



## Women's voices after Turkish invasion

How Turkish invasion affects women and minorities: Interviews with women from the occupied territories of North and East Syria



## WOMEN'S VOICES AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE AGAINST TURKISH INVASION AND WAR

On 9th October 2019, the Turkish State began a new military aggression into the territory of North and East Syria. For weeks, the violence of Erdogan and his gangs of jihadists carried out the worst atrocities against the population<sup>1</sup>. The bombing of the convoy of civilians and journalists going to Serêkaniyê or the murder of the representative of the Syria Future Party Hevrin Khalaf were some of the brutalities carried out during only the first weeks of the new offensive. The result was hundreds of civilians killed and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people and refugees<sup>2</sup>, as well as the illegal occupation of the territories of Serêkaniyê and Girê Spî.

The offensive, cynically named "Source of Peace" by Erdogan, was a new stage in a war that began long before and is motivated by the expansionist zeal of the Turkish state. The Turkish state is seeking to end the system of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria in order to impose its Neo-Ottoman fascist system, exchanging the peaceful coexistence of peoples for a monocultural hegemonic society, in which cultures other than Turkish and religions other than extremist Islam are extinguished. This system would put an end to the huge strides toward freedom made by women by imposing once again the patriarchal mentality of the state.

Two years ago, in January 2018, the Turkish state began its imperialist war with the territory of Afrin. There we can see the consequences of Erdogan's invasion, where mercenaries from different jihadist gangs engage in looting, threatening, raping and murdering the local population<sup>3</sup>. Dozens and dozens of kidnappings have taken place<sup>4</sup>, vehicle bomb attacks are becoming a depressing norm<sup>5</sup>, the Kurdish language has been banned from schools and the Turkish state is moving Turkish and Arab populations into the area with the clear aim of demographic change. Women are once again the most affected by the occupation<sup>6</sup>: the number of women killed and raped is increasing day by day, and in recent weeks it has been revealed that a group of women<sup>7</sup> is being held hostage under inhumane conditions in the prisons of one of the jihadist groups.

1 Committee for the Protection of Journalists *Second Syrian Kurdish journalist dies from injuries sustained in Turkish air raid* 15.10.2019. <https://cpj.org/2019/10/second-syrian-kurdish-journalist-dies-of-wounds-su.php>

2 Rojava Information Center, *Displaced population and refugee camps*: <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2019/11/report-displaced-population-and-refugee-camps/>

3 Rojava Information Center, *Turkey's track record. The occupation of Afrin*: <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2019/11/turkeys-track-record-the-occupation-of-afrin/>

4 Violation Documentation Center in Northeastern Syria <https://twitter.com/vdcnsy/status/1266635754886836225>

5 Rojava Information Center, *Report 2019: review of sleeper cell attacks and anti-ISIS raids in North and East Syria*: <https://rojavainformationcenter.com/2020/01/good-work-undone-2019-review-of-sleeper-cell-attacks-and-anti-isis-raids-in-north-and-east-syria/>

6 Kongra Star: *Women and children in the Turkish Invasion. Genocide, femicide and demographic change*. 2.1.2020

7 Human Rights Organisation in Afrin: <https://www.facebook.com/114977619885802/posts/273897753993787/>

Meanwhile, ethnic and religious minorities are also being targeted with the aim of eliminating them, as shown by the desecration of cemeteries and sacred places of the Yazidi community<sup>8</sup> and the fact that all Yazidi families had to flee in the face of the occupation to escape being killed.

Turkey's occupation war, as we see, has not come to an end. The war is still being fought in the occupied territories, with the choice between resistance and assimilation and submission. Furthermore, Turkish expansionist zeal has not stopped and attacks on the other territories of North and East Syria continue. Attacks on water infrastructure in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>9</sup>, the setting of fires to weaken the local economy, or the killing of civilians on the border <sup>10</sup>, add to the kidnappings, abuse, rape and demographic change carried out in the occupied areas.

On the other hand, we also see how the war continues because hundreds of thousands of displaced people are still living the effects of the invasion of the Turkish state and its mercenary gangs, since it is impossible for them to return to their homes. In this small brochure, we have collected different interviews with women who were displaced from the occupied territories following the October invasion, as well as women from religious minorities who have either had to leave their homes or live with the constant threat of having to do so. Women have been the direct targets of Erdogan's attack but at the same time they continue to be the mainstay of the resistance. In the face of fascism that seeks to eliminate the democratic system in North and East Syria and stop the process of women's liberation, the lives and voices of women are the Turkish state's greatest defeat. Their lives are in themselves an act of resistance.

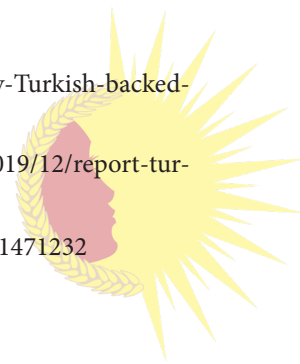


*Women in the Washokani IDP camp inaugurate different women institutions in the camp*

8 Genocide Watch: <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/2020/04/28/Yezidi-shrines-desecrated-by-Turkish-backed-groups-in-Afrin>

9 Rojava Information Center, Report: *Turkey's war against civilians*: <https://rojvainformationcenter.com/2019/12/report-turkeys-war-against-civilians-1/>

10 Violation Documentation Center in Northeastern Syria: <https://twitter.com/vdcnsy/status/1268564821781471232>





**ZERKA SEDO KÎNO**  
**CELGE, A VILLAGE NEAR AYN ÎSA**

*“Their only goal  
is genocide,  
murder and ethnic  
cleansing.”*

In the beginning of the Turkish threats on North and East Syria, and at the start of the war with the occupation of Girê Spî, we were not connected to the Autonomous Administration or any of the groups in Girê Spî. We didn't see ourselves on any side, so we decided stay in our place.

When the Turkish state and its jihadist proxies attacked and occupied Girê Spî region, usually the villages connected the Autonomous Administration were emptied, but as I said we don't consider ourselves to be on any side, so we decided to stay. The occupation forces also arrived to our village. They destroyed and plundered all the houses and established their base in the village. After two days they came to the house of my husband's brother and with the excuse that he works with the SDF they arrested him. They call anybody connected to the SDF a terrorist. They said that he will pay for it, even though he hasn't ever worked with the SDF. That's why our neighbors warned us, and advised my husband to hide well, because the next time they would come for him. That's why my husband went to the house of an Arabic friend to hide there, but they caught him on the way. I didn't know about it, because our phone communication was cut off.

Later on I got a call from my husband's brother's phone. They told me not to leave the village as a demand of the kidnappers. They threatened to kill him if I left. My husband and his brother went through brutal torture whilst they were kidnapped. They tied their hands behind their backs and hung them in the air, letting them swing by their hands. They called this torture “belingo”. They also beat them with cables. Due to this torture my husband and his brother were forced to say false things in order to save themselves. They said that they work as Asayîş and that they took up arms.

After some days the occupation forces arrived to the village with a car full of weapons and dozens of other armed groups. They loaded their weapons and ordered all youth to surrender, and all the people to give up everything they had. Telephones, money, gold... We were very scared so I gave them everything that we had in our house. I also took 70 sheep that we had and brought them to them.

They sent us a little amount of money to be able to arrange a meeting, and then requested our jeep and a Kalashnikov as ransom for my husband and his brother. I knew they were just using them to get what they wanted. Anyhow we agreed, but we requested they free both of them immediately. They hung up the phone as soon as we said that. After some days they came armed and took our Toyota jeep. Later I saw a video with our car burning in front of a military base in Serêkaniyê.

After they checked all our phones, they saw a picture of my daughter wearing military clothes. She wore them just once to take a picture and have it as memory. Because of this they came to our place and said that the military forces want to interrogate my daughter. I brought my daughter to the door of their centre in Girê Spî. They interrogated her, threatened her with torture, imprisonment, and killing her father, if she wouldn't say the truth. But my daughter actually didn't know anything. She explained that she hasn't ever participated in any military group and she just, as any 19 year old does, wanted to try on the clothes. They put her in jail for two days with her father and uncle, and brought them all in front of a Turkish judge, as the Turkish municipality had been opened. At the appointment only Turks worked there, but translators were present. After that the judge let them all free.

More than 7 of our family members were arrested and released in the following time. So we decided to leave the village. We left secretly in the night and stayed in the middle of desert. We informed some people about our situation, to inform the SDF in Ayn Îsa and to make clear that we are civilians and avoid any confusion. The SDF picked us up and we could stay till the next day in their place. They helped us a lot and gave us anything we needed. The next morning we left and arrived to our friends' place in Kobanê.

Right now we are in Kobanê with nothing, everything was stolen from us. We have no house, no money and we don't know what is going to become of us. We don't know if we will be able to return to our land, after everything we have been through, all the torture and violence. We are hoping that the war will end and an international tribunal prosecute all these mercenaries, and their leaders, and the president of the Turkish state Erdogan. They have no rights on our people as their only goal is genocide, murder and ethnic cleansing. Not only of Kurdish people but all the population of North and East Syria. They want to destroy all the security and stability which has been achieved under the Autonomous Administration.

I demand all international and human rights organizations help the people in the region to implement the international laws which these institutions claim to uphold. Do not stay deaf and mute to the reality here.

January 2020



Turkish soldiers patrol Girê Spî with armed vehicles after the invasion





**RUKEYEL CEVAD**  
**SERÊKANIYÊ**

*“As Arabic women, we started our movement with great steps”*

My name is Rukeyel Cevad, Kongra Star Spokeswoman from Minecîr, Serêkaniyê. I will speak about our situation as refugees.

We were living a peaceful way of life. As Arabic women, we started our movement with great steps, and we raised women's empowerment.

Suddenly the Turkish threat fell on us, but we were strong and did not surrender. Then Erdogan sent his gangs to our city, and attacked with planes. They bombed the city first, and we didn't run, we didn't leave our villages until they were arriving in the villages. Because of the bombs, we ran in just the clothes we stood up in, bringing the small child.

The Autonomous Administration found us places to stay, in camps and in schools, but our children's education was cut, farmers had to leave their crops, teachers leave their work. The offices and the municipality, we left everything, we had to leave.

And now what is our situation? In these camps and schools, in the cold. There's three families living in one room. It's a bad situation. We want to return to our homes.

We call on the United Nations, Human Rights Organisations, international powers, and every person with a conscience, to help us to return to our own place. We won't surrender, we want to return, and we will rescue our land from Erdogan's clutches.

January 2020



## **NOURA NADIR, CHECHEN**

**SERÊKANIYÊ**

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*“As Chechen people, we were often forced to move. After the revolution, we no longer faced difficulties.”*

My name is Noura Nadir I'm from Serêkaniyê, and my people are Chechen. We became refugees from Russian more than 300 years ago, from the Islamic wars, and we arrived and made a place in Syria, in Serêkaniyê.

Our situation and life was good, we had what we needed. Until 2011, the situation in Syria and Serêkaniyê was not so good. As Chechen people, we were often forced to move. After the revolution, there was peace in Serêkaniyê, under the umbrella of the Autonomous Administration, and as Chechen people we no longer faced difficulties.

Life became peaceful, everyone followed their dreams. We were responsible for ourselves in the Autonomous Administration. There were schools for our children and hospitals. We forgot about war until the Turkish threats started. Erdogan's threats on Serêkaniyê went on for a year. They said for a year that they would attack Serêkaniyê, we heard the threats every day.

On the 9th of October, when we were on a women's movement march, we were suddenly bombed by planes, and the people of Serêkaniyê escaped, from the attacks, particularly those with children or old people.

As Chechens, Kurds, Arabs and Circassians, we ask international powers, and all human rights organisations, to support us to be able to return to Serêkaniyê.

January 2020



## **HEMRIN SALAH** **SERÊKANIYÊ**



*“A huge resistance has been made, so that we can live with dignity in our city, in our land.”*

My name is Hemrin Salah. I'm a refugee from Serêkaniyê, staying in Heseke. As everyone knows, the attacks came hard and fast on Serêkaniyê, from Erdogan and the fascist Turkish State. The Ottoman empire ruled and oppressed here 500 years ago. Since 2011, Erdogan has tried to take us back there, and build a new Ottoman empire. But the Serêkaniyê society, all different groups working together, has given a huge resistance, since 2011 until today. All in all, we have given 11.000 shehîds, for our land, our language, for the unity we had developed. A huge resistance has been made, so that we can live with dignity in our city, in our land.

On the 9th of October a huge attack was made on Serêkaniyê. With warplanes and shelling they attacked us. Before then, a “security zone” was going to be made. But we didn't see anything of the kind. Just the invasion of our city. A city where we were living a system of democratic autonomy. Everything was built up, all needs were met. What we needed as society was arranged. All the institutions, for the region, for society... everything a society needs to live well had been created in Serêkaniyê.

But then the huge attacks came, with planes and heavy shelling. For the first few days we stayed, but after that we couldn't stay any longer. The planes were bombing all the time. Mostly, there were not military forces in the city. They were bombing civil areas. Civil buildings, homes... They bombed any group of people, it didn't matter who you were. With heavy weapons or from planes and drones.

The gangs that Erdogan brought and sent to Serêkaniyê, they didn't even want to take the city as such, we saw that they were mostly there to loot, and rob, and kidnap people from their homes. We can see this and so can everyone, including international forces. Human rights organisations know this too. But no one says anything. Everyone is silent. Erdogan himself, by attacking our city, intended ethnic cleansing. Because many different groups were living together. In a beautiful way, with a richness of life. In Serêkaniyê society everyone was living together. Arabs, Kurds, Syriacs, Assyrians, Chechens... So his first goal was ethnic



cleansing. And that way of life I describe would be ruined.

We as women, from the beginning of the attacks until now, we are always demanding our rights. We were living as a collective society, and we didn't give up our land, we demand to return there. But without the Turkish state's occupation, and without their gangs. They must leave, and an international force intervene, so the society can come back to its land. Because it's our land, not theirs, we will never accept ethnic cleansing, nor demographic change. Not in Serêkaniyê, or Girê Spî or anywhere in this so called "security zone".

We will continue to make these demands on this basis. We lived in dignity in Serêkaniyê, and we will continue to life with that dignity til we return to our land, with our honour.

January 2020

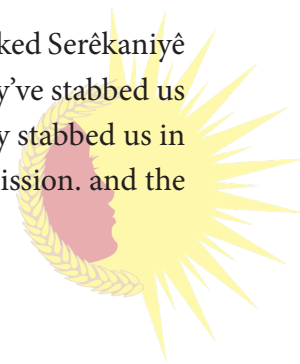


**SELVA AHMED**  
**SERÊKANIYÊ**

*“ Our revolution is a women’s revolution. And Erdogan’s objective is for the revolution not to continue.”*

As women displaced from Serêkaniyê that had to leave our city, because the Turkish invasion bombed there first, the surroundings of Serêkaniyê, and then the city itself, we have been internally displaced within Rojava. We have only had to move a few kilometres. We still live relatively close to our homes. But it is a very hard life. We have made protest actions in front of Human Rights organisations. So that they know that we are here. We are Kurds and we are here. We held protests in front of the UN headquarters and we have sent two letters, saying that as the people of Serêkaniyê we want to return home. Go back to our schools and study, continue to practice our culture. But no answer has come.

The various attacks on Rojava continue. The jihadist gangs that work for Erdogan have attacked Serêkaniyê in the most brutal way. And what have international states done for us? Like the USA. They've stabbed us in the back. We can't trust them. Of course, we never trusted them, or Russia, but still, they stabbed us in the back. One day we were fighting on the same frontlines. Then we saw the US give permission. and the Turkish planes attacked Serêkaniyê.



Our demand is always that we want to return to our city. To live in our land, Rojava, in our city of Serêkaniyê. Washokani (Serê kaniyê) was built up by many different peoples. By Arabs, Assyrians, even though there are not so many Assyrians, more in Til Temir, but also Armenians, Syriacs, Kurds... How did the Kurds and Arabs live together? They were saying between each other "this is my brother." There was unity between peoples. That is why we say to the international community, to human rights organizations, that we want to return to our land. But we say, if we go back to our land that international forces must intervene on the Turkish Syrian border. We cannot be attacked every day.

In 2011 the 'Free Syrian Army' attacked us, helped by the Turkish state. They came to the land of Serêkaniyê, and the people rose up in a great resistance, giving many martyrs. And even though in this war in total we have given more than 12,000 martyrs we will continue to fight for our land even if it means more martyrs.

Women say they cannot raise their children with the sounds of aeroplanes always over their heads, leaving our sons and daughters deaf. And we can't be sure that Erdogan won't, once again, drop chemical weapons on us. All the children in Washokani camp the same, when they hear the sound of plane they ask, "are they going to bomb us with chemicals?"

We can see the mentality of the jihadist gangs, how women are being raped, and assaulted. It doesn't matter if it's women of 17, 15 years, they attack them. They come and say "this woman is mine." They make women into slaves, and use them as sexual objects. Erdogan has attacked North and East Syria to attack the women's movement. Our revolution is a women's revolution. And Erdogan's objective is for the revolution not to continue.

We will either live a free life on our land or we will die a dignified death here. We have given a lot of martyrs for our land we have passed dark days here but we are going to overcome these dark days. And we will bring light to Rojava. We always say that with our weapons and self defence forces, with the will of women we will overcome all of this.

But today, the international powers have given to the Turkish State, full permission to use their war planes. And no one can live under warplanes. This is why we call out to international forces, to all the world, to all the international community, saying that all we want is a free life in our land.

We speak as Kurdish women, Arabic women, Assyrian and Syriac our callout to the world continues: We are resisting for a free life in dignity, a dignified life for our children, a dignified life for our culture, and a dignified life for our elders. So they don't erase our history and exterminate us. A life lived in dignity... or death.

*January 2020*

**HALIMA IBRAHIM ALDARBO**  
**ALSUBATYA, A VILLAGE NEAR SERÊKANIYÊ**



*“We just want to come back to our homes and lands.”*

When we got out, they were attacking. We suffered a lot until we came out and we had children with us. Some people fled by walking in lands. We became homeless and the people left their livelihoods behind. They had nothing but their soul when they left.

A woman we know died. She had four daughters. She was breastfeeding one of her kids. They kidnap women from villages near us.

We can't come back there, we are afraid. We can't live with them, they could do anything. And life there is so difficult. There's no water, no electricity, no food, nothing.

What is the fault of these children that they became orphans and homeless? There we were so happy in our homes and lands. There was electricity and water. But if we would go there now there is nothing.

Our situation is more than a tragedy. There is nothing more difficult than our situation. We are living a real tragedy. I hope everyone can see the tragedy we are experiencing. We are lacking everything. We couldn't bring anything with us. We left our houses with all the stuff.

We just want to come back and sit in our homes again. We don't want anything else. We just want to come back to our homes and lands.

March 2020



**FATIMA MAHMOUD IBRAHIM**  
**REGEL TALHAMRA, A VILLAGE NEAR SERÊKANIYÊ**



*“Our families and we had nothing but our soul when we left.”*

Turkey and the Free Syrian Army suddenly attacked us and began to bomb us. They attacked our houses and looted our money. Our families and we had nothing but our soul when we left.

Some people were attacked, some people could get out safely, and if someone had a car, they could escape. This is what happened. This is without conscience.

We're also human and we demand our rights. I mean what is our fault? Why does this plundering happen and why are we being displaced in camps? What does Turkey have here? They attacked us, looted our money and displaced us from our houses. We're not even fighting them and they're attacking us. What do they want here?

*March 2020*



*Washokani IDP camp (Heseke)*

**SHAMSA MIHEMED BEKIR**  
**LAYLAN, A VILLAGE NEAR SERÊKANIYÊ**



*“They came to kill, loot, plunder and rape.”*

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unemployment was over. I have two daughters and five sons.

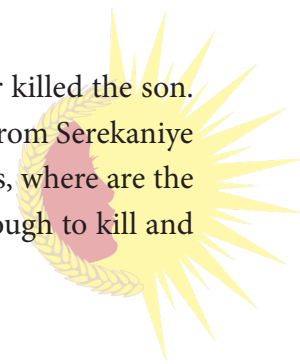
Everything we saw from the Free Syrian Army was killing, they are merciless, they kill children, young and old people. They rape, they came to an old man who married a young woman in Manager. They told the man: “We will take your wife till tomorrow morning.” “Leave your wife with us and tomorrow you can take her.” Even in the sunset they told the man to prepare his wife, and that in one hour they are coming to take her. So the man and his wife left the house and escaped. They just came to rape.

In Serêkaniyê we are all related and we know each other, we stay in touch. One family lives near Safahh. This family has a tractor and ironware, the male children went out and just the woman and her daughter were at home. They came and saw the girl at home. Then they told the mother that they wanted to marry the girl. And the poor woman was crying and saying she just wants to save her daughter. So she told them to take the tractor, harvest and the barley, but to not take her daughter. They told her: “We will read Al-Fatiha and we will take your daughter.” So the poor girl ran from house to house after dark, until she could finally hide with the help of the villagers, and after two days she could come out.

They came to kill, loot, plunder and rape. In the region, they raped six girls from Manager. And the parents are ashamed to say that their daughters has been raped.

We call the international society and we ask them: Aren't we human? Why does no one feel us? The big countries are merciful with the animals. We are human beings, be merciful with us. Stop this aggression that is happening without any reason or guilt. Stop it ! We had enough displacement.

If someone had stayed there to protect the house, they would have raped the daughter or killed the son. They say people are in their homes, but they're not. All people are displaced. My relatives from Serevaniye till Til Temir are all displaced. We are displaced persons and they talk about human rights, where are the human rights? Why can't anyone hear us? Why doesn't somebody tell them: Stop! It's enough to kill and



loot these people, it's enough! Stop to rape these girls.

The honour of all is dear to us. Why doesn't anyone defend us? Why doesn't anybody hear us? We call upon all nations and nobody hears us. The presidents of large countries, they can be merciful with a dog or a cat but, why aren't they merciful with these poor people? These people who face crimes for no reason. What is our guilt?

March 2020



**BESIMA DAUT, YAZIDI  
LIZGA, A VILLAGE NEAR SERÊKANIYÊ**

*"This land is  
ours and the  
land of our  
grandparents.  
It's not  
Erdogan's  
land."*

Actually we wouldn't leave our village, we were forced to leave our village. My family, friends and neighbours, we all left together. Because Erdogan's planes were above our village,

because of throwing rockets, shells and artilleries of the mercenaries. My little daughter who is ten years old vomited because of fear when we left the village at ten o'clock at night. She became sick and horrified because of the sounds. She asked me what are these sounds, why are these planes above us and why are people running? We left very sadly. We had to leave, like the people from the Shengal had to leave. It was like the flight when ISIS attacked Shengal.

We are from Lizga village, it is placed between Serêkaniyê and Zirgan. It's a Yazidi village. All the villagers became refugees because of the attacks of Jabhat Alnussra. All of our relatives went to Europe, nobody stayed, only my family. Because of the attacks, we left the village but we didn't go to Europe. We came to a nearby city, we came to Heseke. We cannot give up our home and our country. Our home is beautiful, this land is ours and the land of our grandparents. It's not Erdogan's land. They have no right to enter our land, take our land and expel us from our homes.

We suffered a lot until we built our homes. My children's father was going to work in the morning, he was working in the land. He was working until midnight to build our house. And now the whole house is gone. Not only our house but also the house of our relatives too. We're six Yazidi families and three Christian families in the village. And now they all are gone. They took the land from us.

When they came, our Arabic neighbours told us to leave. They told us that we're Kurdish and Yazidi, because of that the danger is high that they will capture us and slaughter us or put us in prison. So we were forced to leave. Because our Arabic neighbours love us they told us that Kurds have to leave. Kurds, Yazidi and Christian have to leave. The invaders say that Yazidi people are disbelievers and killing them is lawful.

We were scared of them and that they will do something as they did in Shengal. They slaughtered and abducted children, women, men and old people of Shengal. We are afraid they will do this again. So we were forced to leave our village.

They build the Washokanî camp. The Autonomous Administration build the Washokanî camp. The camp is for refugees from Serêkaniyê, Til Temir and nearby villages. They said that refugees can come to the Washokanî camp.

In fact we had a lot of difficulties until we settled here. We want to come back to our villages and lands. Erdogan has no right to enter our land. This land doesn't belong to him or anybody else. This land belongs to Kurds, Arabs, Circassian and Yazidi. We all live together. Our relations are pleasant. The occupiers came to destroy our relations. The occupying forces didn't come just for that. They also came to kill and destroy minorities like Yazidi, Armenian, Circassians, Turkmen, and Chechens.

They came and saw the democracy and the Autonomous Administration here. It's beautiful, democracy, freedom and rights of women are given. They want to end this project. That this project doesn't reach them. If this project reach them, their state will fall. Because of this fear they attacked us.

We condemn the aggressions of Erdogan. We ask the nations: the USA, Russia, France, the European nations and Arabic nations why are you silent? They see these attacks against women, children and old people. They didn't come because of SDF and the military forces. They came to rob, destroy and kill Kurds. Honestly, we're suffering a lot of pain. They came to destroy.

May 2020



Bombings in Serêkaniyê by the Turkish state last October



## ASSYRIAN WOMEN

VILLAGE IN TIL TEMIR AREA



“We are still afraid of the “Free Syrian Army”. It’s the same thing as ISIS.”

We opened our houses. We have done what was needed. No less than that. We don’t have differences between Kurds and Arabs. We are together. 9 Syriac families live in this village. Many houses have been opened for refugees. We’ve opened 75 houses for them. There’s 3 or 5 families in a house. Depends on the size.

But they are many, around 100 families. Many refugees are arriving but unfortunately we have no more room. They are from Serêkaniyê, Derbesiyê and Amûde. We have welcomed them all. We are afraid of the jihadist mercenaries. 280 families fled the previous ISIS attacks and came here. The attacks were from ISIS. There’s no difference between ISIS and Turkey’s mercenaries. They are all terrorists.

We were at home, we were happy. We had everything. God prevent this! Many families have gone to other countries. Before the village was 75 families. Now it’s 9. Now they are refugees, from ISIS.

And we are still afraid of the “Free Army”. It’s the same thing as ISIS. No difference.

November 2019



## ARMENIAN WOMEN

QAMISHLO

*"Until this moment, we're sitting in our home and we're scared."*



Armenians in North East Syria on their history, genocide, and the current threat We beg and we hope that our prayers will be answered, that our demands be accepted. Hopefully they will be heard. But the international states have no conscience.

If they had a conscience, they wouldn't wait 100 years, to admit that 1.5 to 2 million people were massacred and slaughtered. Is that a conscience? [No!]

I'll say it to the whole world: From Arabs to Kurds, Christians and all the peoples of the world, where is the human conscience when two million people are massacred?

They reported that our weapons were confiscated first. and then we were attacked. They've kidnapped our daughters and our wives, and then it was our turn. They attacked and murdered us. The individuals who escaped, could flee, hide in valleys, woods and fields. Individuals escaped like my father and aunt did. But there was no general escape.

Whole families were destroyed. Except my father, my aunt and my sister, no one escaped from my family, everyone else disappeared. Who murdered them? Germany murdered them.

They're trying to pin it on the Kurds, but they weren't to blame. Germany had its hands in the game and split us and the Kurds. They've killed so many Armenians. That is not God's will.

We escaped from our homes, hungry, and experienced terrible things. We ate what we had in our hands.



So much suffering and violence came to our country.

Today, fighter planes bomb without knowing who they're hitting. But back then they knew who they were holding their gun to their chest. They saw and knew who they were killing.

First, they killed our scholars, then our religious scholars and priests and in the end they murdered our teachers. All the weapons the Christians had were taken from them. Young men who were in good physical condition, they did not kill them immediately, so the foreign states didn't know what was going on.

But these countries, Russia, France, Italy, Germany and England were accomplices of Turkey. They supported Turkey and Sultan Hamid. Concluded an agreement with Turkey. Their goal was to kill all Armenians up to the last one. They ordered their soldiers to kill all Christians, young and old alike. And the international states proceeded without conscience.

No state has admitted this genocide, and now, after 100 years, what do you want to admit? We're afraid of Turkey. Until this moment, I tell you, we are afraid of Turkey. We sit in our houses and are afraid. He's a tyrant, don't you know that? The Kurds didn't do anything to us. Our great-grandfathers were friends with Kurds. And until this minute, we and Kurds are friends. Kurds are not hostile to us, we have daughters, daughters-in-law. and the Kurds are not hostile to us all. But who that threatens our lives is Turkey. And until this moment, we're sitting in our home and we're scared.

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Washokani IDP camp (Heseke)

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