



The Democratic
Federation of North Syria
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Addressing the Current Situation in Afrin, Syria

The Hague, Netherlands – On 20 January 2018, the Turkish regime under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan launched an unprovoked military assault against the Syrian city of Afrin. The military campaign, called “Operation Olive Branch”, is in direct violation of international law regarding the invasion of a sovereign state initiated with no provocation or legitimate justification.

Turkey alleges that the city of Afrin is harboring ISIS terrorists and that Kurdish forces have attacked Turkish forces across the border. Therefore, the Turkish regime claims that the invasion of Afrin is a legitimate military operation necessary to secure Turkish borders against foreign threats. However, these claims have been consistently refuted by multiple local and international investigations, including a statement released by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers released on 25 January 2018. In addition, Erdoğan has stated recently that the Turkish military plans to extend the Olive Branch campaign to the rest of the Turkish-Syrian border including the areas around Manbij, Kobane, and Qamishli – even extending into Iraqi Kurdistan Region.

Despite attempts by the Turkish regime to justify this military operation, the actions of the campaign also contradict any legitimacy. The Turkish military is conducting ongoing indiscriminate bombing campaign throughout the region of Afrin, targeting civilian populations, refugee/IDP camps, and internal infrastructure. At least 17 civilian deaths, 7 of them children, have been confirmed. The Turkish military has also expanded its bombing campaign outside of Afrin, targeting cities across Syrian Democratic Forces SDF-controlled North Syria, including Qamishli, Hasakah, and Deriki.

There have been limited statements from the West regarding Turkey’s latest aggressions. Notably, Dutch Chairman of European United Left, Tiny Kox, condemned Erdoğan’s actions and called for a halt to all Turkish military operations against the Kurdish people in Syria. However, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Halbe Zijlstra called for Turkey to be given the “benefit of the doubt” and the ability to defend itself against legitimate security concerns. This contradicts the Dutch government’s earlier stance in which it expressed concern over Turkish aggression and called on the Turkish regime to exercise “great restraint”.

Other members of the Global Coalition Against Daesh have also expressed concern and condemnation over Turkish assault on Afrin and North Syria, including France, Germany, and the United States.

For those would like more information, there will be a demonstration this Saturday, 27 January 2018 at Amstel 1, Amsterdam, Netherlands (Stadhuis van Amsterdam) beginning at 14:00.