

Lelun Association for Victims' speech at the Minorities Forum

My name is Kawa Omar and I am from the Kurdish Afrin region in north Syria here speaking on the behalf of Lelun Association for Victims.

I would like to convey to you the suffering of our people in Afrin region, which was invaded by Turkey in March 2018. Its indigenous Kurdish people have been suffering from violations of human rights since the beginning of the Turkish operation dubbed "Olive Branch", and which has resulted in the forced displacement of most Kurdish families who have since been living in camps in the Shehba Region in North Aleppo Governorate where they don't even have the minimum essentials for living in light of the siege by the Syrian state.

The Turkish state is coordinating with armed factions to bring non-Kurdish sectarian groups to the Afrin region to live in Kurdish homes and seizing Kurdish properties and working to bring about a demographic change in the region.

On the other hand, those Kurds who remain in Afrin are subjected to racial persecution discrimination and violations such as the killing of four young Kurdish men by armed factions on the eve of Nowraz 2023 in the city of Jindires, as well as the torture and killing of the lawyer Lukman Hanan which was reported by the independent international investigative committee on Syria. This is in addition to applying financial tariffs on their harvests and being victims of kidnapping for ransom.

The Kurdish Yazidis and Christians in Afrin are suffering from double violations by being forced to convert to Islam and the destruction of their homes and burial places. An example of this is the Yazidi citizen who miscarried as a result of torture in the prisons of these factions.

Furthermore, financing organisations are building residential complexes in Afrin region to house Arab families.

From this standpoint, we call on the international community to put a stop to the attacks that the Turkish state is carrying out against civilians in north and east Syria, and to put a stop to the violations that the armed factions are carrying out against the indigenous residents in Afrin [incomprehensible].

Thank you.