



To the Non-Governmental Organisations Accredited to the United Nations,

Since the 9th of October 2019 there have been continuous attacks of the Turkish state and the jihadist terror groups which they call their national army on the lands of North and East Syria. Before the occupation war started and since the very first days of the occupation war, many social groups worldwide expected an effective statement and position from the UN on this topic. Although there have been some sporadic statements, the UN did not publish the expected statement that demands the end of this war of occupation and did not apply its international security mechanisms. The UN, with 193 member states, was not able to avoid this occupational war which Turkey calls by the name “Barış Pınarı” - fountain of peace –, a war which will bring instability, denigration and chaos for all peoples of the Middle East and will shed the blood of innocent people. The UN could have fulfilled its mission and performed a supranational role to democratize Syria and the Middle East. Instead, in their statements, the UN took the side of international profit interests and became an accomplice to the war themselves.

As women living in North-Eastern Syria and Rojava, we followed the statements of the Secretary-General of the UN since the first day with great attention and communicated our thoughts and demands with a letter. In the first statement of the UN it says that any military operations have to respect the UN charter and international humanitarian law, and that civilians and civilian infrastructure have to be protected through international law. In Serê Kanî (Ras al-Ayn) alone, dozens of war crimes violating this statement have been carried out by the Turkish army. Civilians including children have been attacked by chemical weapons. Tens of thousands were displaced from their lands within 1-2 days. The co-president of the Syrian Future Party, Hevrîn Xalef, was brutally murdered. The body of a YPJ-fighter who fought against ISIS was abused in a way that harmed the dignity of all humanity. Many times health workers who wanted to help the wounded were targeted, lots were killed and wounded. In Girê Spî (Tel Abyad), three health workers were kidnapped and brutally killed by jihadist gangs. Further, many people had to leave behind their workplaces and properties and became displaced. The forces of the Turkish state in this dirty war saw the property of the people who were forced to leave their lands as their war booty, they looted and will continue to loot the properties. When looking at all of this, how can we say that “civilians and civilian infrastructure are protected”?! It is clear that the UN, which remains silent towards all the unlawfulness in this dirty war, has taken the side of the state laws instead of international humanitarian laws. The fact that the “safety corridor” which Turkey declares is actually a zone of ethnic cleansing is now clear to everybody.

While we were expecting the UN to take steps against the countless humanitarian crimes and war crimes, the statements by the General Secretary of the UN, António Guterres, undermine the possibil-

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ity for a political solution and approve the forced demographic change and genocide that we can name as “ethnic cleansing”, and which fuel the hate between the peoples. These seriously anger and worry us as women who live in this region. On the 2nd of October, António Guterres met Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Istanbul to negotiate the project of placing the refugees that come from Syria in the lands of North-East Syria. After this meeting, Guterres stated that a delegation from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) will be created to negotiate this plan and that it is very important that the return has to be “voluntary, safe and dignified”. It is shameful how, while speaking about all this, they completely ignore the fact that an entire population had to leave these regions, their lands, because of war, in a forced, involuntary way and under pressure and threats, and that the reason for the displacements are the absence of their security and the disregard of their dignity. Other than that, in the occupational war that he carried out in Afrîn on the 20th of January 2018, the whole world witnessed how the same Erdogan created a system based on sharia law and force (anti-democratic, anti-pluralist, against women and freedom) by replacing the locals with people aligned with him (jihadists).

Another ignorant approach like this can be seen in the so-called Syria constitutional committee of 150 members: The Kurds and women, who have been fighting against the ISIS gangs in the 9 years of Syrian war and who fought for a democratization of Syria and the liberation of women for years, are not represented. The fact that the committee has 20% women does not solve this problem. FSA representatives, that are collaborating with ISIS and Al Nusra, gangs like the ones that killed our comrade Hevrîn Xalef, are given a place in Geneva, while the representatives of the QSD and MSD, which have been fighting against ISIS for years, are excluded. The women who live in North-Eastern Syria that created a system based on equality and women’s liberation are the ones that have been paying a high price for a democratic, free and peaceful Syria for 9 years. Every attempt for a constitutional committee that invites these gangs to their table, gangs with bloods on their hands, will deepen the crisis on the lands of Syria.

As women, we do not accept, we condemn this position and these policies of the UN. As women who live in North-Eastern Syria and in the region of Rojava, we call upon the UN to perform the role that they refused to play since the beginning of the crisis in Syria, to remain objective and to not sacrifice the destiny of the peoples for commercial deals; in short, we call upon the UN to act according to their own declared principles. Our demand from the women’s institutions that are working in the frame of the UN is to take steps to respond to the demands and voices of women that are living in North-Eastern Syria. On this basis, the human and reasonable demands formulated below are crucial for the works of women’s organizations to stop the war and to create a dignified peace and to render our demands visible for the UN.

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- To realize the long-term political solution that the UN considers important, and to end the occupational policies of the Turkish state in North-East Syria, we call upon the UN to create more serious politics and practices. We demand a third agent for the border security, provided by the UN, and we demand the declaration of a No-Fly-Zone for the lands of North and East Syria.
- The UN should not approve in any way the project of Turkey for demographic change and ethnic cleansing on the occupied lands. Rather, the UN should attempt to avoid it.
- We demand to include the true defenders of democracy in the Syria Constitutional Committee of Geneva by considering all ethnic groups of Syria and the elected women's representatives.

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