



KONGRA STAR

Open Letter to the

UN Secretary General ANTONIO GUTERRES,

Since October 9, 2019 the Turkish state and its so-called “National Army” which has been composed of former IS-members and other jihadists have been attacking uninterruptedly the territory of North and East Syria. Before the start of this announced occupation war and since its first days, the public expected an effective response and attitude by the UN to stop this war.

However, although there were some statements made, non of the UN statements had the clear aim of stopping the occupation war and did not implement international law or security mechanisms to protect those under threat from Turkish aggression. It seems impossible that the UN, with its 193 member states, could not prevent this bloody invasion, carried out under the cynical name “Peace Spring”, that has caused instability, displacement and chaos to the peoples of the Middle East. This will be remembered as one of the greatest failures in the history of the UN. Today, the Turkish state and its mercenaries are raiding our towns and villages, killing innocent people and abducting women. Most importantly, tens of thousands of people - especially from Serêkaniye (Ras al-Ain) - have been displaced from their land, detached from their homes, from their origins, livelihoods and sources of income. Due to the Turkish army’s bombardments they have been forced to leave their homeland becoming IDPs or refugees. Despite the clear violence of the Turkish campaign in North and East Syria the UN has thus far confined itself to the simple mission of giving “financial aid to refugees.”

The UN has at its disposal the power and the means to play a historical role and find a peaceful solution to the war and crisis in Syria. By playing a role in line with its mission as a peace-keeping force, the UN could have been a transnational actor in the democratization of Syria and all states in the Middle East. However, throughout the Syrian war and especially from the Turkish occupation of Afrîn, which started in January 2018 until the latest occupations of the towns and regions of Serêkaniye and Girespî (Tilebiyat) the UN has failed to act. Furthermore its policies have served the very states and forces that are imposing tyranny on the people of Syria.

As women living in north-eastern Syria and Rojava, since the first day of the war we have followed the UN Secretary-General’s statements with great attention and we conveyed our thoughts and demands to you in a letter that we wrote on 10 October and the Women’s Declaration signed by over 2,000 women’s organisations and human rights defenders which we sent to you on 1 November. In

Contact

womendefendrojawa@protonmail.com

womendefendrojawa.net



Twitter: @starcogress

Facebook: Kongra Star Diplomacy

Instagram: @WomenDefend

Youtube: Women Defend Rojava



KONGRA STAR

the UN charter, it is stated that during any war universal human rights should be a priority and remain something that are adhered to by participants in the war. On 10 October UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi stated: “Hundreds of thousands of civilians in northern Syria are now in harm’s way. Civilians and civilian infrastructure must not be a target.”

Not only in Serêkaniye, war crimes were committed that violated this statement dozens of times. Civilian people, including children, were attacked with chemical weapons. Within one or two days tens of thousands of civilians were driven away from their houses and land. Hevrin Xalef, co-chair of the Syrian Future Party, was tortured and executed. The bodies of YPJ fighters, who fought against ISIS were tortured, in a way that damaged their human dignity. With all this in mind, we would like to ask you; how it is possible to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in this climate? People have been forced to leave their homes, shops and assets behind. Turkey’s allied forces in this dirty war have looted them seeing them as “spoils of war”. We would like to know which section of the human rights declaration deems this as legitimate?

The UN is expected to take action against these and other countless crimes against humanity. Instead of action, we simply see the tendency to normalize this situation and to support Turkey’s inhuman practices. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres recently announced that he believes that it is possible to solve the crisis in Syria through an inclusive political solution, not a military one. People living in Syria are aware of the role the UN should be taking in finding this solution. However, the UN, which is expected to stop military violence, has not taken any effective or decisive steps in this direction.

Moreover, it was with serious consternation and anger that we heard the UN Secretary-General’s press statement after meeting Turkish president, Tayip Erdogan on 1st November which stated that “The Secretary-General expressed his deep appreciation for the strong cooperation and support of Turkey the United Nations”. After this meeting the Secretary-General announced that the “UNHCR will immediately form a team to study the proposal and engage in discussions with Turkish authorities” concerning Turkey’s plan for “new settlement areas for Syrian refugees”.

This statement undermines the chances of a political solution, fuels hostility among the peoples of the Middle East and affirms forced demographic change and genocide, also called ‘ethnic cleansing’. As women living in North and East Syria we do not accept and condemn the UN’s attitude and policies that have failed to protect our lives and rights.

Contact

womendefendrojawa@protonmail.com
womendefendrojawa.net



Twitter: @starcogress

Facebook: Kongra Star Diplomacy

Instagram: @WomenDefend

Youtube: Women Defend Rojava



KONGRA STAR

At the aforementioned meeting, Erdogan presented his plans to establish “refugee city projects” in the areas of Serêkaniye and Girespî, places from which tens of thousands of our people were forcibly displaced. Regarding this the UN Secretary-General mentioned only “the voluntary, safe and dignified of return of refugees”. This is extremely worrying with respect to the future of North and East Syria’s residents. Why does the UN Secretary-General ignore the right of tens of thousands of people displaced from their homes in Serêkaniye, Girespi and Til Temir to return to their cities in the same voluntary, safe and dignified manner?

Problems cannot be solved with conscientious blindness and social engineering, choosing not to see who are the actual owners of these cities. The UN Secretary-General announced that this project will be reviewed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. It is also very notable that the same statement remarks on the financial support of the Turkish government to the United Nations. The towns which have been destroyed by the Turkish army are now being rebuilt in the form of refugee cities with the ambition of Turkish capital and profit. We call upon the UN to live up to its stated neutrality and not to sacrifice peoples’ destinies to commercial agreements. It is ludicrous that the UN speaks of the investigative team while there is extensive evidence that tens of thousands of people have been expelled from their land which has been overrun by looting, torturing and murdering gangs of Turkey’s “National Army”.

As women living in North and East Syria and the Rojava region, we urge the Secretary-General finally to play the role that the UN has been unwilling to play from the beginning of the Syria crisis. In this manner:

- We urge the UN to produce effective policies and practices to stop Turkey’s aggression and occupation against North and East Syria to achieve a sustainable political solution which the UN also supports the realisation of.
- In order to preserve the UN’s neutrality, we request that an impartial expert mission should to be established by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and be sent to the regions of Serêkaniye, Gire Spî and Til Temir to see the fact that the “refugee cities project” has been established at the expense of demographic change and genocide. We request this mission to meet the tens of thousands of people who were forcibly displaced and examine whether their right to return ‘voluntarily, safely and with dignity’ to their homes is ensured. Further we appeal to examine the consequences of Erdogan’s policy of displacing population and making them refugees before approving his “refugee cities project”.

Contact

womendefendrojawa@protonmail.com
womendefendrojawa.net



Twitter: @starcogress

Facebook: Kongra Star Diplomacy

Instagram: @WomenDefend

Youtube: Women Defend Rojava



KONGRA STAR

• We do not believe that the present 150 members of the Syrian Constitution Committee represent the will of women who have been fighting heroically against ISIS terrorism in Syria during the 9 years of war. Furthermore, women who have been struggling for years for the democratization of Syria and women's freedom have not been recognized by this constitutional committee. A 20% representation of women in this committee does not solve the problem. The political significance becomes obvious by the fact that companions of Hevrîn Xalef, the popularly elected co-chairman of the Syrian Future Party, have been excluded from participating in the constitutional commission in Geneva, while the leaders of the perpetrators are included.

It is politically meaningful that FSA representatives who have been collaborating with killer groups like ISIS and El Nusra are included in the process while SDF representatives who have been fighting against ISIS for years and the SDC which represents the diversity of the people in Syria have been excluded. For 9 years, women, especially Kurdish women have given thousands of sacrifices for a democratic, free and peaceful Syria. Any constitutional initiative that denies this fact and invites gang-leaders with blood on their hands to the constitution table will deepen the chaos on Syrian territory. In order to avoid this we call to give seats to real advocates of democracy in the constitutional committee by taking into account the elected representatives of all ethnic communities and all women living in Syria.

On behalf of the coordination of Kongra Star

EVÎN SWÊD

Qamishlo, 04 November 2019

Contact

womendefendrojawa@protonmail.com
womendefendrojawa.net



Twitter: @starrcogress

Facebook: Kongra Star Diplomacy

Instagram: @WomenDefend

Youtube: Women Defend Rojava