

# Syrian Kurdish leader responds to Turkish dictator Erdogan's remarks on HDP members

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PYD leader Salih Muslim

LONDON (ANF) – Democratic Unity Party (PYD) Co-chair Saleh Moslem is in the United Kingdom for a series of meetings and he spoke at the Kurdish Community Center in London.

Moslem assessed the latest developments in Syria and the Middle East. He pointed out that the Turkish state's attacks in Cizre and Şırnak were no different from the attacks in Kobanê and said: "They couldn't even tolerate the tents Şırnak residents whose homes were demolished put up on the periphery of the city, and they burned those too. They want to 'cleanse' these lands. The events in Ottoman history are being repeated, in a way. Where do the Central Anatolian Kurds come from? These are all people forcibly pushed out of Kurdistan. It's all to assimilate these people. And the proposed camp in Maraş is a part of this plan as well. That is what bringing Sunni Arabs into a residential area that is wholly Alevi means."

**"A TOUGH FIGHT IS TO COME FOR KURDS"**

Moslem stated the following in the rest of his speech:

"We are a movement that fights a moral war, that is loyal to humanitarian values, that only wages a fight for freedom and democracy, we have no other goal. On the other corner is a terror such as ISIS and Al Nusra that the whole world fears. This is why all international powers are revising their plans. Kurds are stepping on to the stage of history once more, they are recognized at this level for the first time. For example, if we see such a level of international support on November 1 World Kobanê Day, this is valuable for us.

But this doesn't mean that the Kurds have made it. There is a tough fight to come for us. I don't mean this in a military sense, the military struggle continues daily in any case. We are building a system in Rojava now. Of course we want this system for all of the Middle East, not just for Rojava. We have been building our own democratic autonomy since 2012. But there are territories such as Manbij, Girê Spî and others that have joined us recently. Arab population is dense in these new areas. At this point, we must adapt our system. A democratic

system in which all peoples can live together. We define this system as federalism for now. A democratic federal system for all of Syria. But there are those who still don't want a system where the Kurds have a will. And they have no suggestions of their own. Syria won't go back to the old Syria, it's impossible. Everybody must see this.

The villages to the north of Al Bab are very important to us. Of course, Turkey is after implementing the safe zone plan that they have been talking about since the beginning. They want to change the demography. And on the other hand, they don't want their relationship with ISIS to end. So, they enter those lands with their tanks, artillery and jet fighters. They haven't reached Al Bab yet, and I don't believe they can. Our forces are 7-8 km away from Al Bab from the east. 10 km to the south of Al Bab are the regime forces. At this point, the Free Syrian Army is a lie. They are not an army, they are not free and they are not Syrian. The International Coalition has yet to reach a decision on this matter. The Turkish army wanted to advance, our forces stopped them. Of course the clashes weren't directly with the Turkish army, it was with forces they call FSA. Al Bab is still controlled by ISIS. And the Turkish state still has a relationship with ISIS. The forces fighting there are not the SDF, they are local forces, like Al Bab Military Council and Jabhat ul Akrad.

## ANSWER TO ERDOĞAN

When we look from Rojava, there is no difference between Erdoğan and Baghdadi. Whatever ISIS is doing in Syria, Erdoğan is doing the same in Northern Kurdistan. It is our responsibility to be in solidarity with the people of Northern Kurdistan, we must do this. Tayyip Erdoğan said about Demirtaş, 'Let YPG save you'. I would like to say this here: It is our duty to save them! The Turkish state forces us to say these things. Yes, we will fight until the end and achieve the freedom of Demirtaş and his colleagues."

## "YPG'S RETREAT FROM MANBIJ TURNED INTO A CRISIS"

PYD Co-chair Salih Muslim answered a question on YPG's retreat from Manbij: "YPG was formed for the interests and security of all the peoples of Kurdistan. When local forces form and reach a point where they can achieve their own security in places like Manbij, there is no more need for YPG to be there. Of course the matter turned into a crisis between Turkey and the US. The last ones were a 200 person force that stayed behind for military training, and they completed mission and retreated. So this was a crisis? Alright, we are retreating – and we are marching onwards to Raqqa. Nobody worry about Manbij, it is the land of Abu Leyla, there are heroes who will defend that land."