

YASA e.V.

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YASA is a civil society organisation concerned with the issue of human rights in northern Syria, as well as the ramifications and effects on minority rights.

In the first instance, I would like to highlight the fact that the Kurdish people in northern Syria are currently being subjected to a bombing campaign as we sit here. Kobani, which was celebrated by the world for its victory over terrorism, is today being subjected to bombing and destruction in the face of silence by the international community.

Pursuant to the United Nations Declaration on Minority Rights (1992) and I quote:

“States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity of minorities ... and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.”

Consequently, and in light of the current situation of the Kurdish people in northern Syria, we regrettably confirm that the attempt to transform the aforementioned laws into a lived reality has utterly failed.

The documents we have gathered from Afrin since January 2018, which had a Kurdish majority of more than 95% of its inhabitants, prove the perpetration of serious violations. For example, but not limited to:

1. The destruction and alteration of the demographic infrastructure.
2. Unlawful excavation and theft of historical heritage.
3. Systematic killing, arrest, and extortion perpetrated against the remaining Kurdish minority.
4. Rape and sexual violations.

From the point of view of international law these violations amount to war crimes. Therefore, we request the following:

Firstly: Immediate intervention to halt the violations.

Secondly: Permission for all the refugees to return.

Thirdly: To review the case of Afrin by enacting:

1. Human rights laws.
2. Laws protecting minority rights.
3. The Convention on the Prevention of Genocide (1948), as adopted by the United Nations.

We would add two further notes:

The Turkish occupation of Afrin and the subsequent crimes perpetrated there occurred under the pretext of applying Article 51 of the UN Charter, but without any evidence.

In the aftermath of the occupation of Afrin by Turkey and its jihadist groups, the area was converted into a source of human capital for wars in other countries, such as Libya and Armenia.

With thanks,
YASA