



Chomsky's (unintended) reply to Erdoğan

The President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has attacked a petition signed by over 1,200 academics criticising the ongoing police and military operations in many Kurdish towns ordered by the government. Among many things he also said he would like foreign academics to come to Turkey and see for themselves what was really happening. He specifically referred to Professor Noam Chomsky, renowned linguist and social critic, among those he wished to be invited for this purpose. This is what he said:

“I leave aside those who have signed the so-called academics’ petition. I invite foreign academics to Turkey. It will not do to sign a petition only. Come and see what is happening in the east and the southeast; we are ready to explain. Is it a violation of the law or is it the usurpation of the rights of the citizens by the terrorist organisation? Let them come and see. For instance, let the US ambassador invite Chomsky so that he receives a truthful report rather than the information provided by employees of the fifth column.”

It turns out that Professor Chomsky had signed another petition, this one circulated internationally, condemning the policies of the Turkish government vis-a-vis ISIS and regarding the Kurdish question, in particular the police and military operations that the other domestic petition also criticised. Chomsky had signed that petition before Erdoğan’s invitation, but the petition was made public after that invitation was extended to him. A strange coincidence thus led to an unintended duel of words between the Turkish president of the republic and the renowned linguist.

We present below the text of the petition signed by Chomsky and many other eminent academics, public intellectuals and political leaders from around the world and the full list of those who signed.

Stop aiding and abetting ISIS!
Stop repressing and killing the Kurds!

The Turkish government is pursuing a criminal policy in the Kurdish region of the country, in Syria and in the Middle East at large.

Despite pretensions to the contrary, all evidence suggests that it continues to aid and abet the murderous warlords of ISIS by permitting ISIS oil to be marketed via Turkey, allowing its own territory as a transit route for militants from all over the world to join the ranks of the organisation, providing safe haven and medical care when necessary to ISIS combatants, and supplying weapons to ISIS and an assortment of other sectarian-takfiri groups. If true, all this adds up to complicity with a political movement that poses a threat to the future of the peoples of the Middle East or, even, of the world at large.

Turkey is also conducting a vicious campaign of repression against its own Kurds whereas only until spring 2015 it was engaged in a process of negotiations with the multi-pronged Kurdish movement of that country. Since late July, many Kurdish cities have been under the siege of the Special Forces of the police and, lately, of tens of thousands of army troops, which, under conditions of the imposition of a round-the-clock curfew lasting a week, ten days or even longer each time, accompanied by power cuts and cessation of all communications possibilities, attack densely populated neighbourhoods, carry out search operations from house to house, and kill civilians ranging from infants to the elderly as well as some very young militants who have dug trenches in order to defend these neighbourhoods. Reports suggest that the situation is already tragic, with scores of casualties since the beginning of a new and stepped up campaign only several days ago. At this rate and given that there is even talk of this round of repressive action lasting up to one month, the figure of casualties may reach into the thousands.

All this needs to come to an end. The Turkish government is playing with fire. Its policies of aiding and abetting ISIS and of denial of the elementary rights of the Kurdish people not only on its own territory but also in so-called Rojava, i.e. Syrian Kurdistan, are unacceptable. There is ample evidence pointing to Turkish assistance under different forms to ISIS, ranging from satellite picture supported evidence provided by the Defence Ministry of the Russian Federation to repeated warnings and affirmations by different spokespersons of the US Administration although Turkey is a major ally and fellow NATO member.

We call on the Turkish government to stop all assistance to the murderous band called ISIS and to cease repressing and massacring its Kurdish citizens.

We recommend that an independent international commission of inquiry composed of noted intellectuals, jurists, and defenders of democratic rights be set up in order to investigate the allegations regarding the practice of the Turkish government in these areas.

Name	Affiliation
Noam Chomsky,	Professor, MIT, Cambridge, MA, USA
Michael Löwy,	Professor Emeritus , CNRS, France
Tariq Ali,	Editor, New Left Review, London, UK
Bertell Ollman,	Professor of Political Science, New York University, NYC, US
Prabhat Patnaik,	Professor Emeritus, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India
Nestor Pitrola,	Member of Parliament, Frente de Izquierda y de los Trabajadores, Argentina
Robert Brenner,	History Department, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA., USA
Nancy Holmstrom,	Professor Emerita, Rutgers University, USA
Aijaz Ahmad,	Professor Comparative Literature & Critical Theory, University of California, Irvine, USA
Michael Lebowitz,	Professor Emeritus of Economics, Simon Fraser University, Canada
Greg Albo,	York University, Canada
Joan Cocks,	Mount Holyoke College, USA
Suzi Weismann,	Politics Department, St. Mary's College, Moraga, CA., USA
Fred Moseley,	Department of Economics, Mount Holyoke College, MA, USA
Eleni Varikas,	Professor Emeritus, University Paris VIII, France
Guglielmo Carchedi,	University of Amsterdam (Retired), Holland
Raquel Varela,	Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
David Laibman,	Editor, Science and Society, Brooklyn, NY, USA
Jorge Altamira,	Partido Obrero, Argentina
Savas Michael-Matsas,	General Secretary of the EEK, on behalf of the EEK, Greece
Katerina Matsa,	psychiatrist, on behalf of the self-organized free social medical services in Nea Smyrni and Aharnon- Kato Patissia, Athens, Greece
Dimtris Dessylas,	former member of the European Parliament
Pantelis Vainas,	member of the Executive Committee of ADEDY(National Federation of Civil Servants)
Iosif Abramson,	the member of Executive Committee of RPK (Russian Party of Communists), the co-chairman of AMO (Association of Marxist Units) St.Petersburg Department, Dr. of Techn. Sci., Russian Federation

Soledad Sosa, Member of Parliament, Frente de Izquierda y de los Tarabajadores, Argentina

Pablo Lopez, Member of Parliament, Frente de Izquierda y de los Tarabajadores, Argentina

Vijay Prashad, Trinity College, Hartford, Conn, USA

Ewa Groszewska, Socialist Agreement, Poland

Gerassimos Makris, Professor of Social Anthropology, Panteion University, Athens, Greece

August Nimtz, Professor of Political Science and African American and African Studies,
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, US

Mindi Schneider, Assistant Professor, International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus
University Rotterdam

Oswaldo Coggiola, Professor of History, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Tatiana I. Filimonova, Association of Marxist Organizations(AMO), St peetrsburg, Russian
Federation

Piotr Lewandowski, Socialist Agreement, Poland

Monika Karbowska, Social Forum of Central-Eastern Europe, Poland

Doug Henwood, Left Business Observer, New York, NY, USA

Neil Faulkner FSA, Research Fellow, University of Bristol, UK

Betto della Santa, Postdoctoral Researcher and Fellow Lecturer at the Fluminense Federal
University, Campus Niteroi, Brazil

Michael Letwin, Co-founder of Labor for Palestine, New York, USA

Joel Andreas, Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins University, Department of Sociology, USA

Alvaro Augusto Comin, Professor, University of Sao Paulo, Department of Sociology, Brazil

Theodoros Koutsoumbos, editor of the newspaper NEA PROOPTIKI, Greece

Yannis Aggelis, elected member of the leadership of the Union of Journalists (ESHEA),
Athens , Greece

Nikos Pelekoudas, trade unionist, Special Education, Greece

Nikos Tziris, secretary of the youth organization OEN, Greece

Kostas Apostolopoulos, Balkan Information Bulletin, Greece

Sotiris Papadimitriou, member of the leadership of the Union of Workers in Alliminum
HELLAS, Aspra Spitia, Greece.

Despina Koutsoumba, Regional Councillor fo the Regional Local Government of Attica

Maria Benetou, member of the Popular Assembly of Aghia Pareaskevi-Athens

Afroditi Tziatzi, journalist, Efimerida twn Syntaktwn(Efsyn)

Ioanna Kurtovic, lawyer

Kostas Papadakis, lawyer, former member of the Executive Committee of the Lawyers Association of Athens (DSA)

Konstantina Gouliou, Chairperson of the Diagoras Union of disabled persons.

Alessandra Mecozzi, President of the Association Cultura è Libertà (Culture is freedom), Italy

Francesca Koch, International House of Women, Rome, Italy

Alessandro Portelli, Sapienza University, Rome, Italy

Teresa Lapis, Democratic Jurists, Italy

Sue George, Pisa University (Retired), Italy

Effiong L. Ntuk, Lawyer, Turin, Italy

Barbara Spinelli, Lawyer, Member of Euripean Parliament, Italy

Robert Sabata Gripekoven Lawyer, Barcelona, Spain

Stefano Mannironi, Arci-Nuoro, Italy

Mario Angelelli, Lawyer, Rome, Italy

Arturo Salerni, Lawyer, Rome, Italy

Maurizio Acerbo, Secretary Partito Rifondazione Comunista Italy

Giorgio Barbarini, Professor Medical faculty Pavia University, Italy

Fabio de Nardis, Sapienza University of Rome, Associate Professor of Political Sociology, Italy

Raul Mordenti, University of Rome 'Tor Vergata', Italy

Paolo Ferrero-National Secretary of Partito della Rifondazione Comunista, Italy

Maria Grazia Campari, Lawyer, Firenze, Italy

Antonio Caputo, Chair of Movimento d'Azione Giustizia, Italy

Maria Immacolata Macioti, Former Ordinary Professor, Sapienza University Roma, Italy

Gérard Lutte, Professor. Emeritus, University "La Sapienza" di Roma, Italy

Collectivities

Associazione Senza Paura, Genoa, Italy

Centro Sociale intifada, Empoli, Italy

Associazione Azad, Italy

Associazione Verso il Kurdistan, Alessandria, Italy

Confederazione Cobas, Italy

Cooperazione Rebelde Napoli, Italy

Associazione Jambo, Parma, Italy

Associazione Senza Confine, Roma, Italy

Circolo Libertario Emiliano Zapata di Pordenone, Italy

Associazione Trama di Terre/Centro Interculturale delle donne, Italy

Associazione Alkemia Lab.Multimediali, Modena, Italy

Ciac-Parma, Italy

Donne in Nero, Italy

Movimento d'Azione Giustizia e Liberta, Italy

CSAO Cartella, Reggio Calabria, Italy

CSC Nuvola Rossa, Villa S. Giovanni, Italy

Cobas Confederation, Bologna, Italy

Cobas Confederation, Empoli Valdelsa, Italy

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Comunità in Resistenza/Csa Intifada, Italy