

Information Center of Afrin Resistance



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AFRIN
RESISTANCE

Weekly News Bulletin on Afrin

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The Information Center of Afrin Resistance is providing direct information on 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

11th May - 17th 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. Within this context, the Turkish occupation war on Afrin started on the 20th of January 2018, violating international law and the sovereignty of its neighbour country. The Turkish army has launched this war in cooperation with jihadist groups from 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 and were evacuated in order to avoid a genocide. Since then, the majority of refugees are staying in the Shehba region without guarantee of security 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 116 days of resistance against the second biggest army of NATO, hundreds of people from the Afrin Canton are still displaced from their land and are facing difficult life conditions. The Turkish army and its FSA allies are implementing ethnic cleansing, assimilation and colonisation policies, preventing the population from returning to their villages and continuing preparations to add the Afrin region to Turkey's State territory. Currently, the resistance of YPG-YPJ forces in all districts of the Afrin Canton carries on, as well as the resistance of the displaced people of Afrin inside Shehba region. Tensions between regional and international powers became apparent with air strikes by USA, UK and France on Syrian facilities.

Afrin

In Afrin city, the FSA forces and the Turkish military continue to kidnap, torture and threaten the population. In addition, fighters from East Goutha and Douma, along with their families, are settling in the area. On May 11th, in Afrin at least a girl and three men were kidnapped by the Turkish army. Their names are: Khedîce (the girl), Ebdulrehman Misto (a young boy), Reşîd Mustefa and his son Berazî Reşîd [1]. According to the Afrin Media Center, the Ahrar Al-Sham faction of FSA kidnapped 25 civilians from the Kurzila village on May 15th [2]. A local source reported that the lawyer Mohammed Jamil, who is the head of a human rights organization in Afrin canton, was kidnapped two months ago by one of the checkpoints held jointly by the Turkish intelligence and FSA forces [3].

Local sources reported that FSA forces have transformed Amir Ghabari schools, near Azadi Square in the center of Afrin city, into the headquarters of the Turkish intelligence, gathering the arrested people and torturing them [4]. Moreover, it has been reported that on the 5th of May Turkish backed groups harvested the wheat crop of 50 hectares owned by local farmers. Hawarnews published the list of the landowners [5].

Turkey has created new police forces in Afrin which include FSA members [6].

The YPG / YPJ continued to be active in the Afrin Canton. YPG have published the outcomes of their actions which took place between April 29th and May 8th. They had been carried out in the Mahmoodie neighbourhood of Afrin city, Kafar Mazrah and Maraskah villages (Shera district), Basoofan village (Sherawa district) and Hammam village (Jindirese district). The Turkish army and the FSA carried out bombardments on Hawar mountain and an operation in Mabata district, that was repelled by YPG / YPJ. As a result of the clashes inside Afrin, four Turkish soldiers and eleven FSA members were killed [7-8].

Shehba and Northern Syria

The situation for Afrin's displaced people in the Shehba region is still difficult. In addition to the medical services provided by the Kurdish Red Crescent, the Shehba Health Council has began to plan to stablish a dispensary in the Um al-Housh village of Ahras district [9]. The Serdem Camp's administration in al-Shahba has set up an internet connection and it is working to open up a playground [10].

On may 11th, the Turkish army targeted the Ghazil border village (Girê Spî district) with a missile, which didn't exploded because of heavy rain [11]. On May 14th, the Turkish army attacked Ali Shbar village, near Kobane. They shot at people and vehicles, but no casualties were reported. [12]

On May 12th, in Raqqa, a loader vehicle crushed an ISIS-planted landmine while cleaning the rubble. Three workers got injured [13]. On May 15th, a car exploded at the border gate held by regime forces in Qamishlo. In this case the driver and a pedestrian died [14].

On May 12th, a women's delegation from Switzerland and Germany visited the natural health care institution of the Foundation of Free Women of Rojava (WJAR, for its name in Kurdish) [15] in Derbesiye.

On May 13th, during the "Jazeera Storm Operation" against ISIS, the SDF forces took the village of Bagouz, cutting ISIS's connections to Iraq [16].

Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran

Meral Aksener, Turkish presidential candidate for the İyi Party, has joined an outcry demanding the release of politician Selahattin Demirtas. Her party was born recently on October 2017 from an internal opposition group inside the right-wing MHP party [17].

Twenty people who were beaten outside the Turkish ambassador's residence in Washington in 2017, have filed lawsuits against the government of Turkey, including five individuals after the bloody assault on demonstrators which was condemned internationally [18].

On May 16th, a military convoy belonging to the Turkish army entered Jisr al-Shoghour to establish the 12th observation point between the al-Sarmaniya and Ghana areas in the Western countryside of Jisr al-Shagor (Idlib, Northern Aleppo province), thus separating the city entirely from Syria [19].

Solidarity for Afrin

The campaign “Boycott Tourism in Turkey” started in Bilbao, Basque Country [20].

On May 11th, 30.000 people marched in Munich supporting the struggle of Rojava. The demonstrators protested the new repressive policies discussed by the State of Bavaria [21].

During the three day visit of Erdogan to the United Kingdom, several protest actions took place. On May 15th, British YPG volunteers and Kurdish activists dropped an enormous #TAMAM banner to protest Theresa May's Downing Street reception of Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan [22-23]. Pro-kurdish protesters occupied the Airbus factory in Bristol, where wings for the A400M transport aircraft are manufactured, some of which have been supplied to the Turkish military. There, they spread out three large banner portraits of women who have been killed defending Afrin with the YPJ, including the Anna Campbell / Helin Qerechox, who was honoured [24] and lived in Bristol.

Statements and analysis

Silvia Hauff, member of the German party Die Linke, visited refugee camps in Shehba, as a part of the German women's delegation. She denounced the stance of the German government towards Afrin's occupation and stressed the importance of solidarity for Rojava [25].

On April 28th, the Global Action Day for Hasankeyf and Sur was celebrated. On that day, the Mesopotamian Ecology Movement, Initiative to Keep Hasankeyf Alive, The Corner House and Peace in Kurdistan Campaign sent an open letter to British Prime Minister Theresa May about Turkey's use of water as a weapon of war [26].

On May 14th-15th, the 9th round of Astana meetings concluded with a final statement issued by Russia, Turkey and Iran setting the next deadline for a new meeting to continue their shared policies in Syria [27].

The Israeli army declared that it struck dozens of Iran-linked military targets in Syria on May 10th in response to rocket fire [28]. This is an escalation in regional hostilities.

Sources and further information

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