

**Conference of the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP)  
(09/17/2011)**

**The national uprising in Syria and future prospects for the Kurds**

**Final resolution**

The world-wide news coverage has focused on the situation in the Arabic States for months. The governments of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya have been overthrown or chose to resign. In mid-March 2011, the wave of protests reached Syria and the authorities reacted with extreme harshness to the largely peaceful demonstrations: At least 2200 protesters were killed and nearly 20.000 wounded since then. More than 20.000 opposition activists were arrested and around 11.000 Syrian citizens have fled – some of them under fire – across the border to Turkey and Lebanon.

Not only the opposition, but also members of religious and ethnic minorities in Syria have become victims of state oppression and persecution. The country has about 20.4 million inhabitants, the vast majority of them being Arabs. The Kurds, second largest ethnic group, make up at least ten to fifteen percent of the population with two to three million people. There are smaller communities such as the Armenians, Assyrian-Aramaic, Turkmen and Circassians. Religious communities represented in Syria are the Sunni Muslims, Christians, Alawite, Ismaili Muslims, Yazidis, Imami, Bahai, Druze and Jews.

All non-Arab peoples and religious minorities in Syria have been suppressed for decades. The ethnic groups don't have any legitimate political representation. In effect, their political parties are prohibited, for the Syrian constitution does not allow any ethnic and religious political parties.

The representatives of the Syrian-Kurdish organizations and representatives of the Syrian Kurds in Germany – who met in Göttingen on 17<sup>th</sup> of September, 2011 following an invitation by the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) – state the following:

**They plenary support the democratic movement in Syria and find the position of the Kurdish national movement in Syria to be appropriate to the situation in the country. The Syrian Kurds call for an internationally observed peaceful and democratic change in their country.**

They call on the Syrian government:

Gesellschaft für  
bedrohte Völker (GfbV)

Associazione per i popoli  
minacciati

Société pour les peuples  
menacés

Asociación para los  
Pueblos Amenazados

Общество защиты  
угнетенных народов

Društvo za ugrozene narode

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DZI Spenden-Siegel:  
Geprüft+Empfohlen

- 1. to immediately put an end to violence against peaceful protesters and to allow peaceful demonstrations. Freedom of opinions and freedom of the press must be guaranteed. The army is to be sent back to the barracks.**
- 2. to implement the Act of April 2011, to revoke the state of emergency which is in force since 1963, to abolish all special courts and special laws and to release all political prisoners.**
- 3. to put an end to all measures of discrimination and any secret arrangements about the Kurds, to naturalize the approximately 300.000 registered (adschanib) and unregistered stateless Kurds (maktumin) as announced in March 2011 and furthermore to stop neglecting Kurdish regions and to treat them equally to other regions.**
- 4. to host a national conference to draft a new constitution, which is to be submitted to the Syrian population for approval. It must guarantee national rights for the Kurdish people and adjudge the cultural rights of ethnic and religious minorities such as the Assyrians-Syrians, Armenians, Druze, Ismaili Muslims, Bahais and other minorities. The Kurdish community of the Yezidi religion must be recognized as a distinct religious community.**
- 5. that the new Syrian constitution and prospective laws must include and ensure equal rights for women.**

They call on the German Federal Government and other EU states:

- 1. to tighten the sanctions against the regime in Damascus. This also means that all oil imports from Syria into the EU must be stopped immediately and completely, and that the Syrian ambassadors must be extradited by all EU countries. Any economic or political cooperation with the existing regime must be stopped.**
- 2. to terminate the readmission agreement met between Berlin and Damascus in 2008.**
- 3. that Syrian bank deposits that are frozen in EU countries should partly be granted to relatives of the victims of the Assad regime and the families of the injured. There must also be a fund to support the Syrian opposition.**
- 4. that the German Federal Government, the EU governments and the United States are not to meet any agreements with Turkey and the Syrian Arab opposition that might endanger the democratic rights of all Syrians – the Kurds in particular. The "Syrian matter" may not be left to Turkey. In the region, Turkey is seen as a "Sunni protecting power" and can therefore not act as a mediator. In addition, the Turkish policy towards Kurds and Christians is often hostile.**
- 5. to keep up all sanctions until it is assured that the regime credibly**

**stops violence against the democratic opposition and permits democratic change.**

**6. that the German Federal Government, the EU governments and the United States should publicly debate about the political system in Syria's near future. Only a democratic pluralist and secular system in Syria can be supported. Support for any government in Syria must be linked to guaranteed linguistic, cultural and administrative rights of the Kurdish people, the Assyrian-Aramaic and other minorities. Christians, Yezidis, Alevis and Druze must be granted full freedom of religious belief.**