

## Publishing Leaked Information as News: Sabotage or Journalistic Success?

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### Abstract

*This article aims to analyse the universal news criteria regarding the transformation of information into news. In February 2013, the transcript of a meeting between 3 pro-Kurdish deputies and the jailed leader of the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers Party) was leaked to the Turkish press. This was published in Milliyet, a national Turkish newspaper, and has been interpreted as a forceful move to sabotage the positive atmosphere surrounding Turkey's latest efforts with the PKK to end a conflict that has lasted more than three decades and resulted in the deaths of almost 36,000 people. The rationale for the leak was that although Turkey was going through a delicate time, there were questions that needed to be answered, but questions still remain: Who leaked the document, and why and how? The media has been divided about whether the publishing of the leaked transcript represented an effort to sabotage the peace attempts with the PKK or whether it marked a moment of journalistic success. What ethical stance should be taken about the leak? Should the journalist have reported it in the name of professionalism in terms of 'informing the public' or should he have exercised restraint out of respect for the 'security of the state'? This article will examine those issues through an analytical approach and discuss the related attitudes of the foreign press.*

**Keywords:** media, journalism, news, leaks, ethics

### 1. Introduction

It is commonly believed that there are just as many definitions of news as there are people in the world. Academically speaking, there are at least 200 different definitions of news. Simply put, however, news is a message that contains information. Harcup describes news as descriptions of events in the world: "News is a selective version of world events with a focus on that which is new and/or unusual. However, not all news is new; much of it is predictable, and some does not concern events at all." (2009, p. 55).

But why do we need to know about world events at all? In other words, why do we have a strong urge to know about it? The answer is that we need an information to decide whether to take action, exercise restraint, speak out, or remain silent. Allan has noted that the rising tide of pseudo-eventstends to wash away the traditional distinction between hard and soft news. News events become little more than dramatic performances, from interviews to news conferences and leaks and self promoting stunts in which everyone seeks to follow their own prepared script (2011, p. 259). In light of these issues, this article seeks to analyse the universal journalistic criteria for deciding about the transformation of information into news.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2013, the transcript of a meeting (1) between 3 pro-Kurdish deputies and the jailed leader of the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers Party)(2) were leaked to the Turkish press. This was published in *Milliyet*, a national Turkish newspaper, and this event has been interpreted as a forceful move to sabotage the positive atmosphere surrounding Turkey's latest efforts to end a conflict with the PKK that has lasted more than three decades and has been particularly destructive in the southeast of the country. The rationale for the leak was that although Turkey was going through a delicate time, there were questions that needed to be answered, but still questions remain: Who leaked the document, and why and how? The media has been divided about whether the publishing of the leaked transcript represented an effort to sabotage efforts at peace (3) with the PKK or whether it was a journalistic success. What ethical stance should be taken about the leak? Should the journalist have reported it in the name of professionalism in terms of 'informing the public' or should he have kept silent out of respect for the 'security of the state'? This article will examine those issues through an analytical approach and discuss the related attitudes of the foreign press.

## 2. Confidential data and sources in journalism

Journalists play a social role that goes beyond the production of news that is then sold in the marketplace. Harmless and banal information is transformed into powerful news by journalism "which is a chaotic form of earning, ragged at the edges, full of snakes, con artists and even the occasional misunderstand martyr," writes Andrew Marr in his book *My Trade*. Seen in this way, journalism is a trade, or a craft, and journalists have been known to refer to their workplaces as word factories, in contrast to professions such as medicine or law. But what, in fact, is journalism for? It is a form of communication based on asking, and answering the questions (Harcup, 2009, p. 3).

A major task of journalism ethics is to determine how existing norms apply to the main ethical issues of the day. One of the current problem is sources and confidentiality. For example, should journalists promise confidentiality to their sources? How far should that protection extend? Should journalist go off the record? The other is referred to as special situations. How should journalists report hostage-takings, major breaking news, suicide attempts and other events where coverage could exacerbate the problem? When should journalists violate privacy? (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009, p. 296-297)

The basic questions 5W1H (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How) of journalism formulated by Laswell in 1948 as an early model of the mass communication process could not be applied to the Imrali leak. Who leaked the meeting transcript, and why did he/she leak it? Initially, these questions could not be answered first hand.

The Imrali meeting transcript was leaked on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2013 in the Turkish daily *Milliyet*. In the text, Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), made striking comments about the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) of Turkey, the ruling government, Turkish Islamic opinion leader Fettullah Gulen and Turkish politics.

"The publication of the transcript of a meeting between Ocalan and deputies of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) has sparked controversy and speculation over the source of the leak, as well as the source's motivations." (Bozkurt, 2013, p. 1). One interpretation of the leak was that it was an apparent move to sabotage the positive atmosphere surrounding the peace talks. The strongest reaction to the journalist who leaked the document came from Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of Turkey and the chairman of the Justice and Development Party (AKP): "The principle of freedom of the press does not give media the right to act against the national interest of a country. If you apply journalism in this way, then samn on your journalism!" (oda.tv.com.tr). In a column published in *Star*, a national Turkish newspaper, Erdogan's main adviser Yalcin Akdogan described the act as "saboteurs at work: there are great differences between the documents provided by Ocalan to the state and the records published in the press. To clear up the situation, those documents given by Ocalan have not been approved by the state either. It's very wrong to release documents as if they were the whole content of the peace process. This is open sabotage" (hurriyetdailynews.com, 2 March 2013).

*Milliyet* then took a step back and news about the Imrali leak was removed from the web page of newspaper published on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, 2013.

Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of the main opposition party (CHP), called on journalists to be courageous and resist pressure imposed by the rulling AKP: "The rulling party mentions freedom of the press on the one hand, but then pressuers newspapers on their coverage of certain stories. The government has asked a newspaper to fire two journalists. I'm appealing to all journalists to be courageous and brave" (hurriyetdailynews.com, 6 March 2013).

This fueled debates about whether or not the press in Turkey is free and about the fact that the media is under a lot of pressure from the government. It also led to debates about whether the event was a journalistic success or sabotage of state interests. Yet, "according to the liberal approach, the main purpose of journalism is to tell the truth. Tell the truth is highlighted universally as a journalistic codes of ethics." The press's social responsibility grants a central role to the concept of objectivity. As a citizen in a democratic environment, it is necessary to give a reliable picture of the events of the day so that citizens can make up their own minds (Uzun, 1993, p. 41-42).

The Imrali leak was reported by Namik Durukan, a reporter at *Milliyet* who noted himself that "People were much more interested in how it was leaked rather than what the contents of the memos was. Putting aside the news itself, they concentrated on where it was leaked. They also assessed the process in a subversive way. Of course I didn't get the memos from a tea maker or a photocopier. I have been a journalist for 30 years and most of this time I practiced my profession in the southeast of Turkey. I have first-hand experience of the violence there. I have no other aim aside from journalism. I believe that if we are indeed living in a period of transparency, all segments of society should need to be informed about situations, including the Imrali transcripts" (Durukan, Gazeteport, 2013).

On the other hand, the BDP has promised to probe the source behind the leak of the talks with Ocalan. Facing accusations that it was responsible for the leak, the BDP defended itself on March 1 and rejected claims that the controversial transcript was handed to *Milliyet* by party officials. BDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtas said that the BDP was investigating how these transcripts could have been published in a newspaper, promising to disclose the results if they could locate the source (Hurriyetdailynews.com, 2 March 013).

It is still a matter of controversy how the transcripts were leaked, but observers say they that the BDP is the likely culprit.

### **3. Laws, regulations and codes of profession in journalism**

Democracy requires more than a free press. It also requires a high level of trust among citizens, a healthy judiciary, an effective legislature and a balance of powers among these institutions. The ethics of journalism is a matter of judging the consequences of stories, actions, and investigations for the vitality of these institutions and the continued capacity of people to act as citizens. Doing good journalism, like writing good prose, is always a matter of judgement. What is right may change from one situation to the other. Still - as anyone who has done journalism or who has read or watched closely knows - there are good choices and bad choices. The key for journalists and for democratic societies is the process those who produce the news go through in making their decision. Once a journalist begins to develop a disciplined, thoughtful way of making choices, he or she will build on it and refer to it over and over again (Rosenstiel & Mitchell, 2003, p. 3).

The news media are also regulated by ethics and codes of practices, some of which are legislated for at the level of government and some are set by the industry themselves as a form of self-regulation. Journalistic endeavours - the investigating and reporting of newsworthy events and issues - requires journalists to verify information by drawing on alternative sources and representing rival interpretations. Thus, the profession is marked by a commitment to public service and the norms of journalistic responsibility, and is built on the values of objectivity, fairness, truthfulness and accuracy. These are the basic tenets of all journalistic codes of practices. Every nation has rules and regulations that determine who can own and operate the news media, how much local content they are required to carry and the percentage of audiences they reach, and how much a single news service provider can control in order to prevent the common ownership of newspapers, TV and radio broadcasting licences that serve the same region. It is said that diverse ownership of the media is important to ensure the expression of points of view antagonistic to the government and the prevailing orthodoxy on any given issue. This helps to ensure informed decision-making, cultural pluralism, citizen welfare, and a well-functioning democracy (Bednarek & Caple, 2012, p. 36). The laws, regulations, professional ethics and principles in Turkey have open-ended expressions on this issue. To put it in a different way, freedom of information comes up against the issue of state security.

In the Imrali case, the leak was a transcript of a conversation and somebody was taking notes about what was being said. One of the difficulties or gray areas was that it was not an official meeting; in other words, it was not secret. If it did have official status, it would have been a violation of privacy and people would have objected. For instance if this had happened in Britain, the reporter would not have been breaking the news by obtaining the transcript. This act was not illegal, as in the recording of a telephone conversation. On the other hand, Wikileaks generated much public interest and the information it divulged should be known to the public, even if it is a breach of the law.

According to Turkish Press Council's Press Professional Principles (Item 6, sub clause 7) "off-the-record information must not be published unless the public interest is seriously at stake" (basinkonseyi.org.tr; Erkeleli-Kizil, 1998, p. 209). The Turkish Press Law (9.6.2004) describes press freedoms in the following way: "The press is free. This freedom includes the right to the acquisition of knowledge as well as the dissemination, criticism, interpretation of news and the creation of works. The use of freedom of the press in accordance with the requirements of a democratic society may only be limited to ensure the authority and impartiality of the judiciary by protecting the reputation or rights of others, public health and morals, national security, public order, public security and the protection of the territorial integrity of the state, or the disclosure of secrets, crime prevention." As the wording is ambiguous in the law, rules and regulations, Durukan acted both correctly and incorrectly, per the terms of Article 3 of the law. While he informed the public, he also put the safety of the state at risk.

One of the pressures that journalists face is limitations imposed on the freedom of expression on privacy and confidentiality when they comply with the ethical principles of their profession. The Declaration of the Rights and Responsibilities of the Turkish Journalists' Association (TGC) states, "Journalist have the right to access all information sources freely and the right to investigate information that affects public life. Obstacles such as privacy and confidentiality

journalists face must be based on public law, or there must be convincing reasons as regards private affairs" (Uzun, 1993, p. 181).

The declaration describes the responsibilities of journalists in the following terms: "Journalists use the name of the freedom of the press for the sake of the public's freedom to obtain correct information. For this purpose, he/she must fight against all kinds of censorship and inform the public concerning this. The responsibility of the journalist for the public comes before all the other responsibilities such as employers and public authorities. Information, news and free-thinking is social in nature as opposed to commercial goods and services. Journalists must assume this responsibility and share news and information. The content and limits on the freedom of journalists is primary in setting out the principles and professional responsibilities" (tgc.org.tr). In this sense, Durukan acted correctly because he knew he was responsible to the public and refused to be censored.

Seen in this way, the Imrali transcript has created a debate about the application of professional practices in terms of right and wrong. The core priority is to enlighten the public on the task of journalism and the other is to look at the consequences. The methods of obtaining news are also important. The Declaration of the Rights and Obligations of journalists and the Swiss Press Council Directives Liabilities Statement Article 4 declare that: "A journalist must not use unfair means to obtain information and photographs, as well as audio, visual and textual materials" (Morresi, 2003, p. 193).

In addition, on the section on Information and Documentation under the heading The Rules of Journalist's Correct Attitudes notes: "Unless there is direct public interest, documents, photographs, audio or image should not be taken without the permission of the owner. In terms of public interest, even if the above definitive judgment is set another way, the material should not be obtained."

Eyup Can, chief editor of *Radikal*, a national Turkish newspaper, wrote that Durukan obtained the document at BDP headquarters. "Everyone knew very well, for example, that he could do the photocopying himself. Two people have been suspected as the copiers of the transcript at the BDP headquarters. Durukan, who closely follows events at the BDP headquarters, heard of the transcript and immediately went to the headquarters building. Everyone knows very well that it is never hard to get a copy of a transcript from a tea seller or person doing photocopies at the BDP" (Can, T24.com.tr, 2013).

#### 4. Leaks as news value

The Imrali leak had universal news value. It affected the majority of the population in Turkey, especially the southeast, where people have been killed on both sides. Because of this situation, the topic has high news value. "Sociologists of news, however, have shown that newsworthiness is less to do with an instinct and more to do with internalising a set of arbitrary values that have become established over time through institutionalised practices" (Machin & Niblocak, 2006, p. 48). The news values described by Galtung and Ruge's (1965) taxonomy of news values, which are frequency, continuity, and meaningfulness, (Harcup, 2009, p. 39) are relevant here because they took place over a long period of time and remained in the media spotlight, and as such, the Imrali case generated strong interest in society and the media agenda.

Leaks are considered to be one source of news. Leaks of information, whether from close contacts or anonymous whistleblowers, can lead to exclusive stories. The official sources engage in tactics to pass privileged but unattributable information to journalists under a cloak of confidentiality, such as through the use of "off-the-record" briefings, is not sufficiently recognized. Typical examples of statements from non-attributable sources are frequently presented to reporters for background only comments. For example, a well-placed government source may note that sources close to a Prime Minister may say that a trusted source has revealed information leaked by an inside source (Allan, 2011, p. 85).

The relationship between journalists and a source, in other words the elbow room between these two, must be considered during the news making process. Sources are central to the practice of journalism, and these are the people, places or organisations from whom potential news stories originate, and the people, places or organisations to whom journalists turn when checking potential stories. Bell argues that the ideal news source is also a news actor, someone whose own words make news. He lists the following news actors as major sources; political figures, officials, celebrities, sportspeople, professionals, criminals, human interest figures, and participants such as victims or witnesses (Harcup, 2009, p. 59). Tuchman (1978) and Ericson et al. (1987), in their studies of the relationship between journalists and their official sources, note that sources are able to organise themselves to provide readily available news for journalists (Machin & Niblocak, 2006, p. 28). In other words, they can prepare transcripts which provide journalists with the copy they need to give to their editors.

Politicians sometimes give reporters minor information "on the record" and then demand that the rest of what they say should be treated as "off the record," i.e., taken in confidentiality. Having received such a promise they may then disclose particularly newsworthy information which they know the journalists will feel duty-bound to refrain from publishing. Reporters need to guard against being manipulated in this way; but it could be argued that the politician is trying deliberately to hamstring journalists in this manner, and in such a situation their trust is being abused, thereby negating the force of their undertaking to the politician (Belsey & Chadwick, 1998, p. 71).

The right to keep the identity of sources confidential is seen around the world as a fundamental principle of journalistic practice. Sources may use confidentiality for their own ends, such as politicians leaking possible policies, only to officially deny them if the public response is negative. From the journalist's point of view this isn't a particularly helpful use of confidentiality, and risks accusations of complicity in source strategies, but there are other situations where confidentiality may be essential in order to cover a story. "Whistle-blowing," whether corporate or governmental, risks fines or even jail for those who commit it, or for the reporters who fail to disclose those who commit it. In 1984, for example, the Guardian newspaper published details of leaked government plans to manage public opinion over the arrival of US nuclear missiles in Britain. The paper was taken to court by the British government and the editor, Peter Preston, faced jail unless he revealed the source, which he did, and civil servant Sarah Tisdall was subsequently jailed (Campbell, 2004, p. 132).

Journalists have developed a vocabulary of their own to describe the different terms of confidentiality. Something 'off the record' has typically been understood as not for public release or information for background purposes. Sources also sometimes use it to mean "non-attributable," that is, information which can be used but not attributed to a named source. "Non-attributable" information is often used in political reporting. Reporters can be used to spread damaging gossip which is like a three-pronged tongue, which destroys three people: the person who says it, the person who listens to it, and the person about whom it is told. Whistle-blowing is where information is covertly disclosed from within an organization to uncover some kind of abuse. The source is key to the informant being prepared to offer information. This is also true of leaks where there is unauthorized release of information. Leaking can be an instrument of the government, often used to gain political advantage over opponents. Leaking is not, however, an ideal form of communication. It is unaccountable and has great potential for manipulation. It both feeds on secrecy and encourages its existence, something no journalist would want to encourage (Sanders, 2009, p. 112-114).

## 5. Similar case studies concerning political news leaks

Governments all over the world tend to manipulate journalists for their own purposes. A concrete example was unearthed with a document referred to in the Turkish media as a "memorandum." , Semdin Sakik, a leading figure in the PKK's military intelligence, alleged that confessions were published on the front page of *Sabah*, a national Turkish newspaper on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 1998. Sakik propounded that some Turkish journalists took an order from Ocalan and interviewed him for money. The journalists accused of collaborating with PKK subsequently lost their jobs. However, Sakik explained at a court appearance that he did not make such a statement. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of October, 2000, Nazli Ilicak, a writer for *Yeni Safak*, a national Turkish newspaper, asserted in her column that the confession which was mirrored in the two major newspaper headlines was in fact prepared by the General Staff Intelligence Department and suggested that the memorandum was a derivative of a study. The General Staff then said in a statement that it had been preparing such a document but it was thought to be a draft (Uzun, 1993, p. 189).

In Spain, talks between and the Basque Country were ongoing, and the prisoned leader of the ETA stated in a letter that 'it is time to leave the guns' and this was published in the press. When this happened, the public did not argue about why it was published but rather they actually debated the contents of the letter for a long time. After this debate, there were some groups who wanted to sabotage the peace process continuing the bombing activities despite the fact that the ETA bombing had made a decision to lay down its arms (Akcura, 2013, p.18).

In 2008 freelance journalist Shiv Malik faced police demands under the Terrorism Act of 2000 and he was requested to hand over transcripts he gathered while researching a book on Islamic radicals. Malik resisted, explaining that "protection of sources is a totem of all investigative journalism and almost none of my work to date has been possible without the promise of confidentiality." Such cases will continue to be fought on their individual merits as journalists resist attempts to identify confidential sources and/or to seize notes or pictures. Meanwhile, the safest way for journalists to be given leaked information probably remains the unmarked photocopy in a plain brown envelope delivered anonymously in the dead of night by somebody wearing gloves on their hands and a scarf over their face; a journalist cannot be forced to reveal the identity of a source they do not know (Harcup, 2009, p. 26).

Informing the public and not revealing the source of news are the most important principles of journalism. In the UK since 1993, the Defence, Press and Broadcasting Advisory Committee (DPBAC) has overseen a voluntary code which applies to UK governmental departments which have responsibilities for national security and the media. It uses the Defence Advisory (DA) Notice System as its means. This voluntary network works as a constraint and represents a situation known to be specific only in England. The news officials of the government ask news editors not to publish news for the sake of the nation's security. It is said that this system has been specifically designed to protect sensitive information in terms of national security, and editors often applied to the Secretary of the Committee (Belsey & Chadwick, 1992, p. 82). The objective of the DA-Notice System is to prevent inadvertent public disclosure of information that would compromise UK military and intelligence operations and methods, or put at risk the safety of those involved in such operations, or lead to attacks that would damage the critical national infrastructure and/or endanger lives ([www.dnotice.org.uk](http://www.dnotice.org.uk)). In the case of the Imrali Leak, if the news carried a risk of breaching security, the only parties that could ask for it not to be published are those who attended the meetings - in this case, the MIT, BDP and Ocalan. By evaluating the publication of the transcript as sabotage, the media set a poor example.

## 6. Conclusion

Simply put, news is a message that contains information. It is a selective version of world events with a focus on that which is a new and/or unusual. We need information to decide whether to take action, refrain from action, speak out or remain silent. But news events can become little more than dramatic performances, from interviews to leaks. This article sought to analyse the universal journalistic criteria for thinking about the transformation of information into news. Journalists play a social role that goes beyond the production of news that is sold in the marketplace because harmless and banal information is transformed into powerful news by the media.

In modern societies, freedom of information is an accepted right. According to the liberal approach, the main purpose of journalism is to tell the truth, and this is highlighted universally as a journalistic code of ethics. The press' social responsibility plays a central role in the concept of objectivity. As a citizen in a democratic environment it is necessary to give a reliable picture of events of the day so that citizens can make up their minds. Journalists have a great responsibility in fulfilling the need of public for freedom of information.

Unfortunately most of the times journalists face a dilemma about deciding what should become news on issues related to the security of the state. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, 2013, the transcript of a meeting between 3 pro-Kurdish deputies and the jailed leader of the PKK was leaked to the Turkish press. This was published in *Milliyet*, a national Turkish newspaper, and has been interpreted as a forceful move to sabotage the positive atmosphere surrounding Turkey's latest efforts to end a conflict with the PKK that has lasted more than three decades and has been particularly destructive for the southeast of the country.

The media has been divided about whether the publishing of the leaked transcript represented an effort to sabotage efforts to strike a peace deal with the PKK or whether it was a journalistic success. In the media, it has often been interpreted as a move to sabotage the positive atmosphere. "The principle of the freedom of the press does not give the media the right to act against the national interests of the country" said Prime Minister of Turkey. Thereupon, *Milliyet* stepped back and the Imrali leak news was removed from the web page of newspaper. Clearly, this was an attack on the media's freedom.

In the meantime, the basic 5W1H questions could not be applied in the Imrali Leak which was reported by Namık Durukan, and he did not tell from whom he got the transcript. The right to keep the identity of a source confidential is seen around the world as a fundamental principle of journalistic practice.

Of course, journalist, must use fair means to obtain information, and some have suggested that Durukan took a copy of transcript from the person in charge of making tea or photocopies at the BDP office. The writers of this article, however, argue that a journalist may sacrifice this responsibility for the sake of freedom of information; in this sense, we argue that Durukan's actions were not sabotage. On the contrary, it was a journalistic success.

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## Notes

- 1) As the Imrali transcript is very long, it is not quoted here. Please see of the entire transcript in Turkish at <http://t24.com.tr/haber/iste-imralidaki-gorusmenin-tutanaklari/224711> or in English at <http://www.habermonitor.com/en/haber/detay/apo-minutes-of-the-full-text-of-imrali/73677/>
- 2) According to Belma Akcura, head of *Milliyet* newspaper, in fact, Turkey's Abdullah Ocalan first made such calls 20 years ago. "The first one was established in Damascus via Jalal Talabani and during President Turgut Ozal's rule in 1992-1993. Immediately after this meeting Talabani had asked for a ceasefire. In 1996, Prime Minister Erbakan Necmettin Erbakan, unofficially sought a solution to end the conflict through intermediaries and verbal and written messages to Ocalan. In 1997, the high-ranking officers of the General Staff held "indirect" meetings with the leader of PKK cadres in Bursa Prison, and these individuals were Sabri Ok and Muzaffer Ayata. Via telephone, Ok and Ayata met with Ocalan in Damascus, and Ocalan was convinced of the seriousness of the military approach. Ocalan's lawyers said of this initiative that Karadayı and Kivrikoglu both wanted to limit the war. They wanted weapons to be laid down to end the conflict, and said they would speak about almost anything for the sake of a solution and they sent a message. After the capture of Ocalan, face to face interviews were carried out by soldiers from 1999-2001. Military staff talks still continued in the period between 2002-2005. Since 2005, the government began to negotiate with the support of Ocalan at MIT. MIT Undersecretary Emre Taner personally met with Ocalan in Imrali Prison. Also, the government stepped in at the request of Jalal Talabani. Negotiations began under MIT's undersecretary Hakan Fidan in 2010 and included the Ministry of Justice. After a meeting in Oslo in 2005, the first regular meetings began in 2006. In September 2008 these became a mutual conversation. In 2008, the PKK delegation to Oslo met with MIT. The Oslo meetings of the 'sine qua non Imrali' included the BDP and the MIT Imrali negotiations in 2013 (Akcura, Interview, 2013).
- 3) Prime Minister Erdogan advised his deputies and everyone involved in the talks which are commonly referred to as 'peace talks' to speak less and do more during this 'fragile' process. Turkish state authorities have been holding peace talks with Ocalan since last October with the aim of achieving a timetable for the disarmament of the terrorists. The three BDP deputies traveled to Imrali Island on February 23, 2013 to meet with Ocalan as part of the talks ([todayszaman.com](http://todayszaman.com), 5 March 2013).