

International Peace and Reconciliation Initiative Funding Proposal

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Peace and Reconciliation Initiative (IPRI) was launched at a press conference on Monday 3rd December 2012 at the Résidence Palace in Brussels following a call by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu for the resumption of dialogue between the Turkish Government and the incarcerated leader of leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan. The call was supported by a number of world leaders and Nobel Peace Prize laureates including:

- His Holiness Dalai Lama, Tibet
- President José Ramos-Horta, Former President of East Timor
- Mr Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin President, Ireland
- President Jimmy Carter, United States of America
- Mr Kjell Magne Bondevik, Former Prime Minister of Norway
- Mr Ingvar Carlsson, Former Prime Minister, Sweden
- Mr Paavo Lipponen, Former Prime Minister, Finland
- Mr Anker Jørgensen, Former Prime Minister, Denmark
- Mr Kjeld Olesen, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

The IPRI works for World peace with a focus on finding a lasting and durable peace in Turkey through the promotion of dialogue and negotiation, and seeks the engagement of the international community and international institutions to support, promote and encourage such processes in order to achieve peace and stability in Turkey, and in the wider Middle East region.

It established its initial objective to engage high-profile international figures to call for dialogue between the Turkish Government and Abdullah Öcalan, and place the issue on the international agenda and to promote a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish Question in Turkey.

The initiative now aims to establish a permanent Secretariat, which will monitor the peace process, and organise workshops, commission reports to inform policy makers and the public on developments of the Kurdish Question and make recommendations and submissions to international human rights mechanisms.

2. DESCRIPTION and CONTEXT of the PROJECT

The International Peace and Reconciliation Initiative (IPRI) was established in 2012 to work towards finding a lasting and durable peace in Turkey through a process of dialogue and negotiations between the Turkish Government and Abdullah Öcalan, representing the Kurdish people. It seeks the engagement of the international community and international institutions to support promote and encourage such process for the good of all the people of Turkey and the wider Middle East Region.

For many decades now, and particularly in the past 2 years, Kurds have been hindered by the Turkish state in their cultural, social and political expression, and Turkey has witnessed many violent clashes with military and civilian casualties. While there had seemed to be some gradual improvement in the recognition of the Kurds as a people, large-scale arrests of Kurdish politicians and activists still occur. There is a prohibition of Kurdish organizations in Turkey and across Europe, and the punishment of journalists and those who speak out.

Despite many attempts to bring attention to the situation by Kurds and their supporters worldwide and in Turkey, there has been minimal response from international governments and institutions to unacceptable human rights abuses and breaches of international law that have taken place, and the media and the public at large are lacking in reliable information and analysis of the complexities of the region.

In order to move forward in this seemingly intractable situation, new initiatives are needed that will gain the trust and respect of all parties, and will enable the dialogue that will bring democracy to Turkey and stability to the region not only to be kept alive, but to bear fruit. The international involvement should not be intrusive, but should be supportive. An initiative is needed to help elevate the Kurdish issue in Turkey and the wider Middle East region issue to an international agenda and to give the Kurds a chance to be heard.

The IPRI was launched to take forward the call, for the resumption of dialogue between the Turkish Government and the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, made by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and a number of world leaders and Nobel Peace Prize laureates including:

- His Holiness Dalai Lama, Tibet
- President José Ramos-Horta, Former President of East Timor
- Mr Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin President, Ireland
- President Jimmy Carter, United States of America
- Mr Kjell Magne Bondevik, Former Prime Minister of Norway
- Mr Ingvar Carlsson, Former Prime Minister, Sweden
- Mr Paavo Lipponen, Former Prime Minister, Finland
- Mr Anker Jørgensen, Former Prime Minister, Denmark
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The call came at a time when it became common knowledge that the Turkish state and Abdullah Öcalan were engaged in prolonged discussion to find a peaceful resolution to the Kurdish issue in Turkey. These discussions took place in August 2009 when Öcalan handed the Turkish authorities his *Road Map to Peace* for consideration.¹ In July 2011 the process of dialogue came to a halt and there followed a phase of violence, in which many were killed and injured both from members of the Turkish army and the PKK

Since the launch of the IPRI, talks between the Turkish Government and Öcalan have resumed. Unlike the previous occasions, this time the talks have the blessings of the Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan and have assumed an element of seriousness and urgency. In April 2013 the PKK agreed to a ceasefire and withdrew to Iraq. The ceasefire in Turkey is presently holding and peace talks continue between Abdullah Öcalan and the government. While many challenges have occurred threatening the fragile peace process it is supported by a wide-range of internal and external forces.

Internally, it is supported by the Turkish structures such as the ruling Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) loosely translated to the Justice and Development Party of Turkey as well as many of the opposition parties including; Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (BDP) loosely translated as the Peace and Democracy Party. Other parties such as the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), Republican Peoples Party (CHP) in principal welcome the peace process but with some reservation.

Importantly the process is also supported by the legitimate structures of the Kurdish people inside Turkey, viz; Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK) commonly known as the Kurdistan Workers' Party. The PKK was formed in 1978 by Abdullah Öcalan. The PKK has fought an armed struggle for an autonomous Kurdistan and for the cultural and political rights for the Kurds in Turkey. Abdullah Öcalan was captured on February 1999 and incarcerated for over 14 years the first ten of which was spent as the only prisoner on the Imrali Island in the Sea of Marmara. For many his participation in the Peace process remains vital.

Crucially too is the growing support for the dialogue and negotiation process from various legitimate non-governmental organisations, academics, professional bodies, the established media, and influential business -persons and activists.

Externally the process is supported of the Kurdish people of the Diaspora in Europe, America, Middle East and other parts of the world. It also has the support of the European Union, America, South Africa, Scandinavian countries, the United Nations and many other countries.

1. [*Abdullah Öcalan, The Road Map to Democratization of Turkey and Solution to the Kurdish Question. International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan – Peace in Kurdistan" 2011*](#)

3. PROJECT GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The IPRI is impartial, objective and independent; it aims to promote international peace and reconciliation; its immediate focus is on finding a lasting and durable peace in Turkey drawing from the South African experience and hoping to share lessons to contribute to the peace building effort in the Middle East in general

As a point of departure, it promotes and encourages this resumption of peaceful dialogue between the Turkish government and the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan. In this regard the objectives of the International Peace and Reconciliation Initiative (IPRI) are:

- to promote and facilitate a lasting and peaceful solution to the Kurdish Question in Turkey;
- to place the matter on the agenda of the international community by highlighting the key issues affecting the Kurdish people of Turkey in Particular and the Middle east in general;
- to keep open a political and social bridge that paves the way for genuine dialogue;
- to promote peace-building steps between the parties to the conflict and encourage compromise;
- to assist the parties in securing deadlocking mechanisms to break any impasse reached in the peace process;
- to inform the international community through periodic reports on developments in the peace process and make recommendations to international human rights mechanisms.
- to work, co-operate and collaborate with other organisations and institutions, whether local, national or international, with similar aims and objectives, values, principles and policies; and

The IPRI will be headed by a Secretariat, which will implement the objectives. It will, through periodic reports, inform Supporters, World Leaders, Nobel Prize Laureates, Policy- Makers and Members of the Public, of the developments in the peace process to find a lasting and permanent peace not only in Turkey but also in the Middle East as a whole.

4. IPRI STRUCTURE

The planned structure for IPRI is a non-profit organisation registered as trust in terms of the Trust and Properties Control Act 57 of 1988 of South Africa with a board of trustees. This board shall approve the programme of action and oversee the work of the Secretariat, which will be a permanent non-voting staffed structure comprising of 5 persons, one employed on a full time basis and four on a part time. The Secretariat is answerable and responsible to the board of trustees and will co-ordinate and

implement the programme of action in terms of the aims and objectives as approved by the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees shall comprise of no less than 5 persons who are independent and who have the necessary expertise with regard to resolution of political issues through dialogue and negotiations and/or conflict resolution.

The Board of Guardians shall comprise of those supporters with moral authority and political expertise who can serve as advisors to the Board of Directors and/or the Secretariat. They will not have any official or administrative functions and their serving on the Board of Guardians will be entirely voluntary.

5. TARGET GROUP of IRPI

The Turkish and Kurdish people and their representatives

World leaders

Policy makers

Media

Civil society groups

6. WORK DONE TO DATE

The International Peace and Reconciliation Initiative (IPRI) was launched at a press conference on Monday 3rd December 2012 at the Résidence Palace in Brussels with a joint call, led by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and supported by other leading international figures, for a *Resumption of Dialogue* between Turkey and the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, for a lasting and peaceful settlement of the Kurdish Question in Turkey.

An initial IPRI team arranged the press conference and coordinated the signing of Tutu's statement by a number of key figures in international affairs. The aims and objectives of the IPRI were announced at the launch, and since then policy-makers, the media and the signatories to the call have been kept informed of developments in relation to renewing dialogue between Turkey and Abdullah Öcalan.

Since the launch an interim secretariat has been established in Cape Town with the support of the Rafto Foundation in Norway. Ms Marcella Naidoo has been appointed acting coordinator. Ms Naidoo has previously worked for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), human rights organisations and within social work. She also has extended experience within organisation management. Judge Essa Moosa has agreed to assume the role of interim director on a voluntary basis. They are responsible to implement the objectives and fundraising for IPRI

7. PLANNED MEASURES

Having launched in December 2012 the IPRI is in the process of completing phase two and three of the strategy, which will run parallel to each other. These two stages will take place with some financial support from Rafto. The second stage includes preparing a trust deed, registering the trust, establishing a permanent Secretariat, putting in place a permanent board of directors and establishing board of Guardians and the third stage includes developing its program of activities together with a fundraising programme with the secretariat and advisors for the next 3 years. Once funding is secured the program will formally commence.

Stage 2

Registering a trust and establishing a permanent Secretariat

Marcella Naidoo has been appointed on a short term part time contract to Support Judge Essa Moosa to complete this step in stage 2. In addition the The IPRI has obtained the services of a lawyer on a pro - bono basis. The IPRI has prepared a trust deed and will shortly register the organisation in South Africa.

Setting up an office

The central office for the IPRI will be in Cape Town, South Africa, from where the activities and communications of the Initiative will be managed by one full time coordinator. This person will oversee the monitoring of the process keeping the IPRI Board informed, as well as liaising with media on the activities of the IPRI and will be assisted by a part-time assistant in the day to day running of the office.

Program Staff

To implement the program the IPRI will also employ 2 part-time researchers one based in Europe and the other in Turkey to monitor news reports and information in those regions, and provide informed analysis and reports to the coordinator in South Africa. It is envisaged that there will also be a person based in Europe to discuss the issue with organisations and lobby in the EU and US to support the IPR, and to follow press.

Stage 3 Program

Activity 1; Monitoring of the Peace Building and Dialogue Process

The **IPRI will monitor** the progress the peace and dialogue process from South Africa, Turkey and Europe, through a combination of research, media observation and liaison with relevant individuals (politicians, civil society representatives, academics, journalists, etc.) and organisations. This information will be collated, analysed and edited before being provided to the IPRI Board of Trustees and Board of Guardians. The IPRI Secretariat will provide a report every 3 months with additional International Peace and Reconciliation Initiative (IPRI) November 2013 (MN)

updates from time to time should urgent matters develop. These reports will be placed on a website which will be regularly updated by the secretariat.

Activity 2; Exposure to experiences of peaceful transitions in other countries

Drawing from observations made during the monitoring of the peace process the IPRI together with some of the key players will identify opportunities to bring together in conversation groups engaged in the peace process in Turkey, to explore concerns which might contribute to deadlock and consider the adoption of pre-emptive measures to avoid such deadlock.

These conversations will be designed to bring greater trust between such players so that they seek ways to create and maintain the climate needed for the peace process to succeed. The IPRI will draw on the experience of other countries such as South Africa, Ireland and South America to share of their experiences of creating the climate to create peace so that meaningful negotiations can take place. The process of developing a democratic and (civilian) constitution may well be an initiative, which could be informed by the experiences of the above-mentioned countries. It is envisaged that such conversations could take the form of workshops or retreats or mini conferences.

Initially a workshop will be held (1) to establish the issues, which threaten the peace process, and (2) to consider ways to address such threats. We anticipate that some actions will become the responsibility of the parties directly involved other issues emerging from workshop will be addressed through further research, exposure through workshops, conferences or field trips to other countries. Workshops in year two and three will be designed to take forward issues, which have been identified, in the initial workshop.

Activity 3 Mediation

This third element of the IPRI's activities is mediation, to be called into action if and when the need arises during the peace process in Turkey. The IPRI will identify the parties to be involved and mobilise its group of high-level leaders and experts including those who have experience with peace processes, conflict resolution and constitution building to encourage engagement in such mediation process. It is envisaged that the IPRI will partner with others to facilitate and fund particular initiatives

8. OUTCOMES and IMPACT ASSESSMENT

It is envisaged that the three forms of activity will encourage engagement in and protection of the peace process that is currently underway between the Turks and the Kurds. The IPRI will evaluate its outcomes through an external assessment toward the end of its second year of operation but the board of trustees will undertake an internal assessment after its first year of operation.

9. COSTS and FINANCING

Attached is a budget which details the expected expense over three years. It is envisaged that the IPRI will obtain its funding from a number of sources.

10. CONCLUSION

The Kurdish conflict in the Middle East stretches for almost a century, during which time the region has witnessed countless conflicts, wars, insurrections, insurgencies and struggle for the right to self-determination. Since 1982, more than 40 000 Turkish and Kurdish people have lost their lives with thousands injured and maimed, the current resumption of dialogue between the Turkish government and the PKK together with the and the commitment to the ceasefire and withdrawal into Iraq by the PKK gives cause to imagine peace in Turkey. Much work remains to be done for such imagined peace but it looks hopeful.

There is a duty on the political leaders of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples to find a peaceful political solution to their problem. The opportunity has presented itself and both parties should take advantage thereof. The international community should promote and encourage such settlement in the interest of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples in Turkey and in the broader interests of the all the people in the Middle East.

The International Peace and Reconciliation Initiative has been established at a critical time in the development of a solution to the Kurdish Question, and with its international network of support is a vital step bringing peace and stability not only to Turkey but to the Middle East as a whole. We hope that will lend its generous support of the Initiative to enable it to continue this important work. We would be glad to have the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the initiative in more detail.