

# Information Center of Afrin Resistance



Information Center Of  
**AFRIN**  
RESISTANCE

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The Information Center of Afrin Resistance is providing direct information from the inside of Afrin. Since the 26th January 2018 we report up-to-date about the invasion and war crimes of the Turkish state and the resistance of the people in Afrin.

This is the weekly summary of the developments in and around Afrin.

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# **The Developments in Afrin and Northern Syria 27<sup>th</sup> April - 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2018**

## **Introduction**

With the defeat of the IS in Syria and especially after the liberation of Raqqa in October 2017, the Turkish state intensified its threats and attacks on the Democratic Confederation of Northern Syria. On this background the Turkish occupation war on Afrin started the 20th January 2018 violating international law and the sovereignty of its neighbour country. The Turkish army has launched this war in cooperation with jihadist groups of the FSA ranks. Many of them are former Al-Qaida or IS members. Since the beginning of March, all districts and the city centre of Afrin had been under heavy bombardments, shelling and drone surveillance by the Turkish army targeting especially civilians. On March 18th more than 200,000 people left the town centre which was evacuated in order to avoid a physical genocide. Since then the majority of refugees is staying in the Shehba region without security guarantee and international support.

In this new phase, the confrontation between the international powers and their interests is increasing all over Syria.

## **Last week's Developments inside Afrin**

After 103 days of resistance against the second biggest army of the NATO, hundreds of people from Afrin Canton are still displaced and are facing difficult conditions. The Turkish army and its FSA allies are implementing ethnic cleansing, assimilation and colonisation policies, preventing the population to return to their villages and continuing preparations to add the region Afrin to Turkey's state territory. The resistance of YPG-YPJ forces in the all districts of Canton Afrin carries on, as well as the resistance of the displaced people from Afrin in Shehba region. Tensions between regional and international powers became even more evident since the strikes by USA, UK and France on Syrian facilities. As well, the Syrian regime attacked the SDF in Deir ez-Zohr.

### **Afrin**

The Turkish army and the FSA forces still carry on threats, kidnapping and killing against the people in the occupied Afrin Canton. They carried out a large-scale arrest campaign against Afrin people under the pretext that they were members of Autonomous Administration institutions or deal with them. They ask for ransom in return for their release [1]. Turkish army and FSA forces have abducted at least 58 people including 26 Êzidîs since April 18th in Afrin [2]. On May 2nd, local sources reported that the Turkish army and FSA forces abducted the 27-year-old Ednan Ebdulhenan in the Mezin village on the grounds of "connections with the autonomous administration". A woman rescued from the FSA forces in Afrin told to "Jin News" that she was about to be captured to be married by force to a FSA member and that she witnessed the beheading of a young man [3]. A source of the Yazidis organization "Yazda" in Afrin confirmed that, on April 26th, 11 Yazidi civilians from Qatma village near Afrin were taken by FSA militia members to an unknown

destination [4]. According to the news agency ANHA, in the village of Xelnêre a Turkish drone targeted a family in a olive garden on April 29th. Xalid Mustafa (24) was killed while his father Wehid Mustefa (50) and his brother Eli Mustefa (23) were wounded.

According to local sources, the Turkish army kidnapped 3 thousand civilians from Shiye district, tortured them, took them to Mirkan village (Mabeta district), and then some to Qarmitlak village and some to Turkey for interrogation. There is no information about their situation [5].

Furthermore, there are increasing incidents of civilians being killed or injured by landmine explosions, in Afrin as well as in Shehba. According to Afrin Media Center, two people from the city of Arbeen in the countryside of Damascus were killed on May 2nd in the village of Basoute, south of Afrin, as a result of a landmine explosion. They were part of the population moved to Afrin by the Russia-Turkey agreement. Two brothers, Siyand Sheikh Na'san (8 years old) and Hassan Sheikh Na'san (11 years old) were killed by a landmine exploded in the Sheikh area of Qantara village adjacent to the town of Maabtali, Northwest of Afrin.

The Hamzah Faction arrested and killed a folk singer and his son: Abdelkader Kilisli and Khaled Kilisli. The bodies were handed over to their relatives on April 29th in the village of Jalma (Jinderese district). In the village of Qudah the Turkish army uprooted hundreds of olive trees and prevented the residents of the village from leaving to work their fields by planting mines. Local sources report that there are many dead bodies in the village and the occupying forces prevent people from burying them [6].

On April 30th, the names of the members of the Turkish backed council of Shiyê district have been revealed. The president is Ahmed Hesên, Vice-pdt Ahmed Şêxo. The members Ferhat Amed Xorto, Zekerîya Nasan, Revand Sileyman, Abdo Hannan.

In addition, fightings occur between different FSA factions: On April 29th, shellings have been reported around Afrin city, as the new arrivals from Goutha refused to hand over their weapons to the "Olive Branch" forces. Moreover, Turkish army started to train radical islamist factions in the occupied region of Afrin. The group is branded as Sultan Suleiman referring to Ottoman Sultan [7].

### **Shehba and Northern Syria**

According to the Co-chair of Ahras council, Hamza Jawish, the town of Ahras received about 40,000 people from Afrin. In addition, the council of Ahras began the provision of aid and food supplies, as well as provision of housing in families' houses, mosques and schools. The displaced people from Afrin are still facing very difficult conditions and life danger in many ways. As a result of the lack of medicines in Shehba canton and lack of special care physicians, the suffering and tragedy of patients and their families is increasing. On April 27th, the director of the Kurdish Red

Crescent, Emar Mihemed, said that some 2,800 people have diabetes but the necessary medicine is very limited and urgently needed in order to secure that the patients will be properly looked after.

Furthermore, there are still thousands of landmines spread all over the territory of Shehba, which are remains of the ISIS occupation of the region. As reported above, cases of civilians who accidentally step onto mines increase. Many died or lost their limbs [8].

However, on April 30<sup>th</sup>, Afrin's people showed their resistance in Shehba. Aldar Xelil from TEV-DEM, Emine Huseyin, from Kongra Star & Imad Davut from the Shehba Council gave speeches about the political meaning of the war on Afrin and Rojava [9].

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, the Syrian Democratic Forces regained control of the villages attacked by the Syrian regime east of the Euphrates in Deir ez-Zohr. The SDF spokesperson, Kino Gabriel, said: "As our Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) preparing to complete al-Jazeera Tempest campaign to liberate the remaining areas of al-Jazeera from the grip of terrorist organization and secure the eastern border of Syria, the Syrian regime army and its militias began targeting our forces in Deir ez-Zohr's countryside along the Euphrates River in order to block the launch of our campaign against terrorism." [10]

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, Turkish warplanes bombarded Ashma village (Kobanê region), next to the Turkish/Syrian border. There are no casualties reported but several material damages.

On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, a bomb explosion in Pira Spi area (close to Heseke) resulted in 3 children killed and 7 civilians injured. Furthermore, Turkish soldiers positioned on the Girê Spî border targeted citizens working in their fields close to the Silûkê district border: Dendî Reşo Muslim and Xelûf Mihemed Îsa were wounded.

### **Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran**

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Turkish police raided HDP Gungoren district branch during an indoor meeting for the upcoming elections. 39 party member, including Istanbul HDP co-chair Cengiz Cicek, were detained. On the same day, HDP executives were arrested in Denizli. In Istanbul (Turkey) at least 60 people were detained in occasion of the 1st of May demonstrations. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, during the trial of Demirtaş and Önder in Istanbul Silivri Prison Campus, the court chair ordered the lawyers to be removed from the court room, alleging that they disrupted the order of the hearing, while soldiers surrounded the lawyers. The prosecutor demanded up to 5 years in prison for Demirtaş and Önder for "terrorist propaganda". The next hearing is to be held on June 8<sup>th</sup> in the Istanbul Court House in Çağlayan.

Since 19 days, protests continue in many cities of Iran and Rojhilat (Eastern Kurdistan), caused by the prohibition of border trade in Iran and customs taxation. In fact, over 80,000 border traders and about 6 million artisans are left without work. In Iran, some days before May 1<sup>st</sup> the political Kurdish prisoner Ramin Hossein Panahi was transported to the Sanandaj prison where, in total isolation, waits his execution. The Secretary of the Council of the Iranian Resistance called to save

Ramin Hossein Panahi [11]. A total of 36 Kurds were detained by security forces in Iranian Kurdistan (Rojhilat) in the past month, according to statistics by human rights organization Hengaw.

In Iraq, at least seven people were killed and 13 others were wounded after Islamic State (ISIS) militants opened fire on civilians in Tarmiya, located 25 kilometers north of Baghdad, on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Solidarity for Afrin**

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, in Castellò (Valencia, Spain) a women action was carried out for the life of Kurdish women and the women's revolution.

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, Munich police confessed that solidarity with the YPG/YPJ has increased in Bavaria despite bans. Imposing a ban on YPG/YPJ flags in demonstrations, the German police conduct raids on the houses of those who share the flags and images of fighters on social media.

On the same day, an action has been carried out at the Belgian Foreign Ministry against the Turkish invasion in Afrin [12]. On April 29<sup>th</sup>, demonstrators in Bilbao (Basque Country) showed solidarity with the Kurdish people.

The Comité de Mujeres en Solidaridad con Kurdistan (Argentina) organized a Commemoration in Buenos Aires on Sunday May 6<sup>th</sup> to the internationalist doctor and fighter Alina Sánchez (Lêgerîn Çiya) who lost her life in Rojava in March of this year [13].

On the First of May, many demonstrations were connected to the topic of Afrin, in solidarity with the freedom struggle of Kurdistan and against the Turkish occupation: In several cities of Germany, Canada, Norway, France, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Spain people were out on the streets for that cause. Also in Turkey (Bursa) the demonstrators connected to the topic, even if among many difficulties due to the repressive policies of the authorities.

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, in the Centre for Kurdish Progress Russel-Moyle (British Labour), after his recent participation to a delegation in Northern Syria, said "I urge the British government to recognize Rojava, to provide resources for health and hospitals, and to ensure that the people of Rojava are at the peace negotiation table" [14].

A solidarity campaign with Afrin resistance and Afrin's displacement people by Punks for Rojava started. All profit will be donated to Kurdish Red Crescent. As well, many Italian internationalists call to support the campaign "SiAmo Afrin" to collect funds for the displaced Afrin's people in Shehba region.

The Kurdish Red Crescent itself launched as well a call for donations and international support, as there is a big lack of medicine and medical supply in Shehba region. [15]

## Statements and analysis

The friends of Haukur Hilmarsson - Sahin Hosseini call for help bringing him home: "Our worst thought is not that he is dead. He might be a prisoner of the Turks and we all know what treatment terrorists get in the hands of the Turks" **[16]**.

The German party Die Linke proposed a draft bill to ban arms sales to any government suspected of using the equipment to abuse human rights. It includes specifically the "Leopard" tank used by Turkey in Afrin **[17]**.

Amnesty International launched the campaign "We need to talk about Turkey". In fact, as Turkey approaches 2 years of a state of emergency, human rights defenders in the country are living in a constant climate of fear and intimidation **[18]**.

The Co-chair of the Democratic Autonomous Administration in Afrin canton, Hevi Mustafa, said that they had received no response to the letters they sent to the United Nations, the European Union, human rights organizations, Human Rights Watch and the League of Arab States. Ilham Ahmed, the Co-chair of Syrian Democratic Council, alleged the Russian, Iranian and Turkish foreign ministers who met in Moscow on April 28<sup>th</sup>, were briefed ahead of the same-day attack by Syrian-regime loyalists against the US-led coalition backed SDF.

On April 28th, during a public meeting in Stockholm (Sweden), the PYD Co-chair, Shahoz Hesên, stated: "This does not mean that we will leave Afrin to the Turkish state and the DAESH gangs. The struggle and the resistance will last until the invaders are expelled from Afrin" **[19]**.

Gule Cafer, head of the Ezidi Women Union Afrin wrote in an open letter to the international public: "Thousands of regulations have been created to protect the right of women and children. In Afrin all these laws and regulations were disregarded." **[20]**

On April 27th, the US State Department said about Pompeo and Çavusoglu meeting that they reaffirmed their support for the established bilateral process to find a common way forward in Manbij. They also discussed the United States' commitment to support Turkey's national security concerns.

The SDF resumed the operations against ISIS in order to free the last areas. As the defeat of ISIS, the new phase shows the states as direct player in the Syria war. The tensions between the US-led coalition and Russia continue out of strategic interests over Middle East. After the Turkish and FSA invasion of Afrin canton, the attack of the Syrian regime forces against the SDF in Deir Ez-Zor could mark the beginning of new confrontations.

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