

# Information Center of Afrin Resistance



Information Center of  
**AFRIN**  
RESISTANCE

Weekly News Bulletin from Afrin

**# 3**

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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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## Last Week's Developments inside Afrin

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 war on Afrin started on 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.<sup>1</sup>

### War and Humanitarian Situation

Since the beginning of the war, the civil population of Afrin has been suffering the most: Kurds, Arabs, Turkmens, Armenian, Ezidis, Alewites, Christians and Muslims. According to the co-chair of Afrin Health Council between 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 due to the attacks of the Turkish army and its affiliated jihadist FSA groups on the region of Afrin more than 207 civilians were killed and 602 were injured, among them children, women and old people.

Since the beginning of the war on Afrin civilian settlement places and agricultural areas have been attacked by the Turkish army by heavy artillery shelling and air-strikes. During the last week from 22<sup>nd</sup> February until 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 the Turkish state intensified these attacks targeting civilians with air-strikes, tanks and heavy artillery while drones are monitoring the area. Along with devastating bombings thousands of soldiers and jihadist FSA members are trying to occupy villages and towns of Afrin's boarder regions by brutally killing villagers that are refusing to leave their homes. Executions<sup>2</sup> of civilians and plundering of village houses that were occupied by Turkish army have been reported.

Last week we reported about the deployment of village guards from Northern Kurdistan/Turkey by the Turkish army in Afrin. This week Turkish officials announced that they would start to deploy their special gendarme and police forces "JOH" and "POH" in Afrin to prepare for the "street battles" in the city. These special forces are known for their inhumane practices committing massacres on civilians in Cizir, Sur and many other Kurdish populated cities in Northern Kurdistan/Turkey. Multiple crimes and human rights violations have been reported in between 2015 and 2016, which were committed by these units.<sup>3</sup>

Fightings between SDF forces and the Turkish army and their allies have been continuing in all districts of Afrin Province over the whole week. Heavy clashes especially have been reported from the districts Jinderes, Rajo, Shiye and Shera. At the same time Turkish air-force and artillery have targeting non-stop all areas of Afrin. On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 the SDF issued a statement on the results of one month of resistance in Afrin.<sup>4</sup> According to this report until 22<sup>nd</sup> February 177 SDF-fighters became martyred in Afrin. During the same period 1219 Turkish soldiers and FSA jihadists were killed. The systematic destruction of civilian settlement places by attacks of the Turkish army is going on. Many villages and quarters have been totally destroyed so that nobody can live there any more.<sup>5</sup> Schools, hospitals, houses and infrastructure have been targeted. It is very likely the number of civilian casualties is much higher as due to continuing bombing and shelling neither

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1 Dossier: "Radical Factions and ISIS members participating in Afrin invasion"

2 <https://www.fort-russ.com/2018/02/video-turkish-led-forces-afrin-execute-kurdish-civilian-steal-tractor/>

3 [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/OHCHR\\_South-East\\_TurkeyReport\\_10March2017.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/OHCHR_South-East_TurkeyReport_10March2017.pdf)

4 [https://icafrinresist.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/sdf\\_22-02.pdf](https://icafrinresist.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/sdf_22-02.pdf)

5 A video showing destruction of Jinderes town, caused by turkish artillery and airstrikes  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgTScU6ydK4>

living people can be rescued nor dead civilians can be recovered under the bombed ruins of their houses.<sup>6</sup> According to researches until now 31 schools have been targeted by Turkish aggressions.<sup>7</sup> This week especially the destruction of bakeries in the region has been reported by IC correspondents on the ground. According to the information they obtained 22 out of a total of 35 bakeries in Afrin had to stop their works because of destruction and life-danger.

The Afrin University issued an information file and statement in which they pointed out that the damage caused by Turkey's war on Afrin is not restricted to material damage, but effects all fields of life and society. Students not being able to study, teachers not able to teach. Many university members were displaced in a result of the destruction of their villages and even the place of the university had to be changed three times.<sup>8</sup>

Another Peoples' Solidarity Convoy that consisted of hundreds of civilians from Cizir Canton, Kobane Canton, Tebqa, Raqqa and Manbij set off to Afrin on 21 February 2018. When the convoy was entering Afrin Kanton it was directly targeted by Turkish artillery. The shelling went on for hours leading to the death of the Arab civilian Salim Xilef (27) and 12 other injured civilians. Turkish officials claim that they would have attacked a military convoy, but all evidences prove the opposite. Since the convoy was openly announced in the media and Turkish drones were intensively monitoring the convoy for hours on its way from Aleppo to Afrin, we can conclude that this attack was carried out on purpose to stop the solidarity of the people and isolate Afrin totally.<sup>9</sup> The convoy was accompanied by two French journalists, that were able to testify the attack on civilians.<sup>10 11</sup> At the same time members of IC Afrin Resistance and the Internationalist Commune as well were participating to the convoy and have been able to document the attack.<sup>12</sup>

Again on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018 a Convoy of International Red Cross got hit by Turkish artillery shelling in Shera district.

While the attacks on Afrin and especially civilians are going on, in Turkey itself any opposition against the war is harshly oppressed. Until today at least 840 person were arrested in Turkey just for opposing the war in social media activities.

### **Resistance of people in Afrin**

Although the situation and life conditions for the population are getting harder day by day, the people in Afrin do not step back in resisting against war and occupation. They are supporting the resisting SDF fighters on the front-lines by cooking food or helping wounded. Many people try to participate to the resistance by their own means. The people in Afrin city opened their houses to internal displaced people who had to flee from their bombed villages. In spite of this everyday thousands take to the streets to protest against Turkey's aggression, to participate to a funeral or to welcome the supporters coming from other regions of Northern Syria. Until today 800 members of the Youth Union of Rojava (YCR) joined the resistance in Afrin.

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6 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43228472>

7 [https://icafrinresist.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/schulen\\_en.pdf](https://icafrinresist.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/schulen_en.pdf)

8 <https://icafrinresist.files.wordpress.com/2018/02/en-report1.pdf>

9 <https://icafrinresist.wordpress.com/2018/02/23/information-centre-afrin-resistance-statement-about-the-recent-attacks-on-civil-solidarity-convoy-to-afrin/#more-684>

10 <https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/1101617/en-route-pour-afrine-bouzouks-et-tambours-juste-avant-les-bombes-turques.html>

11 [https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/syrie-isoles-les-kurdes-font-appel-aux-milices-pro-bachar-23-02-2018-2197496\\_24.php](https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/syrie-isoles-les-kurdes-font-appel-aux-milices-pro-bachar-23-02-2018-2197496_24.php)

12 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pjd2NlOrQm0>

## **Solidarity with Afrin**

On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018 the Mobilization-Platform of Afrin Resistance declared its foundation and announced their general call for mobilization by calling upon all revolutionaries, socialists, democrats and anti-fascists to join the Afrin resistance.<sup>13</sup>

On 24 February a women's delegation with 18 delegates of 8 women's organisations from the three other parts of Kurdistan set off to Afrin expressing their solidarity with the resistance of the women and the people of Afrin.

Salih Muslim who went for talks on behalf of the Northern Syrian Administration to different European countries to address the public and media, was arrested on 25 February in Czech capital Prague. The Czech authorities claimed that he was arrested due to a warrant of arrest that Turkey gave to Interpol. Due to an outcry of in the public, strong protests all over Europe as well as protests of many EU MPs and civil society organisations Salih Muslim was released after two days in custody. An interesting fact is that Interpol did not approve the existence of such an international warrant. Besides at the time of his arrest death threats against Salih Muslim were spread on social media by members of the Turkish secret service MIT.

Still there are actions in solidarity with Afrin resistance taking place all over the world. Many official institutions of different countries have been condemning the Turkish invasion as a violation of international law and attacks on civilians as clear war crimes. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018 again mass protests and demonstrations are going to take place internationally.

The women's movement Kongra Star has announced that this year's International Women's Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March will stand in the sign of Afrin Resistance and the defence of the women's revolution. Under the slogan "Women Rise Up For Afrin" women from all over Northern Syria will head towards Afrin.

## **Statements and Analysis**

Everyday the signs of Turkish state's preparations for "ethnic cleansing" to achieve a "demographic change" in Afrin are increasing: either through forced displacement of the people or through even worse massacres the Turkish government strives to depopulate the region in order to make Syrian refugees return to these emptied settlement areas on Syrian territory.

Despite UN Security Council declared a 30 day ceasefire for entire Syria the attacks on Afrin have been continuing and even intensified. The SDF issued a statement in which they said, that they would respect such a ceasefire. On the contrary, the Turkish State declared that the ceasefire would not include Afrin and they would continue their military operations. Against this government officials from France, Germany and USA criticised Turkey's ongoing attacks and stressed that the ceasefire agreement by the UN Security Council would also comprise Afrin.

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13 <https://ku.hawarnews.com/platforma-seferberiya-efrine-hate-ilankirin>