



**FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC KURDISH SOCIETY-AUSTRALIA**  
**NAVENDA CIVAKA DEMOKRATIK YÂ KURDÊN AUSTRALYA**

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4 September, 2021

[REDACTED]  
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security  
Department of the House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021 | Parliament House | Canberra ACT 2600

**Re: Recommendation 1 of PJCIS 2018 Report**

Thank you for your telephone call and email.

While the Kurdish community centres have had regular contact with some of the Agencies under the Department of Home Affairs for several years, before and after the 2018 review, e. g. AFP and ASIO, we have not been approached officially from the Department of Home Affairs with respect to Recommendation 1. We understand that such meetings with AFP and ASIO are common among some ethnic and religious communities and not specific to the listing of PKK. Please see enclosed Appendix outlining the contacts with these government agencies since 2018 and the content of these discussions. As you will see, whilst we have been approached by these agencies, none of the discussions were in respect of Recommendation 1.

We also have regular contact with the local police forces, e. g. Victoria Police for major events, such as our annual Newroz Festivals, which had to be cancelled as public events since 2020 due to COVID19.

Following the publication of the PJCIS 2018 report, containing Recommendation 1, we expected to be approached formally by the Department of Home Affairs with specific written advice on conduct that would fall within the ambit of criminal conduct under the Criminal code. Such advice would have removed uncertainties, e. g. respect to fundraising, particularly for Kurdish communities subjected to attacks by the Turkish regime in Turkey, Iraqi Kurdistan and North and East Syria. But no such advice has been forthcoming.

We want to take this opportunity to reiterate how traumatic this listing has been on our community. We feel that we are held hostage and it has affected our physical, mental and economic well-being. It is having a huge impact on our community, as it has taken away our liberty and freedom that other communities in Australia can enjoy.

We perceive that every decision to list PKK has been a political decision influenced by Turkey, rather than one informed by a proper study of the evolution and activities of PKK. Furthermore, the decisions have been made without consultation with human rights organisation or Kurdish organisations.

The Kurdish community sees this listing as a fundamental violation of our human rights. As a result, our community feels vulnerable and defenceless. Suffering these violations here, while our families in Kurdistan are being attacked by Turkish forces and their jihadist mercenaries increases our feeling of vulnerability.

Sincerely,

Heval J Herki  
Spokesperson  
Federation of Kurdish Democratic Society – Australia

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## APPENDIX

### Summary of meetings held between our Kurdish Democratic Community Centres and Government Department Agencies between 2018 – Present

#### Melbourne

##### *March 2019*

- Meeting with ASIO and possibly Victorian Police Community Liaison Officer.
- Discussion of two attacks that were made against members of the Kurdish community during two rallies in front of the State Library by a Turkish “mob”. After the attacks the Turkish “mob” distributed video and images of the attacks via social media with corresponding message including ‘how they stopped the terrorists.’
- Representatives of the Kurdish community handed the video and images to ASIO.

##### *September 2019*

- Initial meeting with [REDACTED]: Community Liaising Officer from Social Cohesion Division Victoria: Department of Home Affairs
- Informal meet and greet where officer introduced herself, her role and requested details of the contact person to provide updated information about the policies of the department to the community.

##### *February 2020*

- Meeting with ASIO.
- Content of discussion was in relation to Turkey’s attack on Serekaniye in North Eastern Syria. Representatives from ASIO asked whether the community were receiving any threats.
- General discussion about difficulties faced by the Kurdish members living in Melbourne and across Australia and overseas.
- Representatives of the Kurdish community sought advice from ASIO about Heyva Sor (Kurdish equivalent of Red Cross) and whether it was lawful to make donations to the organisation. ASIO said they would get back to us with that information and there was some SMS communication. As it was not possible to convene a meeting due to Covid, the issue has not been finalised yet.

##### *June 2020 – present*

- Telephone attendance with [REDACTED]. Content of discussion was in relation to the pandemic.
- Further telephone, online meeting, etc were in relation to the pandemic.

*October 2020*

- Webex meeting with [REDACTED]. Mainly in relation to the pandemic and ongoing policies with her department.
- We also briefly discussed the issue of Heyva Sor without any definitive answer.

**Sydney**

*November 2019*

- Meeting held with ASIO.
- Content of discussion was mainly in relation to the death of Qasem Soleimani – Iranian military officer - and political affairs overseas.

*October 2020*

- Meeting held with ASIO.
- Content of discussion was in relation to the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia as well as the celebrations of the Greek Bicentennial.

**Perth**

*July 2021*

- Meeting held with Australian Federal Police – [REDACTED].
- Content of discussion was in relation to the difficulties faced by the Kurdish community in Perth.