



Closing Statement

6th SDFAW conference

Sulaymaniyah - Iraq - December 11, 2016

The member parties of the Social Democratic Forum in the Arab World (SDFAW), hosted by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Party (PUK) in partnership with the Party of European Socialists (PES), held their sixth meeting in Sulaymaniyah/Iraq on December 11 and 12, in accordance with the Beirut Declaration of October 30th 2015.

Discussions were focused on the current political situation in the region, the future of social democratic parties in the Arab world, and on the status of women and that of the refugees in the Arab World which have led to the following:

The SDFAW supports the struggle of the Palestinian people and their resistance to eliminate the occupation and end racial discrimination and the Israeli apartheid as to establish their independent democratic Palestinian democracy with Jerusalem as its capital. We call on all parties and countries to boycott Israel, impose sanctions and withdraw its investments to deter it, terminate the occupation, colonization, and system of racial discrimination, and to release all prisoners in Israeli jails. The SDFAW supports the efforts to end the internal division, to achieve national reconciliation, and to restore internal democracy by holding the presidential, legislative, local, and the Palestinian National Council elections.

The SDFAW values the efforts of the Peshmerga forces in Kurdistan; the PUK was among the first to confront the Salafi jihadists. We also appreciate the role of the Iraqi army troops in their war against Daesh over the past two years, which culminated lately in the success of their campaign to liberate Mosul. We support their decision to face war solely and not to call on external forces. The SDFAW offers sincere tribute to the souls of the martyrs and appreciates receiving more than a million and half of displaced people and refugees in Kurdistan, in spite of the financial crisis and war.

SDFAW expresses its concern about the challenges Jordan is facing from the ongoing events in Syria and Iraq and for receiving refugees. Thus putting pressure on the Jordanian infrastructure and economy which is already suffering repeated crises, indebtedness, high unemployment rate, and scarce water supply in the absence of the promises of international community's commitment and donors to support Jordan.

Regarding political and democratic reform, although some legislations governing the political sphere have been approved and a recent election by the proportional list took place, there is still need to work on the legislative, political, and social spheres. We hope

that this can lead to the formation of governments in agreement with the parliamentary majority and peaceful transfer of power.

SDFAW emphasizes the importance of embarking on a detente in the security and political process and starting an inclusive dialogue in Bahrain to resolve the constitutional and political crisis and its implications. We look forward to achieving comprehensive reform that would act as a solid starting point for political action necessary for enforcing social stability and civil peace.

SDFAW also appreciates the remarkable progress of the course of transitional justice in Tunisia, which recently launched the public hearing sessions for the victims of the despotism. We hope that this will continue according to international standards of transitional justice and will lead to genuine national reconciliation. SDFAW members also express their relief for the remarkable improvement of the security situation. We call on our sister parties to support Tunisia to improve its economy as to achieve the social objectives of the revolution and start a new phase of sustained stability and progress. SDFAW members are eager to observe the pioneering transitional path working on effective decentralization, the local democracy that is capable of dealing with the citizens' demands and empowering the constitutional bodies guarantor of respect for the constitution.

In the Syrian affairs, it is clear that there is no military solution to the Syrian tragedy that has turned into a regional and international conflict. The solution requires the resumption of the political process, which began with the statement of the Geneva 1 for the year 2012 and the related Security Council resolutions in particular resolution 2254 for the year 2015 to achieve a genuinely democratic system for the realization of the rights of the various parties.

SDFAW looks positively and with optimism to the election of a new President of the Lebanese Republic, and hopes that the Lebanese political forces will move forward to facilitate the political process in Lebanon and form a government that works on the socially, economically, and security pressing files. It is of utmost importance to stay impartial from the surrounding raging crisis to ensure the stability of the state as to provide the necessary means necessary to deal with the burden of the refugees and its implications. The timely parliamentary election is required for the progression of the democratic process.

SDFAW also supports the efforts of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party in the face of economic policies that lead to the impoverishment of the vast majority of the Egyptian People. We also support the efforts of the party in the face of anti-democratic laws and practices that are targeting the unions and the civil society. The Forum praises the efforts of the ESDP in building a wider coalition aiming for a modern civil democratic state.

The SDFAW supports the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to find a peaceful political solution to the conflict in the Moroccan Sahara, and consider that the Moroccan proposal for granting the autonomy of the southern provinces under Moroccan sovereignty can be a credible starting point to resolve this conflict

As for the Yemeni situation, the Forum confirms its stance against the coup led by the armed militias in Yemen. It condemns the bombing of civilians most notably children, women, and the elderly. We also condemn the imposition of a deadly siege of the city for more than one year and a half, the most prominent city Tuez where all aid including

water, medicines, food and even international humanitarian aid have prevented from reaching its citizens.

Accordingly, the SDFAW calls for the need to find a political solution to the crisis in Yemen through peaceful dialogue based on the three authorities recognized locally and regionally and internationally represented in Gulf initiative, the comprehensive national dialogue outputs, and the relevant international resolutions, in particular, the UN Security Council Resolution 2216. The Forum demands the quick release of the detained journalists, politicians, and trade unionists abducted by the militias.

Forum condemns the terrorist bombing that occurred this morning at St. Peter Church in Cairo, which targeted innocent citizens during the exit from the Mass. We mourn, with great sadness, the victims of terrorism and extremism.

The SDFAW declares its support for the civil disobedience announced by our brethren in the Sudan. In addition to the monopoly of power for 27 years, the Sudanese regime insists on the use of the ugliest means of repression in the face of civil disobedience. Staff, students, and traders are still resisting in spite of the oppression.

The regression of the Sudanese regime is an indication that the peaceful resistance showed it is more efficient than the policy of violence and bloodshed. In this matter, we cannot ignore the crucial role played by the Sudanese women in the success of the disobedience.

Forum calls on the Turkish government for the immediate release of detainees of the HDP and demands the commitment to the principles of democracy. The SDFAW declares its solidarity with the party's struggle against tyranny and repression of freedoms.

The Forum welcomes Kurdistan Social Democratic Party as a member of the Forum.

The SDFAW appreciates the invaluable support of our European sister parties and organizations represented by the Party of European Socialists (PES) and their positive interest in the current conditions that prevail in the region.