

Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security

Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

29 April 2008

Submission in relation to re-listing of Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) as a “terrorist organizations” under the Criminal Code.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the proscription of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) under the Criminal Code.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the above review. Kurdish Association of Victoria was established in Melbourne in 1986 since then extensively providing settlement, social and cultural services to Kurdish refugees and migrants in Victoria.

Behalf of Kurdish community living in Victoria we write to you to request the reviewing of PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) re-listing as terrorist organization.

Firstly we would like to indicate that policies of the Turkish State on Kurdish people are the major factors that lead to current conflict between Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Turkish forces. These policies are preventing any political representation of the Kurds in Turkey. Turkish State attempts to close down another pro-Kurdish Party (Democratic Society Party) for promoting rights of the Kurdish people in Turkey and remove its MPs parliamentary immune to prosecute them are the current example of these policies.

We believe that if we need to re-visit question of terrorism it is the Kurdish people whom been terrorised by the Turkish State. Kurdish people systematically have been oppressed, prosecuted, displaced, tortured, and murdered by the Turkish State. We think that those historical and current facts can be gained simply by the member of your committee in depth.

Back to question of listing Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), while as an association we believe and support peaceful solutions to any human crisis, there are some important elements of this conflict need to be addressed.

First of all even we can criticize some tactics of the PKK in fact there are millions of Kurdish people in Kurdistan and Diasporas who support wider political aims of the PKK. The large majority of Kurds view PKK as a last chance to way the liberation. While re-listing of the organization we believe these facts should be considered.

On the other hand during twenty eight years arm conflict between Turkish forces and the PKK, Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) many times called unilateral cease-fire, and in 1999 after calls from their jailed Leader Mr. Abdullah Ocalan organization withdraw all its forces from Turkey to seek for nonviolent solution. Organisation Leaderships are continuously calling for political and democratic solution to Kurdish Question and their willingness to give up arm struggle. However Turkish Government rejects any calls and use language of killing anyone who oppose to government policies and ask for surrender without taking any step forward through resolution of this conflict. Military controlled past and current Turkish governments do not seek any real solution and implement old policies of denial and repression. These Policies are to be blamed for arm conflict and lost of the life

Secondly we strongly believe that listing any organization should be kept away from any political interest and pressure as we believe Turkish State is implementing. As your committee indicates in earlier listing PKK does not create any treat to Australian interest and we believe it will never.

Thirdly we believe that listing PKK will only encourage Turkish State to keep its repressive and discriminate policies alive and totally assimilate Kurdish people living within Turkey. Kurdish community especially Kurdish refugees have great concern on the criminalization of the PKK. Claims of persecution due to real or alleged association with the PKK or related organization will expose Kurdish refugees and asylum-seekers to the criminal prosecution for membership or a number or other serious offences related to a proscribed organization.

Fourthly we like to inform you that about the month ago the European Court of First Instance in Luxembourg annulled the EU decision to list PKK as a terrorist organization. The lawsuit was reportedly backed by Britain. We hope this decision will crate guide for your committee.

In conclusion we like to bring your attention that many acts of terrorism attributed to the PKK have in fact been perpetrated by the Turkish security forces as part of their psychological warfare. The most recent highly publicised terrorist act was the bombing of a Kurd's bookshop in the Kurdish town of Semdinli by two Turkish security operatives in disguise under direct orders from a Turkish general. They were caught by the locals whilst trying to flee the scene. All pronouncements by the PKK leadership in recent years clearly show that all of its demands are compatible with a genuine democracy free from the domination of an ideologically driven gang of generals.

Considering all above information we strongly believe that PKK should be re-moved from terrorist list and both side of the conflict should be encouraged for political and nonviolent solution. This is the only way can bring stable and long-term peace to Turkey and the middle-east.

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