

Effects of the Turkish invasion of North and East Syria on women and children



Kongra Star Statistics and Research
Committee Qamishlo

Kongra Star Diplomacy's
Women Defend Rojava campaign

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1. Situation of the Turkish army and affiliated forces' invasion of the region of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria

Since the 9th of October at 4:00 PM (EEST/GMT+3), the Turkish state army and affiliated groups have been engaged in a military operation against Northern Syria. At the time of publishing this report, this attack will have been ongoing for six weeks.

This began with heavy air strikes in the regions of Serekaniye (Ras al-Ayn) and Gire Spi (Tel Abyad), and bombing and shelling all along the border, including the cities of Derik, Rimelan, Qamishlo, Amude, Dirbesiye, Serekaniye, Gire Spi, Kobane, Manbij and Ayn-Issa.

Turkish army airstrikes and artillery shelling have accompanied a ground offensive by on the ground factions they support and deploy. The bulk of these forces are made up of the Free Syrian Army, otherwise known as the Syrian National Army, which is a composite militia created by Turkey from various Sunni Muslim Arab and Turkmen militias. All of the groups comprising this new force have been found in the past to have committed war crimes. The majority have direct or indirect relations to the Islamic State (IS).¹

The Turkish Army and these affiliated groups have now occupied the cities of Serekaniye and Gire Spi, and the area of land in between. There is an ongoing land incursion from both the Turkish Army and their allied groups on the regions and cities of Tel Temer and Ayn Issa, and along much of the M4 highway in an attempt to control and isolate these cities. The land incursion continues to be supported by airstrikes from Turkish warplanes and UAVs ('drones').

On the 17th October at 10pm, a ceasefire was declared after an agreement between Turkey and the US. On the 22nd of October, another agreement, this time between Russia and Turkey, was made; the Sochi agreement. According to this agreement, if the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) withdrew 30km from the border and Russia escorted the Turkish Army on patrols in certain regions of Syria along the border, the ceasefire would be extended.²

Despite the SDF complying with the terms of the agreement, Turkey and their affiliated groups have repeatedly violated the ceasefire and continued to extend their attack.³ Evidence of war crimes has been found throughout the whole invasion.⁴ Experts have found strong evidence of the use of prohibited weapons, and recommended the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons undertake an official investigation.⁵

Turkey's deployment, support of and connection with jihadist mercenaries with extensive links to ISIS has also been documented during this invasion.⁶ The Turkish state is institutionally using jihadist groups as their ground forces, and to maintain the occupation and suppress the population in areas captured.

Consistent targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure has been documented from both the Turkish army and their affiliated groups.⁷ These attacks impact in particular the life and livelihood of women and children. Attacks on infrastructure affect the whole of society, and spheres of life which are usually

1 https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/03/TNA_report.pdf

2 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/full-text-turkey-russia-agreement-northeast-syria-191022180033274.html>

3 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/10/Report-on-Situation-in-North-and-East-Syria-18th-October-2019.pdf>

4 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/syria-damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-and-other-violations-by-turkish-forces-and-their-allies/>

5 https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/report-on-chemical-weapon-use_Dr-Abbas.pdf

6 <https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Turkish-state-relations-with-the-terrorist-organization-daesh.pdf>

7 https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/dossier_final2.pdf

centred around women. Women and children are more likely to already occupy vulnerable social positions, and be less able to move freely to escape danger.

We have also seen targeted attacks on civilian women, from the brutal assassination of politician Hevrin Khalaf,⁸ to the occupation forces in Gire Spi and other occupied areas forcing Sharia law upon the women there.⁹ War crimes intentionally targeting women in the SDF have also been documented.¹⁰ Over 300,000 people so far have been displaced by the invasion and displacement also impacts women and children far more highly.

This dossier provides evidence of:

- Some of the impact of the invasion on women, children and communities
 - War crimes perpetrated by the Turkish army
 - Finally, it will show how these human rights violations, war crimes and destruction of civilian life are intentional tactics by the Turkish army and its affiliated groups, amount to genocide and femicide and warrant international intervention.
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8 <https://rojvainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/10/Report-on-Situation-in-North-East-Syria-last-24-hours-12th-October-2019-8am-Rojava-Information-Center.pdf>

9 <http://www.syriaahr.com/en/?p=146432>

10 <http://www.syriaahr.com/en/?p=145269> <http://www.syriaahr.com/en/?p=144854>

2. Women and children in modern warfare, in Syria and the Middle East

The current invasion by the Turkish state of North East Syria takes place in a context and as part of a wider geo-political situation. Extensive research has been made on the effects of modern warfare on women and children. The ongoing attacks of October 2019 are an extension of the Turkish state's invasion and occupation of Afrin in 2018. They also continue a pattern of the Turkish state taking unilateral action in the name of "security" in the region, and attempting demographic change and causing widespread displacement. Further, they take place within the context of an 8-year long conflict within the borders of Syria. As such, all these events must be analysed in the context of the documented effects of both short and long term warfare on women and children, and of the documented history of the region. The fact that this war includes practices of genocide,¹¹ crimes against humanity¹² and war crimes¹³ must also be placed in context.

Many aspects of war have the greatest effect on women and children.¹⁴ This has emerged as a pattern of modern warfare since the mid-20th century. Whether due to tactics, technology, or both, victims of modern conflict are far more likely to be civilians than soldiers.¹⁵ This is sometimes an intentional strategy to break communities and resisting populations. Because women usually have the role of holding communities together, and building the base where social organisation can best operate, invading forces in modern warfare routinely target women in order to make occupation more 'successful' and faster, with the aim of breaking the will of women and society and implementing assimilation. After his office made extensive research on this topic, the UN Peacekeeping Operation commander in the Democratic Republic of Congo made the assessment

that in the late 20th and 21st century "[i]t has probably become more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in armed conflict."¹⁶

Women are much more likely than men to suffer many types of violence, particularly sexual violence, even in peacetime. This makes the mere outbreak of war already a more dangerous situation, as they are more likely to be under threat to begin with.¹⁷ This has particular significance in the context of an attack on the area of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, where the self-administration and the women's movement have created women's laws and women's justice centres. In doing so, the community has been actively combatting gender-based violence and institutionalising women's empowerment, and the destruction of these centres sets women back and leaves them much more vulnerable, both now and in the future.

One of the most devastating effects of modern warfare is that of displacement. According to UNICEF, far more children die as a result of disease and malnutrition caused by war than from direct attack.¹⁸ Displacement usually means a hiatus in education, and exposure to exponential risks. Displacement also impacts more highly on women, as they carry the burdens of reproductive labour and care in their communities, and rely more closely on connection to land for survival and safety.

A model for the long term consequences of displacement currently taking place in North East Syria is the situation of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) currently unable to return to Afrin. Afrin is occupied by the exact same forces, the Turkish Army and its mercenaries, which are currently establishing

11 As defined in Article II of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

12 As defined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

13 As defined in Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

14 <https://static.unicef.org/graca/women.htm>

15 <https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/assets/pdf/Backgrounder%20Sexual%20Violence%202014.pdf>

16 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/newsevents/pages/rapeweaponwar.aspx>

17 https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/media/publications/unifem/213_chapter01.pdf?la=en&vs=1005

18 <https://static.unicef.org/graca/women.htm>

control in the North East. A report on the situation of thousands of internally displaced women and children in Shehba region as of August 2018 showed conditions of health, shelter, safety and education that fall well below acceptable levels set by UNICEF and the UN.¹⁹

Afrin can also be used as a model for the consequences of long term occupation by the Turkish Army and its affiliated groups. Extensive evidence of rape, sexual violence, kidnap, ransom and targeted killings of women has been documented, along with the enforcing of Sharia law against women's will, confining them to houses, and the stripping away of women's rights and access to justice.²⁰

The Turkish state has made extensive use of proxy forces during its occupation war. Its long running connection with the Islamic State has been well documented. Further to this, many members of proxy forces currently engaged in North East Syria and answering to the Turkish state have a history of membership of the Islamic State and are members of organisations based on the same principles.²¹

This means that, to understand the impact of this conflict on women, girls and children, we must look at the documented track record of the Islamic State in this regard. In one of the most notorious documented instances, IS were found to have practiced sexual slavery, systematic kidnapping, rape, and femicide, much of it against underage girls, during the 2014 genocide of the Yezidi population of Shengal.²² Across Islamic State territory in Syria, there were countless instances of sexual violence, rape, honour killings, abuse, slavery and of torture and kidnap particularly targeted at women.²³ Women's rights and

access to justice were destroyed, women's health deprioritised, and women were not allowed outside without a male family member, often turning their home into a de facto prison. Children, girls in particular, also suffered from child marriage, lack of proper schooling, and lack of access to healthcare.

It is into this historical context that we can place the events of the first month of the Turkish state's current war on Northern Syria, to fully understand the weight and implications of attacks on women and children.

The current situation is a clear continuation of these practices. Turkey is also attempting demographic change by causing mass displacement and planning to "resettle" (by deporting from Turkey), thousands of refugees originally from other parts of Syria into the North and North East.²⁴ Many of these have been deliberately selected for their affiliation with jihadist groups.

An attack on the currently pluralist and multi-cultural area of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria is also an attempt to destroy harmony between social groups and create chaos and violence. Since the invasion, women are increasingly exposed to the threat of rape, sexual assault and gendered violence,²⁵ and thousands of children are already living as displaced persons with all the physical and psychological damage that creates. Reports and statements are beginning to emerge that show the same practices seen in occupied Afrin in Serekaniye and Gire Spi.

The occupation of and attack on Northern Syria by the Turkish army and its affiliates has repeatedly involved crimes against humanity as defined by the UN,²⁶ and fits the UN defi-

19 <https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Health-and-Medical-Situation-of-Displaced-Women-and-Children-in-Shahba-Region.pdf>

20 <https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Health-and-Medical-Situation-of-Displaced-Women-and-Children-in-Shahba-Region.pdf>

21 <https://rojvainformationcenter.com/2019/08/database-over-40-former-isis-members-now-part-of-turkish-backed-forces/>

22 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-un/islamic-state-committing-staggering-crimes-in-iraq-u-n-report-idUSKCN0HR0R120141002>

23 <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/witness/2019/09/women-isis-life-caliphate-190923094413989.html>

24 Report: Demographic change by the Turkish state in North-East Syria, Committee of preparation and documenting files of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, 7/11/2019

25 <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-these-kurdish-women-helped-fight-off-isis-now-they-re-the-no-1-target-in-syria-1.8130721>

26 <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.shtml>

dition of a genocide²⁷ towards the people of North and East Syria, with particular targeting of Kurdish and Christian communities. It is also a continuation of the invasion of Afrin in 2018.

Many organisations, including the WHO, have termed the killing of women because they are women 'femicide'.²⁸ The term femicide has also been increasingly used by women's rights defenders and social movements to describe systematic gender-based violence that is directed against women as a means of warfare and occupation, though an adequate approach and definition is lacking in international conventions and law.

Genocide includes social and psychological annihilation. By the same token, femicide should be considered systematic not only physical but social, ideological and psychological attacks against women's existence, identity and dignity. This has been and continues to be carried out by groups like IS, Al Qaida, Al Nusra or Buko Haram and states like Turkey. It requires the introduction of a new legal and political framework to condemn, prosecute and prevent these crimes from spreading. There is increasing evidence that we must assess femicide on the same level of analysis as genocide, when multiple acts that conform to the genocide definition or crimes against humanity are being systematically committed against women as a particular social group.

27 <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

28 https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77421/WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf?sequence=1

3. Civilian casualties of Turkish invasion: women and children, 9th - 31st October 2019

The following statistics are the civilian casualties that the Kurdish Red Crescent (Heyva Sor) has been able to fully confirm. Heyva Sor estimates the numbers as much higher: there have been casualties and deaths in local hospitals that they have not treated, and there are multiple civilians dying in areas which are too dangerous for medical crews to access.²⁹

3.1. Statistics

Names of wounded Women³⁰

No.	Name	Age	Place of Residence	Casualties	Date
1.	Rojeen Mohammed Hani	18	Serekaniye	Shrapnel in the thigh	09.10.2019
2.	Juliette Jacob Nicola	30	Qamishlo	Shrapnel in the back and break in the pelvis	09.10.2019
3.	Qeema Moussa	45	Qamishlo	Shrapnel in right shoulder	10.10.2019
4.	Genkin Ahmed Mourad	35	Kanat Swis neighborhood / Qamishlo	Open abdomen	10.10.2019
5.	Amina Abdo Shikhi	55	Serekaniye	Gun shoot in the left foot	11.10.2019
6.	Goleestan al Mohammed	42	Ayn Issa	Broken leg	11.10.2019
7.	Firial Abdul Rahman Alfaraj	26	Serekaniye	Shock	11.10.2019
8.	Dadvik Nazyan	25	Qamishlo	Broken leg	11.10.2019
9.	Khawla Mohammed Matar	20	Serekaniye	Shock	12.10.2019
10.	Hannan Sheikh Ali	20	Serekaniye	Shock	12.10.2019
11.	Nesreen Misto Ma'ashouq	38	Gire Spi	Shrapnel	13.10.2019
12.	Manifa Sa'ad Jouma'a	43	Gire Spi	Shrapnel	13.10.2019
13.	Berman		Amude	Wound in left thigh	13.10.2019
14.	Mirvet Ahmed	35	Tirbespiye	Trauma	13.10.2019
15.	Dilsoz Kute	22	Tel Temer		13.10.2019
16.	Jazya Hussein Horani	63	Gire Spi	Shrapnel	13.10.2019
17.	Mouna Naser Sinanik	45	Girke Lage	Shrapnel in head and right hand	13.10.2019

29 Daily report of Heyva Sor on the humanitarian situation in the North and East of Syira: <https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/9th-october-to-14th-of-november-doc-1.pdf>

30 Daily report of Heyva Sor on the humanitarian situation in the North and East of Syira: <https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/9th-october-to-14th-of-november-doc-1.pdf>

No.	Name	Age	Place of Residence	Casualties	Date
18.	Amal Younis		Sterk TV journalist		13.10.2019
19.	Beerjan Yaldiz		Journalist		13.10.2019
20.	Bahya Sheikho	38		Shrapnel in the abdomen	13.10.2019
21.	Rojeen	39		Shrapnel in the abdomen	13.10.2019
22.	Aveen Haji	45	Amude	Shrapnel in the body	13.10.2019
23.	Nisreen Misho	39	Tirbespiye	Injury in shoulder	13.10.2019
24.	Rojhalat Yaldiz	22	Kobane	Shrapnel in the head	13.10.2019
25.	Manifa Sayd	44		Shrapnel in the body	13.10.2019
26.	Rojeen Akin		ANHA Agency journalist		13.10.2019
27.	Amina Salim Isma'il	46	Serekaniye	Shrapnel in legs and hands	13.10.2019
28.	Mirvat Mohammed Amin	30	Serekaniye	Shrapnel in the head	13.10.2019
29.	Tagreed Alhussein	26	Serekaniye	Trauma	13.10.2019
30.	Gazala Ahmed	26	Serekaniye	Shrapnel in the neck	13.10.2019
31.	Montaha Mohammed Saleem	34	Serekaniye	Shrapnel in the body	14.10.2019
32.	Kamla al Mohammed Kheir	40	Manbij	Shrapnel in the right leg	15.10.2019
33.	Fahmya Hussein	45	Serekaniye	Trauma	15.10.2019
34.	Wafa'a al-Khidir	28	Manbij	Injury in the abdomen	15.10.2019
35.	Nermeen al-Ali	18	Manbij	Broken bones	15.10.2019
36.	Rabia al-Ali al-Khidir	18	Manbij	Shrapnel in the left hand	15.10.2019
37.	Ameera Mamo	60	Serekaniye	Trauma	16.10.2019
38.	Maryam Mohammed Jeloud	25	Serekaniye	Shrapnel in the left leg	16.10.2019
39.	Jazyza al-Ali	45	Serekaniye	Broken legs	16.10.2019
40.	Sara Suleiman Hasan	20	Serekaniye	Trauma	16.10.2019
41.	Nermeen Mohammed Hasan	18	Gire Spi	Shrapnel in the left hand	17.10.2019
42.	Amal Mohammed Sherif	25	Serekaniye	Trauma	18.10.2019
43.	Jeendah		Kobane	Shrapnel in the body	20.10.2019
44.	Leen Ali	58	Manbij	Injury in the leg	21.10.2019
45.	Fattin al-Ali	46	Manbij	Trauma	21.10.2019

No.	Name	Age	Place of Residence	Casualties	Date
46.	Khadija Yalsh	30	Manbij	Injury in the leg	21.10.2019
47.	Sana Mohammed		Ayn Issa	Gun shot	25.10.2019
48.	Maryam Khalaf Mohammed	55	Tel Temer	Gun shot	26.10.2019
49.	Wadha Saleh Abdo	21	Tel Temer	Gun shot	29.10.2019
50.	Tufaha Ali al-Saleh	55	Tel Temer	Shrapnel in the body	31.10.2019
51.	Aysha Omar		Derik	Tear gas inhalation	08.11.2019
52.	Alah Omar		Derik	Tear gas inhalation	08.11.2019
53.	Sosan Ramadan		Jin TV journalist	Shrapnel	12.11.2019

Names of wounded children³¹

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Place of Residence	Casualties	Date
1.	Turkiya al-Hajji	16	Female	Qamishlo	Shrapnel in the head	09.10.2019
2.	Abdul Ghani Delef	15	Male	Qamishlo	Injury in the head	09.10.2019
3.	Hussein Hamo	10	Male	Qamishlo	Shrapnel in the head	09.10.2019
4.	Abdul Ghani Hamo	17	Male	Qamishlo	Shrapnel in the bottom of the thigh	09.10.2019
5.	Abdul Ghani Besheer	16	Male	Qamishlo	Shrapnel in the head	10.10.2019
6.	Sara Yousef Hussein	8	Female	Qamishlo	Leg amputation	10.10.2019
7.	Ahmed Yousef Hussein	11	Male	Qamishlo	Shrapnel in the left eye	10.10.2019
8.	Dilgash Mahmoud Mohammed	15	Male	Qamishlo	Shrapnel	11.10.2019
9.	Daisem Emad Suleiman	13	Male	Terbesipiye	Shrapnel in the head	11.10.2019
10.	Idris Saydo	5	Male	Serekaniye	Shock	11.10.2019
11.	Amar Abdullah Abdo	11	Male	Serekaniye	Injury in the head	12.10.2019
12.	Adam Ahmed	16	Male	Serekaniye	Burns	13.10.2019
13.	Yasseen Khidir	12	Male	Manbij	Shrapnel in the body	15.10.2019
14.	Rouqaya al-Safari	13	Female	Manbij	Broken leg	15.10.2019
15.	Razan Moussa	5	Female	Manbij	Shrapnel in the legs	15.10.2019
16.	Ibrahim Moussa	3	Male	Manbij	Shrapnel in the left leg	15.10.2019

31 Daily report of Heyva Sor on the humanitarian situation in the North and East of Syria: <https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/9th-october-to-14th-of-november-doc-1.pdf>

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Place of Residence	Casualties	Date
17.	Ali Moussa	11	Male	Manbij	Shrapnel in the legs	15.10.2019
18.	Mohammed Moussa	10	Male	Manbij	Shrapnel in the left leg	15.10.2019
19.	Amsha Khidir	14	Female		Shock	15.10.2019
20.	Mohammed Hamid Mohammed	13	Male	Serekaniye	Burns	15.10.2019
21.	Rezan al-Safri	5	Female	Manbij	Shrapnel in the head	15.10.2019
22.	Bedryah al-Safari	13	Female	Manbij	Broken leg	15.10.2019
23.	Shahnaz Mamo	14	Female	Serekaniye	Trauma	16.10.2019
24.	Lamees Ali Assaf	14	Female	Serekaniye	Gun shot	16.10.2019
25.	Ammar Isa Mohammed	3	Male	Serekaniye	Wounds	16.10.2019
26.	Mohammed Emin	13	Male	Serekaniye	Burns in the hands and the abdomen	17.10.2019
27.	Hussein Ali Kleech	2	Male	Serekaniye	Burns	18.10.2019
28.	Wassim Suleiman	13	Male	Terbaspyah	Injury in the head	18.10.2019
29.	Fadiya Mohammed Eida	3	Female	Serekaniye	Trauma	18.10.2019
30.	Bangin Lazgin Atiah	7	Male	Serekaniye	Trauma	18.10.2019
31.	Mohsen Ali Jasim	16	Male	Serekaniye	Injury in the legs	18.10.2019
32.	Hussein Seoud Khalaf	13	Male	Dirbesiye	Injury in the right hand	19.10.2019
33.	Marya Ali	1	Female	Manbij	Shrapnel	21.10.2019
34.	Hamzah Makati	1	Male	Manbij	Injury in the leg	21.10.2019
35.	Jana Makati	10	Female	Manbij	Trauma	21.10.2019
36.	Ahmed Khalid	17	Male	Kobane	Gun shot	26.10.2019
37.	Mohammed Hasan Hawas	15	Male	Tel Temer	Trauma	26.10.2019
38.	Ghalib Ibrahim Mohammed	7	Male	Kobane	Gun shot	27.10.2019
39.	Khidir Mohammed al-Zahir	10	Male	Tel Temer	Shrapnel in the leg	29.10.2019
40.	Luai Sitam Hamid	17	Male	Tel Temer	Shrapnel in the left leg	03.11.2019
41.	Muhannad Jasim Hamid	17	Male	Tel Temer	Shrapnel in the left leg	03.11.2019

Names of women killed³²

No.	Name	Age	Place of Residence	Date
1.	Rabia Ismail		Gire Spi	09.10.2019
2.	Amina Mardini Mohammed	73	Qadourbek/Qamishlo	10.10.2019
3.	Hevi Khalil		Health committee member - Gire Spi	10.10.2019
4.	Midia Khalil	18	Health committee member - Gire Spi	10.10.2019
5.	Eman Haji Sherif	22	Qamishlo	12.10.2019
6.	Hevrin Khelef	33	Qamishlo	12.10.2019
7.	Aqida Osman	53	Girke Lage	13.10.2019
8.	Khewla Khidir Daham	30	Tel Temer	26.10.2019

Names of children killed³³

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Place of Residence	Date
1.	Mohammed Youssef Hussein	13	Male	Qamishlo	10.10.2019
2.	Qais al-Sheikh	10	Male	Serekaniye	11.10.2019
3.	Mohammed Youssef Kherbo	11	Male	Qamishlo	11.10.2019
4.	Mohammed Jouma al Hussein	11	Male	Tel Temer	23.10.2019

32 Daily report of Heyva Sor on the humanitarian situation in the North and East of Syira: <https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/9th-october-to-14th-of-november-doc-1.pdf>

33 Daily report of Heyva Sor on the humanitarian situation in the North and East of Syira: <https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/9th-october-to-14th-of-november-doc-1.pdf>

3.2. Case Studies

The Kongra Star Statistics and Research Committee, Qamishlo, made visits to the wounded or the families of those killed in the invasion to establish more in depth information about the situation of civilian women and children. These interviews took place from the 27th to the 31st of October 2019.

Attacks by the Turkish state against civilians on the 9th October 2019³⁴

Gire Spi / Tel Abyad

Rabia Ismail

Rabia Ismail, from Matlala village 10 km west of Girê Spî/ Tel Abyad, was killed by Turkish shelling.



Rabia Ismail

Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 28.10.2019

Qamishlo

Turkiya al-Hajji

Turkiya al-Hajji, a 16-year-old girl, was injured by shrapnel in the head as a result of indiscriminate shelling on unarmed civilians in Qadourbek neighborhood.



Turkiya al-Hajji

Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 27.10.2019

Juliette Isa Mahfouz Nicola

Juliette Isa Mahfouz Nicola, a 30-year-old mother of three children, was injured because of the Turkish occupation shelling of unarmed civilians in al-Bashiriya neighborhood. Shrapnel entered her back and left via the abdomen. Her pelvis has been broken, which led to paralysis.



Juliette Isa Mahfouz Nicola

Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 29.10.2019

34 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/10/Report-on-Situation-in-North-East-Syria-last-24-hours-9th-October-2019-8am-Rojava-Information-Center.pdf>



Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 29.10.2019

Juliette Isa Mahfouz's house in al-Bashiriya neighbourhood, Qamishlo, 29.10.2019.

Attacks by the Turkish state against civilians on the 10th October 2019³⁵

Qamishlo

Mohammed Yousef Hussein

Mohammed Yousef Hussein, a 13-year-old boy, was martyred by shrapnel in the chest in the Turkish indiscriminate bombardment of the city. His two siblings, Sara and Ahmed, were injured.

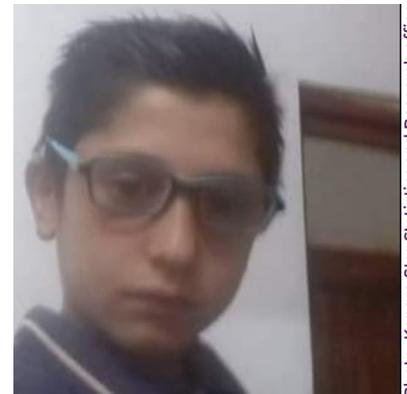


Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 30.10.2019

Mohammed Yousef Hussein

Sara Yousef Hussein

Sara Yousef Hussein, an 8-year-old girl, was injured by shrapnel in both her legs, which resulted in the amputation of her right leg.



Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 30.10.2019

Sara Yousef Hussein

35 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/10/Report-on-Situation-in-North-East-Syria-last-24-hours-10th-October-2019-Rojava-Information-Center.pdf>

Ahmed Yousef Hussein

Ahmed Yousef Hussein, an 11-year-old boy, was injured by shrapnel in the left eye. He underwent an operation in Damascus and then went with his sister Sara Yousef Hussein to South Kurdistan (Iraq) to complete his treatment.



Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 30.10.2019

Ahmed Yousef Hussein

Amina Mardini Mohammed

Amina Mardini Mohammed, a 77-year-old woman, was killed by shrapnel in the side and the back. She was going with her son Ahmed to her brother's house to flee the dangerous conditions, when a shell hit them during the indiscriminate shelling of unarmed civilians in Qadourbek neighborhood.



Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 30.10.2019

Amina Mardini Mohammed

Attacks by the Turkish state against civilians on the 11th October 2019³⁶

Tirbespiye

Daisem Emad Suleiman

Daisem Emad Suleiman, a 13-year-old boy, was injured when four mortar shells targeted Tel Ziwan village of Tirbespiye town.



Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 27.10.2019

Daisem Emad Suleiman

Attacks by the Turkish state against civilians on the 12th October 2019³⁷

Qamishlo

Eman Ibrahim

Eman Ibrahim, a 24-year-old mother of one child, was killed by a Turkish sniper on the Turkish-Syrian border near Nusaybin Gate.

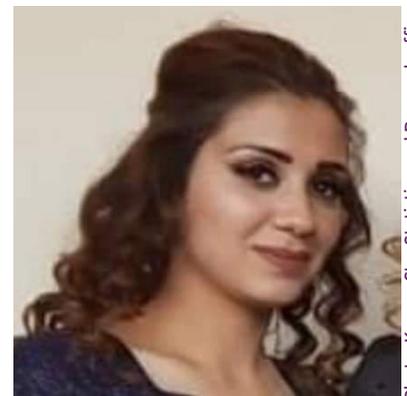


Photo: Kongra Star Statistics and Research office Qamishlo, 29.10.2019

Eman Ibrahim

37 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/10/Report-on-Situation-in-North-East-Syria-last-24-hours-12th-October-2019-8am-Rojava-Information-Center.pdf>

36 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/10/Report-on-Situation-in-North-East-Syria-last-24-hours-11th-October-2019-8am-Rojava-Information-Center.pdf>

4. War crimes and violations by the Turkish army and affiliated groups on women and children

Evidence of war crimes in Northern Syria since the 9th of October is extensive,³⁸ including targeting medical workers and infrastructure, attacking non-military targets and assassination. Here we have compiled some examples of war crimes which have impacted women and children.

Targeting, torture and execution of civilians

Hevrin Khalaf (Hevrîn Xelef)³⁹

The particular extent of violence against women by the Turkish state and its proxy forces during the invasion of Northern Syria is clearly illustrated by the case of Hevrin Khalaf.

Targeting civilians is in contravention of Article 7 of the Geneva Convention.⁴⁰ According to Article 8 of the Rome Statute (UN war crimes legislation), “Intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities”, and “Wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health” constitute war crimes.⁴¹

Hevrin Khalaf, Secretary General of the Future Party of Syria, was executed on the 12th October 2019 along with eight other people on the international route M4 near Tel Abyad. Her car was trapped in an ambush by Battalion 123 of the pro-Turkish jihadist militia Ah-rar al-Sharqiya, which is one of Turkey’s proxy forces. After they sprayed the car with bullets, she was injured, dragged out of the car with enough force to tear out parts of her scalp, tortured and executed.⁴² Even her body was brutally defiled.⁴³



Hevrin Khalaf

Photo: <https://anfdeutsch.com/frauen/msd-wuerdigt-ermordete-kurdische-politikerin-Hevrin-khalaf-14571>

Hevrin Khalaf, a symbol of the women’s revolution in North and East Syria, fought for the democratic unity of the people in order to build a pluralistic society in Syria. She stands for a democratic, pluralist and decentralized Syria.

38 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/syria-damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-and-other-violations-by-turkish-forces-and-their-allies/>

39 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/10/Report-on-Situation-in-North-East-Syria-last-24-hours-12th-October-2019-8am-Rojava-Information-Center.pdf>

40 <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-0173.pdf>

41 <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/Documents/RS-Eng.pdf>

42 <https://anfdeutsch.com/frauen/msd-wuerdigt-ermordete-kurdische-politikerin-Hevrin-khalaf-14571>; <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-these-kurdish-women-helped-fight-off-isis-now-they-re-the-no-1-target-in-syria-1.8130721>

43 <https://twitter.com/RojavalC/status/1184456565656576001>, 18.10.2019

Lîna Ebdulwehab

On Sunday the 17th November, two masked and armed men stormed the house of Lîna Ebdulwehab, member of the Future Party of Syria and of the Legislative Council of the Autonomous Administration in Deir er Zor, and shot her in an attempt to kill her, leaving her hospitalised and severely injured.⁴⁴ This once again contravenes Article 7 of the Geneva Convention and Article 8 of the Rome Statute.⁴⁵

It is no coincidence that during the time of the same invasion, Hevrin Khalaf and Lîna Ebdulwehab were both targeted for their civil and democratic political work. As Hevrin Khalaf was, Lîna Ebdulwehab is focused on creating bridges and communication between different ethnic groups, and raising up women's voices.



Lîna Ebdulwehab

Photo: <https://www.hawarnews.com/kr/haber/hewl-dan-endama-partiy-pseroj-ya-sriy-lina-ebdulwehab-qetil-bikin-h24922.html>

Attacks on the civil convoy to Serekaniye on the 13th October 2019

On Sunday the 13th October, a convoy of civilians and journalists was going from Qamishlo to Serekaniye. Near Serekaniye, the Turkish Air Force targeted and bombed this civilian convoy and killed eleven people. Another 74 were injured, including many women and children.⁴⁶

Once again, this is in breach of Article 7 of the Geneva Convention and Article 8 of the Rome Statute.⁴⁷

Dayê Aqîde - Eqîde Eli Osman

One of the women killed in this attack was Eqîde Eli Osman, a 53-year-old executive member of Kongra Star, and member of the Women's Assembly for Justice. She had spent many years actively involved in organizing the women's movement. Going with the convoy to Serekaniye, she was condemning Turkish aggression and standing up against occupation.⁴⁸



Dayê Aqîde - Eqîde Eli Osman

Photo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7opf5mst4&feature=youtu.be>

44 <https://www.hawarnews.com/kr/haber/hewl-dan-endama-partiy-pseroj-ya-sriy-lina-ebdulwehab-qetil-bikin-h24922.html>

45 <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-0173.pdf>; <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/Documents/RS-Eng.pdf>

46 <https://anfenglish.com/rojawa-syria/another-civilian-massacre-by-the-turkish-army-in-northern-syria-38361>

47 <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-0173.pdf>; <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/Documents/RS-Eng.pdf>

48 <https://anfenglish.com/rojawa-syria/eqide-eli-osman-laid-to-rest-38398>

Use of prohibited weapons

Mohammed Hamid Mohammed

The Rome Statute defines “Employing poison or poisoned weapons” as a war crime.⁴⁹ In the case of Mohammed Hamid Mohammed, a 13-year-old boy, severe burns on his body which are eating away at his flesh appear to be caused by a chemical weapon.⁵⁰ Based on his case and others, expert medical witnesses have recommended a full independent investigation into the use of prohibited weapons.⁵¹

Together with his family, he was displaced from Kobane to Afrin in 2013 and then from Afrin to Serekaniye. There, he was injured by Turkish warplanes which bombarded the city as part of their invasion of Northern Syria. For treatment and research, he was transported across Syria to South Kurdistan (Iraq) and from there to France.⁵²



Mohammed Hamid Mohammed

Photo: <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/b42fe66e-7ed4-4162-b8bf-7c89189ecf81>

Execution of civilians and targeting of medical personnel and transport

Media Bouzan and Hafin Khalil Ibrahim

The Rome statute states that “Intentionally directing attacks against buildings, material, medical units and transport”, “Intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities”, and “Intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance” are war crimes.⁵³

On the 13th October 2019, two female paramedics of the Kurdish Red Crescent, Media Bouzan and Hafin Khalil Ibrahim, as well as ambulance driver Mohamed Bouzan Sidi were kidnapped near Suluk in the surrounding of Gire Spi. Almost a week later



The three paramedics.

Photo: https://twitter.com/north_syriastatus/1187753035524648960, 2.11.2019

“their bodies were found dumped in the sewer.”⁵⁴ Responsibility for this execution of civilians as well as the targeting of medical workers and infrastructure lies with the Turkish-backed Ahrar al-Sharqiya.⁵⁵

49 <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/Documents/RS-Eng.pdf>

50 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/turkey-is-suspected-of-using-white-phosphorus-against-kurdish-civilians-in-syria-jp23jmqv>

51 https://womendefendrojava.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/report-on-chemical-weapon-use_Dr-Abbas.pdf

52 <https://www.france24.com/en/20191023-kurdish-boy-severely-burned-during-turkish-offensive-arrives-in-france-for-treatment>

53 <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/Documents/RS-Eng.pdf>

54 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/10/Report-on-Situation-in-North-and-East-Syria-25th-October-2019.pdf>

55 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/storage/2019/10/Report-on-Situation-in-North-and-East-Syria-25th-October-2019.pdf>

Mistreatment of bodies

Amara Renas

Article 8 of the Geneva convention states that the dead must be treated with due respect.⁵⁶ The UN upholds that breaking this convention constitutes a war crime.⁵⁷ On the 21st October 2019, during the time of the supposed “ceasefire”, Turkish affiliated groups posted photos and videos showing them desecrating the body of YPJ fighter Amara Renas.⁵⁸ Furthermore, her body along with many others has still not been returned as Turkey and its affiliated groups have not allowed for a humanitarian operation to recover the dead.



Amara Renas

Photo: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50250330>

Treatment not in line with rules for prisoners of war

Çiçek Kobane

Mistreatment of prisoners of war is prohibited by Articles 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the Geneva Convention, and the Rome Statute states that “Wilfully depriving a prisoner of war or other protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial” and “Taking of hostages” are war crimes.⁵⁹

After YPJ fighter Çiçek Kobane was wounded in combat on the 21st October 2019 videos were released of her being summarily kidnapped without any process and threatened with execution and sexual violence.⁶⁰ In the videos she is referred to as if she is a hostage or victim of kidnapping, not a prisoner of war.



Çiçek Kobane

Photo: <https://womendefendrojawa.net/en/2019/10/25/ypj-general-command-statement-on-situation-of-captured-fighter-cicek-kobane/>

56 <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-0173.pdf>

57 <http://iranarze.ir/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/E5626-IranArze.pdf>

58 <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=144854>

59 <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-0173.pdf>; <https://www.icc-cpi.int/resource-library/Documents/RS-Eng.pdf>

60 <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=145269>

5. Women and children as refugees and internally displaced persons

The UNHCR defines a refugee as someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. An Internally Displaced Person is someone forced to flee for the same reasons but who does not cross an international border.⁶¹

Hundreds of thousands of refugees and IDPs have been created by the Turkish invasion of Northern Syria. This section will focus on the situation of IDPs, who are still within the territory managed by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. IDPs are, in general, far more likely to be women and children than men, who may be more likely to cross international borders or less likely to flee in the first place. The UNHCR names IDPs as some of the most vulnerable people in the world; they often flee to areas that are not accessible to the UN or international aid groups.⁶² Indeed, UN aid has so far not been given permission by the Syrian government to enter Northern Syria, and international NGOs all left the region in October 2019 due to the danger created by the invasion.⁶³ This leaves the management of the humanitarian crisis deeply under-resourced.

As of the 2nd November, there were between 200,000–300,000 people displaced by the Turkish invasion. 150,000 of these are in the Jazeera region.⁶⁴ According to all reports, the vast majority of them are women and children.

The situation of IDPs is critical, with shortages of food and water supplies exacerbated by attacks on infrastructure, for

example the Alouk water station.⁶⁵ They are at high risk of disease, and vulnerable to other dangers.⁶⁶ According to local NGOs working in camps, children are showing signs of psychological damage.⁶⁷ There is no infrastructure for education, counseling, or child development. Healthcare is lacking in a lot of camps struggling for resources.

Washokani camp has been newly built up with no international support, near Heseke, Jazeera canton. Typically for IDPs from this conflict, adult men make up less than 20% of the population of the camp. Everyone there has been displaced from the towns and surroundings of Serekaniye and Tel Temer.⁶⁸

According to reports made to the women's manager of the camp, one of the reasons the numbers of women are so much higher than men is because women are likely to flee earlier due to the extra threat of sexual violence and rape from the attackers. They also shoulder the burden of care for children. However, despite being more likely to become displaced, women and children are more strongly affected by displacement. For children, this is due to higher levels of vulnerability and not understanding the situation. Women are found to suffer a much higher level of psychological trauma from displacement than men, as well as becoming relatively more vulnerable, as their home and land is usually more central to their safety, identity and livelihood.⁶⁹

61 <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>

62 <https://www.unhcr.org/internally-displaced-people.html>

63 <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/151020192>

64 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2019/11/report-displaced-population-and-refugee-camps/>

65 <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2019/11/the-water-will-not-last-more-than-a-month-northeast-syria-faces-critical-water-shortage/>

66 <https://womendefendrojawa.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/9th-october-to-14th-of-november-doc-1.pdf>

67 Kongra Star Research Interview: Dilo Can, Manager, Camp Washokani, 17/11/2019

68 Kongra Star Research Interview: Dilo Can, Manager, Camp Washokani, 17/11/2019

69 Kongra Star Research Interview: Dilo Can, Manager, Camp Washokani, 17/11/2019



Photo: Women Defend Rojava campaign committee, 17.11.2019.

Women and children waiting for blankets and supplies, Washokani camp, Heseke, 17th November 2019

6. Conclusion and statement of Kongra Star

Based on all the evidence which is shown here and widely available, Kongra Star considers there to be a genocide taking place in Northern Syria, and simultaneously a femicide in the political sense, considering women as a social group. The attacks on the system of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria are an attack on women's safety and freedom. On top of this, there is the extreme humanitarian impact of this invasion which impacts women and children, and therefore communities, by far the most grievously.

Kongra Star considers it imperative that a political solution is found for the situation in Syria, one that incorporates the voices of all ethnic groups, all ages, faiths and organisations, and above all the voices and needs of women. In order to begin this process, the women of North and East Syria must be permitted to send delegates to represent them in the drafting of the Syrian Constitution and all processes related therewith.

It is also essential that due process is followed for all war crimes and prosecution of all perpetrators enacted. In order to achieve justice, there must be official recognition of genocide and femicide committed by the Turkish state and its affiliated forces.

In the shorter term, to put a stop to the physical and social crisis caused by the Turkish invasion, the violence, displacement, war crimes, deprivation and violations, the following measures must immediately be taken by the international community:

- A No Fly Zone over Northern Syria to stop a level of indiscriminate violence and allow self defence forces to protect their people from massacre
- End of occupation, practices of genocide and femicide, and immediate withdrawal of occupying Turkish army and all related armed groups from the territory of Syria
- The introduction of a Peacekeeping Force from the international community at the Turkish-Syrian border to prevent further aggression of the Turkish army
- Economic sanctions placed on Turkey forthwith and the cessation of all weapons trade with Turkey
- Immediate intervention of humanitarian support to the region of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria

Report compiled by the Kongra Star Statistics and Research
Committee Qamishlo, and Women Defend Rojava campaign
which is part of Kongra Star Diplomacy

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womendefendrojava@protonmail.com

womendefendrojava.net

eng.kongra-star.org

Facebook: Kongra Star Diplomacy

Twitter: @starrcongress