

Rojava needs the West's help
We are deeply concerned that
a massacre is about to take
place in the Kobane canton of Rojava,
Syria's autonomous Kurdish region.
Kurdish forces here have been resisting
attacks from Islamic State gangs and al-
Qaeda-affiliated groups, despite being
ignored by the West over their links to
the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

It is time to recognise them and Rojava,
a democratic, multi-ethnic, gender-just
administration of two million people
whose refugee camps are hosting
millions of Syrian and Iraqi
refugees.

The region is also now threatened by
Western airstrikes, which will result in
further civilian casualties.

The rape, abduction and sale into sexual
slavery by Islamic State of thousands of
women has not been properly
recognised in the UK Parliament; nor
has the vital role of Kurdish Women's
Protection Units in evacuating
thousands of people from Sinjar region
been acknowledged.

Islamic State owes its origins to US
interventions and is funded

and armed by Qatar and Saudi Arabia.
Its fighters are openly entering Syria
across the Turkish border. It is
imperative this is halted. A buffer zone
at the Turkish border would further
legitimise the presence of the Turkish
military, who have a history of
massacring Kurds.

Instead of belligerence, we urge the UK
Government to listen to those fighting
Islamic State on the ground. If arms are
given at all, they should be provided to
those exercising their right to self-
determination and self-defence in
Rojava.

Rojava Women's Association

Peace in Kurdistan Campaign

Socialist Women's Union

Freedom Without Fear Platform

Prof Mary Davis

Margaret Owen OBE, Director, Widows
for Peace through Democracy (WPD)

Cythnia Cockburn, member of the
London branches of Women in Black
and Women's international League for
Peace and Freedom

Shatha Besarani, women's right activist

Sarah Parker, Haringey Left Unity'

**Open Letter, as featured in the
Evening Standard, 2014.**