

STOP THE DANGEROUS DEAL!

The German Prime Minister Angela Merkel is coming to Turkey on Sunday in order to negotiate with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the President of Turkey. What is on the table is a deal that is as opportunistic as it is dangerous: if Turkey accepts to keep within its borders the Syrian refugees already on its soil (numbering around 2 million) as well as those that are to come, Prime Minister Merkel allegedly agrees to facilitate Turkey's entrance into the European Union, consider a visa exemption for Turkish citizens traveling to Europe, and donate 3 billion Euros to Turkey for its expenses on these refugees as a proof of the good will of the EU. This deal, approved also by the German Right, is unbelievable on all levels. First of all, did anybody ask Syrians for their opinion? The conditions in Turkey are appalling for Syrian refugees. President Erdoğan has also stated over and over again that he has the intention to settle these refugees in a buffer zone on the Syrian border. What this visit means in the short term is a European seal of approval for this project, which entails both even more unlivable conditions for refugees and a clear attack by Turkey on the people of Syrian Kurdistan (Rojava).

Moreover, it is clear that this visit, especially in this period right before the election in Turkey, shall function as significant support for the election campaign of the AKP, since President Erdoğan makes no effort to hide his relationship with this party and retain the impartiality his position requires. This view has been expressed in the Bundestag by both the Left Party and the Greens.

This support for AKP's electoral campaign comes in a period in which this party has greatly damaged the prospect of peace both in Turkey and in the Middle East in general. It has been a mere week since the Ankara bombings. We women were witness to this massacre. It has been a mere week since the police in Turkey attacked people trying to carry those wounded in these bombings to hospitals, using bullets, tear gas and pressurized water. Right after this, the Minister of the Interior had the nerve to claim that "there is no weakness regarding security." The Minister of Justice was able to laugh upon hearing the question of whether the Minister of the Interior would resign. The Prime Minister saw no problem in stating that they have a list of all potential suicide bombers, but could not intervene until the attack had been carried out since the crime was not yet committed. The President, with whom Prime Minister Merkel shall meet, declared that "resignation is not an appropriate mechanism in each and every single incident." This, after one of the most bloody incidents in the history of the country... And this is not all. In Turkey, the State is currently waging war on all societal groups that are demanding and working towards peace. Countless civilians have been imprisoned or deliberately killed by state security forces especially in the Kurdish region since the end of the cease-fire, and many war crimes have been committed. These have all been documented by human rights organizations.

Does the European Union, then, suddenly consider all of these acts acceptable and decide that Turkey has become more fitting of its criteria in exchange for keeping Syrian refugees away? When so many people in Turkey see at least some responsibility for the massacre that took place in Ankara in those that govern us due, for one, to their leniency towards ISIS, we ask Prime Minister Merkel not to award them money and legitimacy in return for keeping this refugee crisis 'under control'. We call upon women's organizations in Germany and the international public at large to prevent this deal. We know that this a real solution neither for the plight of refugees, nor the problems in Europe or Turkey. All this does is imprison Syrian refugees within the borders of Turkey while condoning all kinds of rights violations on all levels within this country.

All of our lives and our hopes to live in peace should be worth more than this. It is nothing short of an obligation for all of us women to react immediately to this deal, because a deal of this sort is dangerous for the future of the Middle East, Europe, and in longer term, the future of the entire world.

Women's Initiative for Peace - Turkey

#StopTheDangerousDeal
#StopMerkelErdoğanDeal