



## **TJA Position Statement on Elections 2024**

As a result of the primaries we held with the broadest, organized societal constituency, we have chosen our candidates who will run for co-mayorship and municipal councils in the 2024 municipal elections. At this point, the drive for radical democracy our movement has launched for emancipatory local governments has once again defeated the attempts by centers of hegemony to impose isolation on all cells of life to counter Kurdish women's struggle for freedom, equality and democracy.

In terms of both the entire process and its results, this drive for radical democracy led by the Free Women's Movement has been an immense source of motivation for all of us. The extensive participation of our female comrades in both the candidacy processes and the primaries was in fact a political stand against the male-dominant system's construct of women-less politics. However, this process has also revealed a weakening in the manifestation of two of our principles of women's liberation in our practices: Our ethical aesthetic approach and patriotic norms. Kurdish women must continue their efforts to make their mentality an essential basis of all layers of life and struggle as well, not only on account of their majority but also with their paradigm.

There is no doubt that revolution is a living, live process; our organizational structure, which does not compromise on radical democracy even in the most difficult of times, will analyze the current shortcomings by means of strong comradeship, criticism-self-criticism mechanisms, ideological strengthening and the courage it has never lost, and will continue to build the revolution. Our current motivation must turn into a capacity and strength to unconditionally integrate our struggle with the values of free women and patriotic norms. We have full confidence that all our female comrades, especially our candidates, going on with their election campaign will persist in their struggle with this belief.

Building a free life – the cause of our struggle – is based on a people-centred and democratic administration of localities; this principle places responsibility on the shoulders of all segments of society. It is the implementation of radical democracy that brings into effect local self-government, which is necessary for a moral and political society. While the concept of local government is the strongest alternative to centralism, it is a democratic, ecological philosophy centering on women's freedom which makes its realization possible. Our perspective centered on women's freedom comprises preservation of ecological balance, enabling of cultures and identities to express themselves freely, socialization of labor and fighting poverty. The construction of multilingual, multicultural, multi-identity localities envisaged by the democratic nation comes to life with the line of women's freedom.

In this sense, the upcoming period should not be looked upon as a mere pre-election period. We have a responsibility to see the process as a turning point that can break the isolation on women, youth, Kurdish people and faith groups, ensure the physical freedom of Kurdish



People's Leader Abdullah Öcalan and achieve the socialization of his paradigm. This responsibility demands a correct understanding of the system of isolation in which we are kept and extrication from the tendency of positioning ourselves with reference to the policies of the centers of hegemony. Kurdish women must go beyond holding a position of defense and become a founding element for all the peoples of the world, especially the peoples of Kurdistan, and the system they establish must be the system of free-life-in-equality/free co-life. In the face of capitalist modernity which which has made femicide its established policy and, imposes a system of isolation with its policies of control, shaping and closure on each and every cell in society with sprouts of belief in freedom, the main goal of the forces of democratic modernity is the construction of a free-life-in-equality/free co-life. The way to achieve this is to bring the identities of free women and free men into daylight and to build the groundworks on which the free, equal and autonomous togetherness of all components of life will be realized, starting with the relationship between free women and free men. It is possible to create such a groundwork through co-chairmanship practice in emancipatory-democratic local governments and in societal veins that will be organized from neighborhoods to villages and cities.

We can express the co-chairing practice as women and men carrying out all the governance activities of the system of free-life-in-equality / free co-life collectively and in unity, without any exception. Female and male co-chairs are elected, and they, beyond being representatives, reflect the shared wisdom and practice of all assemblies, determined on the basis of their free thought and willpower. However, in their persons, the task of governing belongs to the society, that which is societal must be brought to light. Co-chairing cannot be treated as a crude division of labor, and it must be purged of the constructed roles of femininity and masculinity. In this sense, the individual lives and approaches of our co-chair candidates as much as their style, attitude and methods must be societal. Kurdistan is a colony, and for the liberation of colonized Kurdistan we can show that a break with capitalist modernity is possible at all layers of the struggle, only by living in line with socialist values, in a classless, exploitation-free and women's liberationist manner. This is what we will expect from all our male and female executives and especially our candidate co-mayors, in this period.

Once in positions of government, classical masculinity which has been encoded by male-dominated mentality for thousands of years, manifests its misogyny through practices that belittle women, cannot tolerate women, and pit women against each other. Opposition to the system of equal representation, making women candidates the subject of controversy, attempts to abolish values created through struggle, seeing equal representation as unnecessary are products of individualistic and misogynist mentalities with petty plans. When concrete practices are considered, the acts of aiming to undermine the institutionalization of the principle of equal representation, having it shelved as a matter of mere formality thus turning it into an entangled mess can only be described as hostility to democracy and the people. The fact that discussions on who will have the official authority to sign, be the official executive,



be responsible for which area at the administrative level turn into a crisis, shows that mentalities have still not purged themselves of power-centeredness. The identity of the holder of the right to sign becomes insignificant when that signature is seen as the reflection of the willpower of a municipal council elected by the people, not as that of an individual. It should not be forgotten that the practice of co-chairing has come to this day through struggle against attitudes which claimed that "we cannot succeed with women, our localities cannot tolerate this, so what, if it is a man or a woman" and has been embraced by our people. If women and women's achievements have been the first targets of the representatives of power and domination for thousands of years, our claim to carry out the struggle on the basis of women emancipatory perspective will continue uninterrupted.

The Free Women's Movement, with its thousands of years of heritage and struggle for the last 50 years, is the guarantee of women's existence on a unique and autonomous basis. Our movement, which draws its strength from its sociality, will operate women's unique autonomous organization in the most effective way in our emancipatory-democratic local government system. Women's departments, directorates and their affiliated units are not meant to create new centers of power, but on the contrary, they are there to shatter hierarchies of power and male-dominant tendencies. It is our essential position that the relationship between these mechanisms that we will re-establish is based on the principles of free-life-in-equality / free-co-life, on women's freedom and democratic, horizontal decision-making. In this sense, our main method in the event of conflict should be to act with ethical and aesthetic norms based on gender love and comradeship.

On the other hand, there is the reality that just as we share life with men, we will also run our emancipatory-democratic local government mechanisms together with men. Our principle is to develop all relationships with men on the basis of ethical aesthetic norms resting on comradeship, on a non-confrontational basis without compromising women's emancipatory principles. However, it should never be forgotten that it is the common responsibility of all women and men to embrace, protect and grow the values created by the Free Women's Movement, that has reached this day through great struggles while building the emancipatory-democratic local government experience of the system of free-life-in-equality / free co-life.

The exploitation of women's labor is in the forefront of the historical and current attacks we confront. In the face of a system in which women's labor, as the sum of their thoughts, feelings and bodies, is constantly exploited through violence, emancipatory-democratic local governments must call on all components of the society to produce and govern what they produce with a women emancipatory perspective, and provide appropriate grounds for this. Our basic tenet is that providing legal, psychological and economic support after violence takes place is not sufficient in itself to eliminate violence against women in all its forms – economic, social, psychological, etc. We hold that to eliminate all forms of violence against women preventive policies based on purging society of violence are essential. In this



framework, our basic approach to the problem of the impoverishment of women is to uphold setting up and organizing in cooperatives where the producing identity of women will come to light. Our emancipatory-democratic local government system, following the example of our previous terms in local government, will act with the aim of not leaving a single woman unreached by establishing women's support-solidarity-production centers throughout all neighborhoods in this term.

In the face of femininity built by capitalist modernity, women emancipatory knowledge, experiences and emotions, and horizontal, democratic deeds, and deeds against hegemony need to be integrated into all activities of emancipatory-democratic local governments. The aim should be to develop a tremendous awareness of making a correct analysis of the reality of capitalist modernity and its implementer, the nation state; of creating mechanisms that do not replicate the hegemon, especially concerning relations between men and women, and of governing these mechanisms. In this sense, there should be no distinction between metropolitan, city, district, nor directorates, departments, etc. It is essential that the mechanisms organized as such should not be considered as separate or fragmented from each other in any way and should be governed by a common mentality, that is by women emancipatory mentality and practice.

It is extremely important to keep our belief in the depth and power of our own intellectual wealth, policies and literature alive and to organize this approach in the society as well. The modernism brought about by nation-states and nation-state coalitions through their media, technology, fashion and aesthetic policies, or by grant institutions via project-writing and the womanhood and assimilationist policies it has built, must be analyzed correctly, and administrative activities must be carried out with this awareness. Against cultural assimilation, the insidious and gradual policies such as project-writing of centers of hegemony should on any ground be prevented from being symmetrically or asymmetrically turned into the main work, the main source; a balanced stand should be adopted on this issue.

Freedom-centered-democratic local governments are the most fundamental mechanism through which the people of Kurdistan, Kurdish women and girls, confronted with cultural genocide, will reunite with their language, culture and nature, build and sustain their culture in the face of assimilation. Policies and practices that do not converge with women emancipatory approach and have not grown from within it must not be tolerated. Cultural identity must be seen as a whole and all activities must be organized accordingly. Emancipatory-democratic local governments are for all segments of society. This is why it is so important to create grounds and activities that will build intergenerational transfer/interaction and unity between different age groups, genders, lifestyles and pedagogies without compromising democratic, ecological and women emancipatory principles.



Our greatest resource is our flexible minds that have not lost their propensity for freedom. The most important role in the revolution of mentality will belong to the academies of language, culture, history and politics to be established in emancipatory-democratic local governments. Our ideological strength, courage and experiences are our greatest heritage. In this sense, it is necessary to keep the memory alive, to make experience sharing continuous, and not to start the history of struggle with ourselves. Blending our deep-rooted local government experience, our historical existence and the answer we give to the question of what kind of life we want to live should be our beacon both in emancipatory-democratic local government planning and in our academies. A radical transformation in front of all the teachings of the consumer society, the male-dominated and capitalist system, where daily planning and unprogrammed forms of governance are habitualized, can be achieved through academies based on local, democratic, ecological life and women emancipatory knowledge. Otherwise, governing practices that are not guided by due intellectual/mental concentration will take place and this will fail to lead to a radical social transformation.

With all these dimensions, the struggle we are waging is the bed of the river that will channel the construction of a new life from the local to the international. It is our social responsibility to struggle recognizing how effective the diversity and differences of localities can be in change and transformation, and base ourselves on this power seeing how the repercussions of our struggle reach beyond geographical boundaries.

In this period when we set out once again for emancipatory-democratic local governments, we will continue to show that "jin, jîyan, azadi" philosophy is the only salvation for all humanity and nature, especially women. With our emancipatory-democratic local government model, which is the ground and soil on which democratic world confederalism and democratic women's confederalism will flourish, we will continue to deliver the women emancipatory, democratic and ecological life paradigm to all social mechanisms in the Middle East and the world, without stopping for a moment against capitalist modernity.

**Tevgera Jinên Azad (TJA)**