

Mr Saleh Muslim's Speech at the Socialist International Meeting - Geneva

01/07/2016

President of the Socialist International, representatives of political parties and organisations, members of the Socialist International, distinguished Guests,

Greetings from our people, the brave freedom fighters of Kobani and Munbaj in Rojava. I am honoured and humbled to stand before you again, but this time as a representative of a party which is now a member of the Socialist International to continue the democratic struggle that we have started since the establishment of our party in 2003 and to defend noble human values around the world.

Dear Comrades,

The Socialist International was founded during the Cold War as a "third approach" for the defence of democracy and human values in a bipolar world which was dominated by two conflicting ideologies - one clung to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the other clung to the dictatorship of capital. The socio-political developments of the previous century proved the validity and rightness of the "third approach" which has become a reality by the end of the 20th century. In the light of globalisation, international norms and concepts were changed. Neither the proletariat was able to preserve its previous meaning, and nor, capitalism remained as it was - embodied in one state or one camp. Humanity found itself before an ambiguous phenomenon, i.e. global capital, with new and innovative tools. Under these circumstances, the Socialist International, which we believe in its values and adhere to its principles, is bound to adopt innovative tools and means to maintain its continuity as a defender of its values that will achieve human happiness and welfare.

Here, I do not want to address our struggle in Rojava against terrorism, which has become a threat to the whole world. Because I am confident that you are following the news through the media, which has made the world a small village. I also do not want to explain the bravery and heroism of Kurdish people, like *Arin Mirkan*, *Abou Layla* and their colleagues, who believed in and sacrificed their lives for the principles of the Socialist International. They have become a symbol of bravery and sacrifice for the Kurds and the Socialist International.

My comrades in struggle,

We in Rojava have adopted the principles of social democracy, and grass-roots democracy, which is relying on the people in almost everything, giving the general public the ultimate decision-making and executive authorities. The successes and achievements that you are witnessing today are the result of this approach, which represents the essence of the Socialist International. We did not limit ourselves to the theory behind this approach, but we applied it on the ground through an organised society. We have put forward the democratic federal formula as a solution to the Syrian crisis, to which all world powers have been unable to find a suitable solution.

The "democratic nation" formula, which we are trying to implement means the freedom of an organised society, within which all social components are free to express themselves and their aspirations. For example, educational institutions in the Rojava Democratic Self-Administration allow Arabs, Kurds and Syrians to study in their respective languages. This, in turn, allows peoples to preserve their cultural heritage through organised institutions. In addition, faith groups in Rojava enjoys their freedom of association and worship. Muslims, Christians, Yazidis, Alawites and Druze are free to practice their religious rituals within the secular principles of the Socialist International.

Furthermore, women have become a real partner in the decision-making without any gender discrimination (the quota for female representation in government institutions and organisations is currently 40%). All Rojava institutions follow the co-presidency system of leadership, with one chairman and one chairwoman. Moreover, child marriage and forced marriage, dowry and polygamy have all been banned. Honour killings, violence and discrimination against women have been criminalised and a woman has a right to equal inheritance. Marriage contracts are now issued in civil courts.

There is no doubt that what has been achieved thus far is the result of our adherence to the principles of the Socialist International that each one of you has the right to be proud of. However, we need your solidarity, support and cooperation to progress further. We are prepared to hold bilateral and group meetings to inform our comrades about what we have achieved and what we intend to do in our region and the Middle East.

Finally, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk to you, wishing you all success in your struggle for the defence of human values, justice and democracy.

Saleh Muslim
PYD Co-President

Geneva, 01/07/2016