

***Final Declaration
of the International Conference for Solidarity with Political Prisoners***

The International Conference for Solidarity with Political Prisoners was held on 24-25 May 2008 with the participation of the delegates of 12 countries, among them Palestine, West Sahara, Denmark, Italy, Spain, India, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Turkey and Northern Kurdistan, France and Iran. Over 150 participants attended the conference.

The conference started with the speech of the European Committee of Solidarity with the Free Prisoners. The participants of the Conference were ADDAMEER from Palestine, Proletarian Solidarity Association (ASP) from Italy, AFAPREDESA from West Sahara (through a videoconference), Labour Party of Iran (Toufan) from Iran, Netherlands and Germany sections of the International Committee Against Disappearances, Manik Mukherjee in the name of SUCI, IAPSCC and AIAIF from India, Red Aid France, Commission for an International Red Aid from Switzerland, Red Aid Germany, Communist Party of France (Maoist), Istanbul Branch of the Human Rights Association from Turkey, Commission of the Families of Martyrs and Prisoners of the ESP (Socialist Platform of the Oppressed) from Turkey and Northern Kurdistan, AvEG-Kon (Confederation of the Oppressed Immigrants of Europe), Psychiatrist Dr. Jean-Claude Métraux from Switzerland, Pedagogue Umit Kosan from Germany, Kamil Agaoglu – Lawyer of the 10 September Prisoners from Turkey, International Initiative “Freedom for Abdullah Ocalan – Peace for Kurdistan” from Germany, International Forum from Denmark, Persian Dialog from Germany, Revolutionary Construction from Switzerland, Red Aid from Spain, Commission for an International Red Aid from Belgium, Federation of Immigrant Workers of Germany (AGIF), Federation of Immigrant Workers of Switzerland (IGIF), Cultural Association of the Immigrant Workers from Turkey (ACTIT) from France, Cultural Association of the Immigrant Workers (GIK-DER) from Great Britain, Collective of the Oppressed Immigrants from Belgium, Maoist Communist Party from Turkey and Northern Kurdistan. The participants presented papers on their field of work to the conference.

Hatice Toraman, whose son was disappeared by the state under police custody, ex-hunger strikers, who had joined the death fasts in 1996 and 2000 at the prisons of Turkey and Northern Kurdistan, and many ex-prisoners who were imprisoned for many years in the past, attended the conference.

The conference was greeted through messages sent by various supporter organisations that were not able to join the conference for different reasons. The prisoners who are accused for being members of MLCP from Turkey and Northern Kurdistan, Ahmad Saadat in the name of the Palestinian prisoners at Israeli prisons and also prisoners from Italy and Switzerland participated at the conference through their written messages.

The conference organised by the European Committee of Solidarity with Free Prisoners aimed at increasing the interest in the question of prisons and the problems of the prisoners all over the world; developing the consciousness of international solidarity with political prisoners and organising solidarity with them; strengthening the relations among the solidarity organisations; increasing the level of united struggle and activities in common among these organisations; organising simultaneous campaigns and different actions and activities and of acting in a manner coordinated on the international level. There have been important discussions in the conference with this purpose. The participating delegates discussed the experiences of their own countries, the problems of the prisoners and the tasks that are to be put forward. They stressed the international importance and meaning of defending the political prisoners and showing solidarity with them. Through these discussions, the conference has created an important energy and strengthened the participants.

Important proposals and ideas that were discussed in the conference are as follows:

- The question of prisons is not a local, regional or national but an international question.
- Prisons on Islands, deportation prisons, hidden CIA prisons located at aeroplanes are being established.
- The prisons are an area of the international class struggle.
- Even if the countries, cities and names of the prisons are different, the isolation policy implemented in different prisons is an international policy of the imperialists.
- The isolation policy is a part of the general attacks of imperialists against the working class and the oppressed peoples.
- The isolation policy is an issue of self-reconstruction concept of the imperialists.
- New isolation prisons are defined and lanced to the whole world as “high security prisons” by the ruling ones all over the world. These are symbolised in the prisons such as Stammheim, Meza, Evin, F Type, Guantanamo, Libertet, Nafa, Imrali.
- The question of prisons and the problems of the prisoners are not only a problem of those inside the prisons but more than that, of those outside the prisons. These problems are the tasks falling upon them. The struggle against isolation policy, repression and oppression in prisons should not refer only to the prisoners.
- The question of prisons and the problems of the prisoners should not be restricted with being problems of the relatives of prisoners.
- The prisoners all over the world have nearly the same problems. They are becoming more and more similar from day to day.
- These problems belong to the whole society, the workers and labourers.
- Besides of the political side, the prisons and the problems of being a prisoner consist also of family, health and juridical problems.
- Solidarity with the political prisoners is important. Therefore, solidarity should consist of political actions and not remain as a topic just spoken about.
- The interest and sensibility for the problems of prisons and prisoners must be dealt with on the international level.
- The problems of the political prisoners and their families are an important and special field of work within the struggle for socialism and freedom.
- It is important that special organisations for this specific and important field of work are created.
- Relations among the solidarity organisations in different countries should be strengthened.
- The establishment of international relations between these special organisations, their collaboration and the organisation of campaigns at the same time should be paid importance to. Therefore, it should be targeted to achieve the coordination on the international level.
- As a first step in this direction, an “Information Network” should be created.
- Creating a network intervening at emergent cases when there are attacks against the prisoners in each single country will make this struggle more powerful.
- The organisations that agree on this perspective may publish an international bulletin with a special period.
- Holding events and organising meetings such as the International Conference for Solidarity with Political Prisoners should be paid importance to. They serve to create perspectives by discussing the problems of collaboration and united struggle.
- Solidarity with political prisoners should be concrete and answer to calls for solidarity. It should consist of actions. These can increase the capacity of collaboration.

The conference condemns the attacks against the textile workers in Mahalla, Egypt and greets the hunger strike of the imprisoned workers as well as it supports their struggle.

The conference also declares its support for the general strike of the Peruvian workers and labourers on the 9th of June and the strike of the union Limter-Is at Tuzla Shipyards in Istanbul on the 16th of June. The conference calls for solidarity with these strikes and resistances.

The conference published a letter to the prisoners, who were imprisoned through the attacks of the reactionary, fascist regimes carried out against workers and labourers in various countries. In the letter, the resistance of the prisoners and their struggle was greeted and wishes for success were expressed.

The conference has been a stage, which united the voices and the forces of the free prisoners, their families and their comrades, growing the comradeship of international struggle.

Death fast strikers, international participants of the conference and all others joint a demonstration organised within the context of the International Weeks of Struggle against Forced Disappearance. The voice of the prisoners met with the struggle against the forces that are responsible for disappearance.

At the conference, Hatice Toraman, who had displayed an important support and struggle against forced disappearance, was handed over the “Award for the 13th Year in Struggle against Forced Disappearance” given to her in Istanbul in the context of the 17-31 May International Weeks of the Struggle against Forced Disappearance. The award was presented to her by another relative of a disappeared. Thus, the conference ended with enthusiastic standing ovations of the participants shouting international slogans.

European Committee for Solidarity with the Free Prisoners

25 May 2008, Cologne, Germany