



Freedom for Ocalan UK Trade Union Campaign
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London, WC1X 8TN

30th January 2026

The Rt Hon Keir Starmer MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
London, SW1A 2AA.

Dear Prime Minister,

We are gravely concerned about the recent developments in Syria and the attacks on the Kurdish led SDF by forces of the Syrian Transitional Government acting alongside jihadi militias. Of particular concern are credible reports that ISIS prisoners have been released during these assaults, raising the clear and present danger of an ISIS resurgence.

The UK and wider international community owe a huge debt to the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) who played a decisive role in the defeat of ISIS. At immense human cost, they stood on the front line against one of the most brutal forces of our time, defending not only their own communities but humanity as a whole. Thousands gave their lives in that struggle, a sacrifice that must never be forgotten or betrayed.

These developments point to an explicit intention to dismantle the democratic institutions established by the Autonomous Administration of North East Syria (Rojava) and exact violent revenge — especially against women fighters of the YPJ whose leadership and liberation struggle ISIS and other reactionary forces have long sought to destroy. The targeting of women who symbolise emancipation and equality underscores the misogynistic nature of these attacks.

The military aggression, violence and violations of international law by Jolani's HTS forces and jihadi militias, and the abandonment of Rojava by the international community, risks undoing hard-won gains and plunging the area back into chaos with devastating consequences for civilians across Syria and beyond.

As trade unionists committed to peace, democracy, women's rights, and international solidarity, we call on you to:



- Publicly condemn the recent attacks on the SDF and allied forces
- Oppose any UK cooperation with forces aligned with jihadi militias
- Act to prevent the release and regrouping of ISIS fighters
- Support the protection of Rojava and its autonomous democratic institutions
- Press for the inclusion of Rojava's representatives in any political settlement on Syria
- Ensure humanitarian aid and reconstruction support reaches the region without obstruction

The labour movement has always stood with those struggling for democracy, equality, and freedom from oppression. We urge you to honour that tradition and ensure the UK plays a principled and active role in defending the people of Rojava and the values they represent.

We look forward to your response and to meaningful action in solidarity with the Kurdish people.

Yours faithfully,

Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF)

Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU)

Commercial Workers Union (CWU)

Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

GMB union

National Education Union (NEU)

Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)

Social Workers Union (SWU)

University and College Union (UCU)