

**Meetings and presentations, Thursday 17 September 2015,  
Parliament House, Canberra.**

- 9.30 am Richard di Natale, Leader of the Greens, and Hayley Conway  
10.15 am Bronwyn Taylor, Chief of Staff for Tanya Plibersek &  
Mike Kelly, Senior Advisor to Bill Shorten  
11.00 am Luke Simpkins, David Feeney & Laurie Ferguson re  
Australian Kurdish Parliamentary Friendship Group (AKPFG)  
12.30 pm AKA speaks with Public Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security  
1.00 pm KLA speaks with PJCS  
3.30 pm Murray Hansen, Chief of Staff for Julie Bishop and Steven Yates,  
Departmental Liaison Officer

**In attendance:**

**Kurdish Lobby Australia (KLA):** Zirian Fatah, Dr. Gina Lennox and Darya Fatah, who took the minutes.

**Australian Kurdish Association (AKA):** Brusk Aeiveri, Kenan Bircan, Mahmut Kahraman Deniz Ozer, Ismet Tastan. Note: Sulyman Tarim was not allowed into meetings because he had no photograph ID.

**Agenda**

Ceasefire, Peace Process, and snap election in Turkey; Delisting PKK; Syria.

**9:30am Richard Di Natale**

**AKA:** Rojava: Peace Process; Ocalan; Joint declaration in February 2015; 7 June election and HDP votes; snap election 1 November; stressed that it was critical that a ceasefire is implemented to begin peace process.

**RDN:** Is the United States putting pressure on Turkey? Australia has been gutless. Australia can push harder if America is doing something.

**GL KLA:** Australia can play a key role because of the good ties it has with Turkey. Both the Turkish state and PKK need pressure and enticement. There was 1 week when Turkey did not attack PKK in Iraqi Kurdistan - US could have put pressure on Turkey.

**RDN:** Calling for an immediate ceasefire is a priority. PKK listing: tell me more. Is there any movement from the AUS office to delist PKK?

**AKA:** Due to the listing of PKK as a terrorist organisation, Turkey is refusing to speak to PKK, which is hindering the peace process. PKK being listed impacts the reputation of Kurdish politicians (HDP). Delisting PKK could help the peace process. Germany is stepping up and recognizing humanitarian needs.

**ZF:** Turkey has a shocking record of Human Rights.

**RDN:** What can I do?

**GL – KLA:** Understand what is happening. Push for the delisting of PKK, a ceasefire and monitors for the peace process. In Syria – have everyone focus on defeating ISIS. Let Russia put pressure on Assad not to target opposition groups and have US support secular opposition groups against ISIS and support multi-ethnic local administrations, rebuild infrastructure and establish corridors for humanitarian aid and trade.

**RDN Action:** I will speak to Tanya Plibersek. If Labor needs support we will support them. I will bring up the issues with the Foreign Minister. We had a meeting yesterday about Syria – spoke to many academics and basically they were saying what you are saying.

**Gina Action:** Send RDN KLA Submission to Intelligence Committee, report on supporting a functioning federation in Iraq and ask if he is interested in joining the Parliamentary Friendship Group.

**10:15 am      Mike Kelly and Bronwyn Taylor**

**KLA:** PKK 10-point Plan – no response from the government of Turkey. Australian government needs to push for ceasefire before 1 November elections, delist PKK as terrorist organization and garner international support for peace process. Must stop civil war before elections. Labor would have support from Richard Di Natale.

**MK + Bronwyn:** Elections need monitoring.

**AKA Denis:** HDP gained 80 seats in parliament and passed the 10% threshold. Need international pressure to stop the blockades of Kurdish towns and a support a democratic election. Australian government should condemn the human catastrophe. PKK are not targeting civilians. Turkish security forces are. Australia could be a potential mediator via UN. Good diplomatic ties with Turkey could help peace process.

**MK:** We are aware of what is happening between the Turks and Kurds and we intend to raise Human Rights issues in any dialogue with Turkey – to advance the peace process. The instability and politics is getting worse in Turkey.

**Bronwyn:** How would you like us to pursue this? My proposition is to raise it with the Foreign Minister. Labor never steps back from humanitarian interests. We need to ensure free and fair election.

**AKA:** HDP contacts can be forwarded if needed. PKK is no threat to Australia. We need to prevent more casualties. US co-ordinates with YPG/YPJ/PKK in Syria.

**Bronwyn:** International community could monitor the peace process.

**GL (KLA) + M (AKA):** PKK has repeatedly asked for independent monitoring. Turkey refuses.

**Bronwyn:** We are sympathetic towards the Kurds. It is a complex situation. In the presentation you need to make the points re what is the motivation for relisting the PKK as a terrorist organization? What was Turkey's input in providing evidence for relisting the PKK as a terrorist organisation? The other point is that there has been a change in context, both in terms of the negotiated ceasefire and peace process and that PKK is fighting ISIS. Also, PKK has never been a threat to Australia. Mark Dreyfuss and Tanya Plibersik are keenly interested in the issues. Unfortunately Mark will not be attending the PJCIS. As for Syria we are pressing for an international agreement. Borders can't remain as they are. Kurds have territorial claims. Unsure whether the role of Australia can be more than humanitarian.

**Gina Action:** Send Bronwyn Map Proposal Re Partitioning Syria; submission to PJCIS, and Supporting a functioning federation in Iraq.

**11:00 am** Laurie Ferguson, David Feeney, Luke Simpkins

**Agenda:** Australian Kurdish Parliamentary Friendship Group

**David Feeney:** The AKPFG needs to include both major parties. Tanya Plibersek thinks we should proceed but conversations with Liberals indicate a lack of support to form the AKPFG given renewed hostility in Turkey. Turkey may see an AKPFG as a provocation. Liberal support is needed. Luke suggests that due to the complex situation we need to bide our time. Turkey does not care what Australia has to say about what is happening in Turkey.

**Laurie:** Concurred that group has to be bipartisan, whether formal or informal.

**Luke:** Easy to be suspicious about how the election will be run; I've seen past propaganda first hand. Erdogan overrides Turkish constitution.

**ZF – KLA:** Time is ticking. We want to help establish the group in any way.

**David Feeney:** Quite frankly we can't do much more at this stage. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Iraqi Ambassador have been dismissive. The Liberals are also hypersensitive regarding the Iraqi government due to internal tension between Erbil and Baghdad and Australia's involvement in fighting ISIS in Iraq.

**AKA:** It is important that the friendship group is established and supported.

**David Feeney:** Keep talking with MPs and at the earliest opportunity we will revisit the AKPFG. Probably after we know the results of the 1 November election in

Turkey. None of the complications will stop our interest in forming the group but the Australian government is sensitive and a smart approach is needed.

**AKA:** Explained why Erdogan is holding another election.

**David Feeney:** I agree with your assessment of Erdogan and the elections – everyone is deeply anxious. We condemn terrorists but many in the Labor party support the delisting of PKK. Labor members – Duncan Kerr and John Falkner- submitted a report about PKK in 2005 but PKK will not be delisted now.

### **12.30 – 2 pm: AKA and KLA presentations to the Joint Public Commission for Intelligence and Security.**

**JPCIS panel:** Chairman Dan Tehan; Senator Katy Gallagher (Senator that questioned the definition of terrorism); Senator David Fawcett; Mr Andrew Nikolic; Hon Phillip Ruddock; Hon Bruce Scott, Hon Mr. Byrne.

Dennis and Brusik presented for the AKA, and the committee asked Denis, Brusik and Mahmut questions. This was followed by the KLA presentation by Gina and Zirian. Most questions were about PKK killing civilians, as listed in the Attorney General's submission. See [KLA's speech to the committee](#), which took issue with the Attorney General's submission.

**AKA volunteered the following action:** Submit any available evidence that PKK did not conduct the listed terrorist acts against civilians, soldiers and police in the Attorney General's submission, and cite sources.

**Action suggested by Zirian for KLA and AKA and other groups:** Have a lawyer for future hearings of this nature, especially in regards to the need for the Australian government to relook at the criteria for defining a terrorist act and a terrorist organization, to distinguish between murder, a terrorist act, a legitimate act in self defence or in the name of an armed struggle against an oppressive regime that does not respect international Human Rights law. Most definitions include 'acts of violence or threat of violence against civilians for political gain'.

### **3:30 pm Murray Hansen and Steven Yates Meeting Minutes**

#### **Agenda**

Turkey peace process – given Australia's close relationship with Turkey, Australia could be a mediator; Engage HDP and PKK and others in ceasefire and peace process; No official recognition of Kurdish Broadcast Rights. What is Australia's position?

**Murray:** Difficulties in talking with Turkey about PKK especially as PKK uses violence. We will bring the points you raise to Julie Bishop's attention. Julie Bishop is in New York next week and will possibly have a chance to talk with Turkish (Prime?) Minister. The problem with international monitoring is that the host government has to invite the international monitors and if they don't want them, they don't get

invited. Countries are talking with Turkey about instigating a ceasefire. No public comments will be made due to the nature of the situation and ties with Turkey but we will pass your advice onto the Minister. Stopping the violence is a minimum requirement.

**KLA Gina:** Raised issues regarding Syria.

**Gina Action:** KLA to send 'Supporting a functioning federation of Iraq' and other documents to Murray Hansen. Already sent to Steven Yates.



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