. The Kurds there cannot live their identity freely and cannot receive education in their mother tongue, Kurdish – neither can they freely use their language in the public sphere. They lack the means to learn and develop Kurdish culture and history.

Our party is primarily supports creating the necessary conditions for the voluntary return of the Kurds living in the western parts of Turkey back to their ancestral lands while the Kurdish people gains its legitimate rights.

However, it is a fact that a significant portion of the Kurdish population will still prefer to stay in places such as Central and Western Anatolia.

Our party believes that Kurds in this situation, like other ethnic and religious minorities, should be freely able to live their national and cultural identities, and defends that receiving education in mother tongue is a universal and democratic right.

In places where the Kurdish population exceeds a certain ratio, the right to education in Kurdish should be granted, and opportunities should be created for the use of Kurdish in the public sphere. Our party defends and struggles for the implementation of the decentralization principle to ensure the participation of Kurds in the political and administrative process in the provinces, districts, and regions where they are populated.

## **RELATIONS WITH OTHER PARTS OF KURDISTAN**

Our party defends the right to self-determination for our people in every part of Kurdistan.

Under the effects of the developments in the region in 1991, Southern Kurdistan entered the path of emancipation. Since 2005, it has gained a federated status. The experiences of the people of Southern Kurdistan in freedom and democracy make an important contribution to the construction of regional

peace and stability and create important opportunities for the solution of the problem in other parts of Kurdistan.

The PSK appraises the achievements of our people in Southern Kurdistan and recognizes the federated status attained by this part of our country as an important historical progress. It accepts it as its duty to protect these achievements and to support the efforts to protect them. It regards and supports the efforts of our people living in Southern Kurdistan to breakup from Iraq and to establish their own independent state if necessary.

Our party shows effective solidarity with the national liberation struggle of Kurdish people living in Western and Eastern Kurdistan.

On the other hand, the struggle for freedom in each part of Kurdistan is closely related to the struggle of other peoples with which our people live side by side and is affected by the historical, social, and political conditions of the countries in question. The struggle may take a different course in each part, may come to the conclusion at different times, and may reach different results depending on the conditions. The organization and management of the struggle in each part are up to the patriotic organizations that emerged from the ranks of our people in that part.

For the sake of the freedom of our people, the PSK capitalizes solidarity and cooperation with patriotic organizations in other parts of Kurdistan, and it commits to friendly criticism when necessary for the benefit of the national movement – it does not, however, interfere with the internal affairs of these other parts and these organizations.

The PSK refuses to resort to violence in solving the problems between Kurdish organizations and advocates that peaceful methods should be used in all circumstances as a principle.

## **DEMOCRATIC FEDERATED KURDISTAN**

### **Political Goals**

A Kurdistan Assembly, in which all parties can freely participate according to the principles of universal, equal, and direct suffrage and secret ballot, will exercise the legislative power and form a government in Kurdistan.

The Kurdistan Assembly will exercise the legislative power for Kurdistan in all areas other than where the central/federal government is authorized as per the constitution.

The executive power will be used by the government, which will be formed from within the parliament according to consensus and democratic principles.

A democratic legal system will be established to realize the principles of independence, impartiality and integrity of the judiciary, and the legal judicial process.

A pluralistic, participatory and contemporary electoral and political party system will be established based on Venice criteria.

In Kurdistan, governors, district governors and police chiefs will be specified through elections.

It will be ensured that all ethnic and religious groups living in Kurdistan will have their national democratic rights and be able to participate in the political and administrative management of the country.

The administrative system in Kurdistan will be structured in a decentralized manner and will follow the principle of local administration. Local governments will be strengthened, and municipal and provincial councils will be turned into direct democracy institutions in line with social pluralism.

Everyone regardless of race, gender, language or religion will fully enjoy freedom of thought, belief, speech, press, association, and protest.

### **Building a National Economy**

We will assume a mobilization approach to quickly eliminate the economic damage caused by the country's forced underdevelopment conditions and to build a national economy for the benefit of the people.

All kinds of measures will be taken for the development of science and technology, and the opportunities provided by science will be used for the development of the economy in line with the age.

Heavy industry plants that are sustainable and eco-friendly will be established.

Foreign capital and technology will be encouraged to come to the country.

Modern techniques and methods will be used in agriculture.

Measures will be taken to protect small tradesmen and craftsmen.

Necessary works will be undertaken to utilize the rich rivers of Kurdistan for energy generation and irrigation.

A maximum effort will be made to process the country's underground and ground resources with modern methods and to use them for the welfare of society.

Special attention will be dedicated to extricating the country's renewable energy resource potential.

The tourism potential of our country will be utilized to the maximum extent.

### **Agriculture**

Our country, with its geographical structure and ecological conditions, has the potential to reach international competitiveness in terms of crop quantity and diversity in agricultural production.

Organic agriculture practices will be expanded, irrigation systems will be modernized and product diversity will be ensured.

As a result of the division of agricultural lands among family members, the agricultural enterprises are small and fragmented. This reduces productivity and profitability. As a counter-measure, voluntary cooperatives will be encouraged in agriculture, modern agricultural tools will be provided, and necessary measures will be taken for farmers to learn and apply agricultural techniques.

Producers will be provided with enough credits, rural laborers will be liberated from the exploitation of usurers, and usury will be prohibited.

Stable development is not possible without agriculture. Agricultural lands will be used in a sustainable way for our people to reach sufficient and reliable food, for rural development, for economic development, and for livable environment; livestock production will be supported with modern methods.

The anachronistic slavery relations of the feudal era will be terminated in the countryside.

## **Regulating Working Life**

The PSK will take heed of fair and equitable sharing in social life, and will base the regulations in working life on the principle of social justice.

ILO standards will be followed in regulating the working life.

All employees will have the right to unionize, collective bargaining, and strike.

A social security system including unemployment insurance will be established.

The retirement age will be determined considering the average age in Kurdistan and other conditions as well as international standards.

The widows and orphans of those who were martyred in the struggle for freedom will be put on a salary.

Everyone will be paid according to their labor.

Employment of persons under the age of 16 will be prohibited, except for jobs having characteristics of help to family work and are not deleterious to health.

Employees will be able to participate in the management and control of the workplace.

Necessary measures will be taken to ensure that all employees can have paid leave and rest; those who work in the agricultural sector will be covered by the social security system.

## **Freedom of Belief and Secularism**

Religion and state will be separated. The state will stand at an equal distance to all religious beliefs, and provide the necessary guarantees for all groups to freely live by their faiths. Everyone will be free in their religious beliefs and nobody will be oppressed or privileged because of their faiths.

It will be ensured that the Alevis, Yazidis, Christian communities living in Kurdistan, such as the Armenians, Syriacs and Chaldeans, and members of the other faiths, who have suffered injustice for years, will have all their religious rights. Their shrines and educational and social Institutions will have legal and autonomous status, and necessary conditions will be created for them to fulfill their beliefs freely.

## **Education and Culture**

The official language in Kurdistan will be Kurdish. The Kurmanji and Zazaki dialects of Kurdish spoken in Northern Kurdistan will be provided with the opportunity to develop freely on the principle of equality; the issues of unification of dialects and linguistic unity will be up to the natural process.

The multilingualism principle will be applied in educational processes. Depending on the demand, Turkish will be a part of the education side by side with Kurdish.

Ethnic groups living in Kurdistan will have the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue, and their languages will have official status in places where they constitute the majority.

Basic education will be compulsory and free until the age of 16.

Necessary arrangements will be made to ensure that the Kurdish written language and literature, which has been subjected to atrophy under suppression up until today, is learned by large masses and used in schools, the media, and all spheres of social life.

The education policy will be scientific and democratic and all educational processes will be carried out under the light of reason and science. Universities will be autonomous and scientific and it will be ensured that they have a scientific and technologic curriculum in line with the requirements of the age.

Necessary measures will be taken for everyone to develop their talents and to benefit from cultural and artistic potentials.

Necessary work will be carried out to bring Kurdistan's historical artifacts as well as its artistic and cultural products to light, and to protect and bring them into public use.

### **Women's Rights**

Necessary measures will be taken for women's emancipation and their participation in business, social and political life on equal ground with men; positive discrimination principles will be applied for women until they reach an equal position with men.

Women will be provided with equal opportunities in working life, the principle of equal pay for equal work will be applied, and legislative guarantees will be introduced to solve the problems arising from women's reproductivity.

All humiliation and oppression on women will be lifted; domestic violence against women will be considered a crime, and necessary measures will be taken to prevent this.

Women's education will be of special importance and it will be ensured that they benefit from educational opportunities equally. An education policy against gender discrimination will be adopted in order to increase the awareness of the society towards women's rights.

All sexist traditions such as bride price, bride exchange, polygamy, forced and child marriage will be abolished.

### **Youth and Children**

Necessary measures will be taken for the youth to develop physically and mentally in a healthy way and in order to educate them with contemporary values and a sense of social responsibility.

Special emphasis will be placed on raising a conscious youth who have developed self-confidence and can make decisions about their own future.

Necessary arrangements will be made for the active participation of the youth in all spheres of social, cultural, and political life.

In terms of the physical and mental health of the youth, sports will have special importance and, to this end, youth culture centers will be opened.

Our party, which believes that children's rights begin with pregnancy, will handle maternal and child health in a holistic manner; and it will take necessary measures both inside and outside the family so that the baby and then the child can grow up healthy and well. Our party will provide any sort of opportunity for children to have a good education, a healthy life, and a safe future in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the education of children and young people, the principle of education in the mother tongue will be followed.

## **Health and Social Services**

Everyone will have equal, accessible, free, protective, and rehabilitative health services.

Effective measures will be taken to eradicate hunger and poverty.

There will be a fight against any kind of unemployment; efforts will be made to ensure that everyone has an income affording adequate nutrition.

Necessary measures will be taken for public health; examination, treatment, care, and medicines will be free in public hospitals and in other health institutions.

Enough number of kindergartens and nurseries will be opened for children; orphans will be brought up under the care and control of the state.

The state will provide care and livelihoods for needy patients, the disabled, and the elderly.

## **Housing and Urbanization**

Kurdish society will be saved from the primitive and unhealthy dwellings they live in today, and from being the victim of earthquakes and avalanches as a result of the current situation.

Every family will be provided with a modern and healthy housing adequate for their needs, rents will be taken under control, and needy people will have rent subsidy.

In urbanization, nature, history, and society will be handled holistically.

The development plans will include green spaces to reduce air pollution, public transport to facilitate transportation, and state-of-the-art waste sorting and recycling facilities.

One of our primary duties will be to arrange the living spaces (old and new, rural or urban) preferred by the victims of forced migration in line with modern living conditions. Urbanization will feature social spaces and facilities that will contribute to the personal development of all segments of society, health centers that are easily accessible, nursery schools, district bazaars, sports and training centers, and spaces for recreation, skill development, play, etc.

Urban regeneration plans will be prepared and implemented by considering the social, cultural, and natural characteristics of each locality for the purpose of correcting the existing slums and unplanned urbanization and creating contemporary living spaces. Urban regeneration will consider social equality, protection and improvement of the environment, and a diverse dynamic economy with regards to access to services. Planning will be done in a way that ensures the participation of all stakeholders and related groups in the decisions.

Settlement and housing policies will pursue a contemporary understanding of urbanization that takes into account comfortable transportation, clean air, green spaces, parks, and urban aesthetics that preserves the historical texture and observes disabled people.

## **Natural Environment**

Nature and environment will be protected, and the health of future generations will be a priority in domains such as industrialization and urbanization.

All activities disrupting the ecological balance of our world – the home for the entire humanity – will be ceased and industrialization, urbanization, and energy activities will be harmonized with nature. A

world-wide cooperation approach will be adopted to protect the nature of our country and the world, which are entrusted to us by the posterity.

Serious measures will be taken to preserve forests, to expand forest areas, to protect and ensure the reproduction of birds, fish and other game animals, plants, in short, natural wealth, and to prevent degradation of the natural environment; furthermore, wildlife will be protected, and hunting will be prohibited.

Rapid population growth, unplanned urbanization, unplanned industrialization, and the irresponsible use of natural resources cause degradation of nature, as well as air, water and soil pollution.

Green spaces that enhance heat, light, food, clothing, shelter, health, and joy of living that life needs will be offered to the service of people with the least destructive and renewable methods.

Industrial zones will be planned in areas with completed infrastructure and in a way that will not impact residential areas.

Facilities will be established for sorting and recycling the waste generated by consumption.

Cooperation with relevant international institutions and forces on issues such as environment and global warming will be of special importance.

### **Kurds Living Abroad**

Our party supports the struggle and organization efforts of Kurds who have left the country for various reasons for their economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian demands. It places great value on their support for the national freedom struggle of our people.

Our party sees the Kurds abroad as an important dynamic in our people's struggle for freedom and upholds and appreciates their efforts to find support for the Kurdish cause at the international level.

### **International Relations**

Effective activities will be carried out for our country to approach and integrate with the European Union.

A dialogue and cooperation approach will be taken as the principle for the solution of regional and international problems.

Efforts will be made to realize the principle of living in peace with neighbor countries.

An effective attitude will be adopted to end the armament race in the world, to solve global warming and similar problems, and to spend resources on a fair and livable world.