



ON THE PATH TO PEACE RESPECT PRISONERS RIGHTS

March 25, 2013

On October 17th, 2011, the International Conference for the Resolution of the Conflict in the Basque Country took place in Donostia-San Sebastian. The great majority of Basque socio-political agents took part in it, as well as a wide and relevant international representation headed by the former Secretary General of the UN, Mr. Kofi Annan. As an outcome of the conference, the so-called Declaration of Aiete was presented, the declaration was named after the site in which the conference took place. In the Declaration of Aiete, international agents proposed a process of dialogue and negotiation, prior declaration of a definitive cessation of armed activity on the part of ETA. ETA's declaration came a few days later, creating a unique and historic opportunity to address the causes as well as the consequences of the conflict.

This new scenario, reinforced after over twelve months since ETA's definitive cessation of armed activity, however requires new steps to go on towards a political solution to the conflict. It is time to put an end to the exceptional measures put in place until now. These measures have not only become useless but also counterproductive. The cessation of armed activity must be responded with political measures to create the conditions for achieving a just and lasting peace.

For all those reasons the signatories and promoters of this International Initiative demand from the Spanish and French authorities the following initial measures to consolidate the peace process:

- The end of the policy of dispersion, arbitrary measure applied to Basque prisoners and their transfer to prisons close to their families.
- The release of prisoners to whom the Spanish courts apply the Doctrine 197/2006 (also called "Parot Doctrine"); as well as the release of those prisoners who can be eligible for parole..
- The immediate release of seriously ill prisoners who according to current legislation should be set free in order to receive adequate treatment for their illnesses.
- The immediate release of Arnaldo Otegi and all the imprisoned for their mere opinion or political activity, developed in political parties, youth organizations, and social movements or in the media. The dismissal of the processes related to this issues, as well as, the removal of all the European arrest warrants that may have been issued for actions of the same type.

What should prevail today is the construction of a political space for dialogue and not the resort to the use of police's and justice's usual measures.

It is time to build peace, it is time to build a future based on human rights, justice, truth and reparation for all those who have suffered throughout the conflict.

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Bill Bowring

Marjorie Cohn

Piedad Esneda Cordoba Ruiz

Padre Alberto Franco

Javier Giraldo Moreno

Peter Madden

Nelly Maes

George Mavrikos

Nora Morales de Cortiñas

Essa Moosa

Alexander Moumbaris

Michael Tubiana

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