

# Turkish intellectuals to seek solution to Kurdish question

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**A group of 50 intellectuals — both Turks and Kurds — plans to hold meetings in 10 cities throughout Turkey later this month to seek a solution to the decades-old Kurdish question.**

The meetings will be held in cities that often see provocative attacks, including Mersin, Samsun, Kayseri and Erzurum. Many nongovernmental organizations will be represented at the meetings. Among the intellectuals planning to attend the meetings are writers Altan Tan and Ümit Fırat, former National Intelligence Organization (MİT) Undersecretary Cevat Öneş, literary critic and columnist Murat Belge, former member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) Seydi Fırat and former Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Altan Öymen.

Tarık Çelenk, general coordinator of Ekopolitik, a web-based publication produced by the ADAM Social Sciences Research Center, said participants of the meetings are people who use constructive language to address problems and confront their own realities, though they tend not to change their ideologies or beliefs. Çelenk is one of the many coordinators of the meetings.

"They [intellectuals] have similar reactions if an incident occurs in Samsun. They display a common stance in the wake of provocative acts. Ümit Fırat and Mete Yazar [a retired Special Forces Command officer] are regarded as belonging to opposite camps, but they call each other 'brother'," Çelenk said.

Çelenk also said the first meeting would be held in Mersin on May 15. "Mersin is the scene of many provocations. The Nationalist Movement Party [MHP] and the Peace and Democracy Party [BDP] have influence on Mersin residents. We will meet with officials of both parties in the city to prevent any possible problem during the meeting," he remarked.

He went on to state that nongovernmental organizations can stem provocations in cities throughout the country if they are allowed to become active actors in the reconciliation process within society. He also called on Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, opposition leaders and businessmen to consult with intellectuals and nongovernmental organizations about solutions to Turkey's problems.

"Turkey has enough room for everyone to live in peace. Everyone under Turkey's roof must meet at common points. Turkey cannot develop by excluding Kurds. Every citizen is necessary for development," Çelenk added.

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## Sources

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