

# Mala Jin

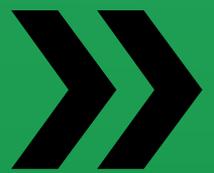
Empowering women  
Strengthening society



KONGRA STAR  
مؤتمر ستار



Kongra Star is a democratic and confederal women's organization in Rojava and throughout Syria. It organizes its ranks according to the ecological democratic paradigm that believes in women's freedom. It seeks to develop a free Rojava, a democratic Syria, and a democratic Middle East by promoting women's freedom and the concept of the democratic nation.



# Preface

Women's liberation has played a leading role in the construction of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES). In the areas under AANES control, society has been nothing less than transformed by women organizing together, largely under the umbrella of the Kongra Star organization<sup>1</sup>.

Kongra Star, originally called Yekitiya Star<sup>2</sup>, was founded in 2005 as a clandestine organization of mostly Kurdish women operating under the Baath Regime. These first years were difficult and dangerous for the women involved in organizing. Activists were targeted by security forces, arrested, and even tortured. However, the organizing done by members of Yekitiya Star during the Baath regime formed a solid foundation to act from when the Syrian crisis broke out. From the first day of the revolution Yekitiya Star played a key role in organizing and integrating all administrative efforts across the region, becoming one of the leading political movements in the region, and centering the importance of women's empowerment and political action in liberation. It began as a movement for primarily Kurdish women, but has grown to include women of all ethnicities and religions. In 2016, Yekitiya Star changed its name to Kongra Star, becoming an umbrella organization of all women's structures and institutions that had agreed to work within its charter. In addition, as the Arab majority regions of Manbij, Tabqa, Raqqa and Deir ez Zor were liberated from ISIS and brought into



1st conference of  
Mala Jin  
- 10 October 2016

the AANES project, the Arab women found that they had similar cultural backgrounds to each other and faced similar challenges. As such, they founded their own organization, which was named Zenobia Women's Council at a Conference in 2021. The Zenobia Council serves many of the same functions in the majority Arab regions as Kongra Star.

The political system in the AANES overall is based on 4 pillars: gender equality, self-defense, cultural and religious diversity, and social ecology. These elements are interconnected, meaning that one cannot be achieved without the other. Gender equality is understood to be intrinsically linked to the 3 other pillars.

In order to put these principles into practice, many structures have been set up in the AANES in order to fight patriarchal behavior in society. One of these structures is the Mala Jin<sup>3</sup>: a place where women can turn for assistance, support, mediation, advice, and protection.

1 Kongra Star- Star Congress - 'Star' referred to Ishtar, the ancient Mesopotamian goddess

2 Star Union

3 «Mala Jin» means literally «Women's House»



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# Introduction

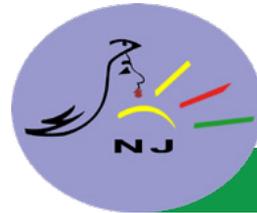
The Women's Revolution in North and East Syria (NES) is now well known around the world. For most people, it first brings to mind the Women's Protection Units, known as YPJ (Yekîneyên Parastina Jin), and the key role they played in the defeat of ISIS. But the women's revolution cannot be reduced only to its military aspects; the revolution has touched every part of political, economic and social life.

The women's movement has been integrated into structures throughout the Autonomous Administration organizations. The work has many aims depending on the needs of the sector protecting women in danger, providing educational opportunities, developing women's economic independence, tackling male and female mentalities and more. Much of this work started long before the revolution within the underground Yekitiya Star movement. The first Mala Jin opened in Qamishlo even before the revolution began, in a dangerous and uncertain period. With the outbreak of the civil war in 2011, the condition for women in the region further deteriorated. The opening of a Mala Jin at that time was an opportunity but also a necessity for the women of the region. The Mala Jin structure has been discussed in many articles and research papers, but some informa-



Photo of the Mala Jin Conference 2016

tion on its structure, purpose and inner workings remains difficult to find. With this report, we want to provide the reader with a broad overview of this key women's institution, which is now present in all the regions of North and East Syria. This document is based on research and interviews conducted with women working in Mala Jin as well as in the Women's Justice Council and the AANES court system. The aim of this work is to better explain the work of the Mala Jin, their connection with other women's organizations and institutions, and their impact on society. It has limited scope as much more could be said on these topics. We weren't able to visit Mala Jin in each of the regions but we hope that more research will be done on the specific systems in the future.



Logo of Mala Jin



Logo of Kongra star



# Mala Jin - The beginning

Mala Jin are mainly known for their mediation work. Women searching for help and support on family matters or civil cases involving other women can turn to the Mala Jin for help.

Their work operates under the „Social Justice“ mandate of the Social Contract established in 2016, which defines social justice as the necessary “basis to organize and self-protect society. It depends on solving social problems related to justice in the villages, neighborhood, and district communes. It solves problems by means of dialogue, negotiation, and mutual consent”.<sup>5</sup>

## The first Mala Jin

The first Mala Jin officially opened in Qamishlo on March 20, 2011. But, as discussed above, it was the result of decades of underground organizing by Kurdish women building a foundation to reach full equality within their families and neighborhoods. The Mala Jin is an essential feature of the women’s movement on the local level as it offers new possibilities for women to solve conflicts and problems they are facing within their house-



Members of the Mala Jin Center of Qamishlo



The Mala Jin is the house of a community working not only for women but for the whole family. The main goal of the Mala Jin is to teach women how to struggle, recognize their rights, build their minds and resist through education.<sup>5</sup>



hold. It develops a new form of justice and conflict resolution based on dialogue and mediation.

« ... (the Baathist regime) couldn’t accept that women were organizing autonomously. »<sup>6</sup>

Ilham Omer has been politically active in women’s organizations since the 1980s and was one of the three co-founders of the first Mala Jin in Qamishlo. Under the Baathist Regime, politically active women in underground structures experienced threats, detention and torture. Without their dedication under such circumstances, at great personal risk, the emergence of such strong women’s organizations throughout the AANES system would not have been possible.

At the beginning, the founders of

the first Mala Jin faced many challenges. In early 2011, the Syrian regime was still a strong presence in Qamishlo, and they received constant threats of violence and imprisonment. The chaos of the Syrian crisis was quickly gripping the region, and many women were suffering from depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts stemming largely from difficult family situations. They saw the need for the Mala Jin more clearly than ever under these circumstances, but they were operating with minimal financial resources.

Besides the acute financial difficulties, and incessant threats of attack, the early Mala Jin had to overcome another difficulty: societal distrust and resistance against their work, from both men and women. They were accused of bias towards the female point of view, neglecting men, and actively destroying families. Many people were not ready

4 Interview, Ilham Omer, co-chair of the first Women’s House in North and East Syria, July 2021

5 2016 Social Contract, Article 67 - <https://internationalistcommune.com/social-contract/> ; <https://ilacnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ILAC-Rule-of-Law-Assessment-Syria-2021-.pdf>

6 Interview, Ilham Omer, op. cit.

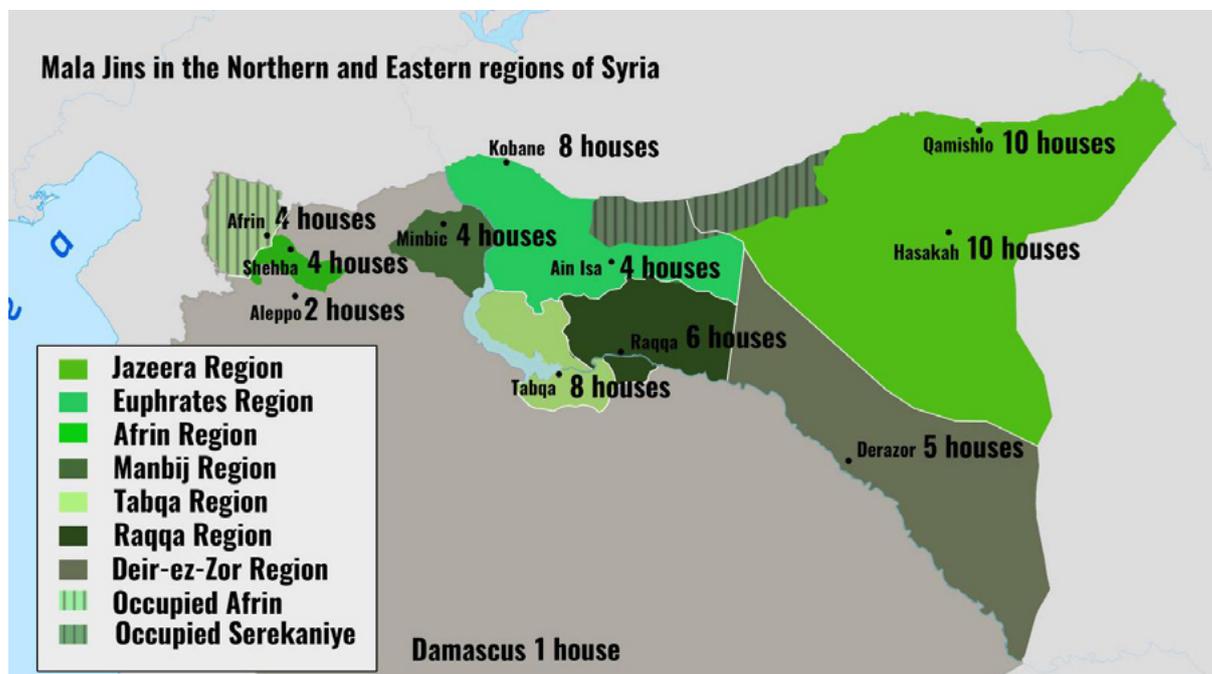
to accept the idea of women working directly on women's issues, and particularly standing in the way of patriarchal violence.<sup>7</sup>

In the beginning only a few women dared to come to the Mala Jin. The reconciliation model of justice was not well known or understood. Many women were ashamed to ask for support and hesitated to talk about their problems, anxious about how they would be perceived

by their husbands and families. As time went on, the community began to better understand the key role the Mala Jin could play in community healing. More women came searching for help and support around personal issues such as marital and family conflicts, underage marriage, polygamy, inheritance denial, child custody, alimony, and forced marriage. Step by step, the structure is growing

stronger, though members of Mala Jin still face attacks and threats, over the phone, and in person.

In the years following the Rojavan Revolution, as more and more cities were liberated from ISIS, other Mala Jin were opened across the liberated regions. As of 2021, women and men can now seek reconciliation support from 66 Mala Jin active across North and East Syria.



Number of Mala Jin in some of the main cities in North and East Syria

«There are seven regions (in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria): Jazeera (which contains Qamishlo and Hasakah cantons), Euphrates (which contains Kobane and Tel Abyad [Gire Spi] cantons), Afrin, Manbij, Tabqa, Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor. The majority of the region of Afrin has been under Turkish occupation since March 2018, but continues to be represented in the political system through the area of Shehba, which is populated by Afrin's displaced population. Parts of the Euphrates and Jazeera regions have been under Turkish occupation since October 2019, and their displaced administrations are now operating out of different cities.»<sup>8</sup>

7 Patriarchal violence can act on a wide scale from verbal, psychological, economic, physical violence including sexual violence or murder.

8 Beyond the frontlines – The building of the democratic system in North and East Syria Report, Rojava Information Center, December 2019, Web version, access July 31 2021 ; p. 21-22 <https://rojainformationcenter.com/2021/06/beyond-rojava-north-and-east-syrias-arab-regions/>



# Mala Jin in society

In most cases, Mala Jin are the first stop for women seeking support and recourse in the AANES justice system. They address all kind of issues but the most frequent are related to underage marriage and divorces (often with children involved).<sup>10</sup> At this point, polygamy and underage marriage are the most sensitive issues that the Mala Jin tackle. The AANES has a Women's Law that outlaws both practices, but in areas where these practices are particularly culturally embedded, these laws are not always evenly or easily applied. This is especially true in the majority Arab regions of the AANES, Raqqqa, Tabqa, Manbij and Deir ez-Zor. The Mala Jin also receives cases of physical violence, threats and femicide, which they immediately escalate to the Women Internal Security Forces (Asayîşa Jin). North and East Syria is a multi-ethnic region and the Mala Jin are

a resource of all women, men and families, be they Kurdish, Arabic, Syriac-Assyrian, Armenian, Yezidi, Turkmen, or Chechen etc. Women from these various communities are actively encouraged to participate in and work in the Mala Jin system as well.

While mediation and reconciliation is their most visible work, Mala Jin also organize trainings and educations for both women and men. These trainings help raise awareness around the negative social consequences of various practices on society, such as underage marriage, and provide empowerment opportunities for women.

They deal with all kind of issues, from problems which can be solved by mediation to cases of physical violence, threats, intimidation, harassment... The most frequent issues are related to underage marriages and divorces (often with children

involved). But polygamy and underage marriage are the most difficult ones to deal with as these issues remain very sensitive in the society leading to tensions. Up to now, Mala Jins have been able to help thousands of women across the region.

## Inter-Mala Jin Coordination

Each individual Mala Jins holds daily meetings and one monthly meeting that results in a monthly report every month. Each region has a central, the Mala Jin Center of the region will integrate all of the reports from their region into one general report which will be communicated to the Women's Justice Council and the Social Justice Committee of Kongra Star and Zenobia Council monthly.

In the monthly reports, some topics can be developed to point specific issues. For example, the cases of femicide in the region. Women are still getting killed by their father, brother, husband... or they find themselves in a position which pushes them to suicide. Mentalities are changing but it takes time and there is still resistance in society, subjugating women, forbidding them to work or to have any independence.

The Mala Jins are also in constant communication through a Whatsapp group, which allows them to share advice on difficult cases and support each other's work. A general meeting for all Mala Jin across the AANES also takes place every six months.

The Mala Jin is „a social and civil institution working for [greater] awareness, [that] aims at spreading the philosophy of social justice, the democratic family culture, and the communal life, and to combat inhuman practices against women and children and solve the problems of women and families. It works with committees and the representatives of Mala Jin within the Women's Justice Councils across the autonomous and civil administration.”<sup>10</sup>

9 Women's House rules, 2015

10 For more information on the phenomenon of underaged marriage in the region, refer to the dossier prepared by Kongra Star - dossier to be released in November 2021 (womendefendrojawa.net)

# The structure

The general structure of each Mala Jin includes four committees:

1#

The Social Reconciliation committee is specialized in solving disputes which women are confronted to. Often, they are able to reach a conclusion before the issue is brought to the court system. If the case is brought to the court, they make a recommendation which is presented to and almost always accepted by the courts. Whenever a case is sent to the court, the representative of this committee will also attend the court proceedings as support for the women.

2#

The Education committee organizes education courses for women at the commune level and as well organises seminars and lectures regarding women's rights.

3#

The Media and Archive committee works on documenting and archiving all the activities of the Mala Jin. It drafts reports on the issues to be sent to the Social Reconciliation Committee, disseminating the decision, data and news regarding women, especially in the justice system, archiving the financial expenses and preparing the necessary statistics.

4#

The Women Social Solidarity committee conducts follows up with women who've sought services, as well as outreach to other women in the commune. They provides social care for divorced women and people with special needs according to the available capabilities of the Mala Jin and in coordination with the responsible relevant authorities. It also coordinates with the Social Justice Committee of Kongra Star to provide the necessary aid for women in need and the Zenobia Council.



# How it works in practice

## Social reconciliation and mediation

Most of the cases introduced to the Mala Jin are solved internally via mediation by their members. But when necessary the members of the Mala Jins also work with the different women's structures existing within the administration, from the Social Reconciliation committees of the commune - the most local decision making body - up to the Women's Justice Committee which operates at the sub-district and regional level, the Court system and the Social Justice Committee of Kongra Star.

Mala Jins are themselves a part of the Women's Justice Council<sup>12</sup> and also part of the Social Justice Committee of Kongra Star. They participate to their meetings and shared reports on their work with both structures.

All cases that are brought to the Mala Jin will have to first passed through the relevant commune's reconciliation committee.<sup>13</sup> If the commune cannot solve the problem, a report will be handed over to the Mala Jin to take over the case. The commune is an important first step, because their proximity to the community means they have an intimate knowledge of the individuals that approach them, and the social dynamics of their communities.

Many of the cases the Mala Jin takes on are between a husband and wife. In these cases, the first step is to organize separate meetings to give both parties the chance to speak freely. To start, at the Mala Jin, meetings will be organised separately, the wife first and then the husband, to listen and talk. When both are ready to meet together, the Mala Jin will make a meeting schedule that can include up to

five meetings, depending on the needs of the situation. These meetings are the crux of the Mala Jin's work. They facilitate open discussion between the couple in a safe environment, and help them come to a common understanding.<sup>14</sup> This kind of procedure often takes longer when children are involved. In some cases, it becomes clear that a woman who has approached the Mala Jin has not necessarily presented her situation fairly. When this happens, the woman is never openly criticized in front of her husband. A further meeting will be organized separately with her to discuss the situation. The man will follow the same procedure until a solution is found, and they are ready to meet together again. Once an agreement is reached, the Mala Jin remains available as a resource for the couple. The Mala Jin members will follow the cases, and organise home visits to make sure that the situation has improved. If the situation deteriorates or another problem arises, the members of the Mala Jin will increase the frequency of their visits. The couple is also able to contact the Mala Jin directly to request assistance at their own initiative.

We build peace in the society, we are neither lawyers nor criminal lawyers... The goal of the Mala Jin is to avoid taking the case to the court.<sup>11</sup>



## Contract of agreement

When the reconciliation process, discussed above, results in a mutual agreement, the Mala Jin will submit a contract to be signed by both

11 Interview, Ilham Omer, op. cit.

12 Women Justice Council will be explained further in the brochure - refer to the chapter "Mala Jin and the Women's Justice System"

13 This procedure does not included the criminal cases that will be processed directly by the Court of Justice.

14 North and East Syria's Women's House, Interview by Rojava Information Center, access july 31 2021 <https://sur.conectas.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/sur-30-ingles-rojava-information-center.pdf>



parties. This contract will be then submitted to the Executive Body in the Court of Justice for approval. Involving the court is particularly important in a number of situations. Firstly, when the couple agrees on a course of action that requires long term commitment (for example, child support to be paid following a divorce arrangement), the court can better ensure that both parties continue to respect the terms of the agreement.

In domestic violence cases the cases of women victims of domestic violence, if the mediation process is able to reach an agreement, the court's oversight is important in the event of a relapse. In this case, the husband will be sent directly back to court.

Additionally, men often contest terms of the agreements after the fact. After noticing this pattern, the Mala Jin began to record the last discussion with couple to protect the integrity of the contract.

### Mala Jin and violence and threats

When a woman reports domestic violence or threats, the Mala Jin will report it to the Women Internal Security Forces (Asayîşa Jin) and the court to take immediate action. On the other hand, sometimes when cases arrive first at the court or the Asayîşa Jin, these bodies pass the cases back to the Mala Jin order to see if the problems can be solved via a mediation process to avoid, if possible, going to court.

If the Mala Jin cannot find recourse in a case, it will be taken to the court. Two members of the Mala



Our aim is to solve problems through dialogue, and avoid to resorting to the courts. When we cannot solve a case, we refer it to the Court of Justice. However, they often send the case back to us, as we are more capable of bringing about reconciliation and consensus.<sup>16</sup>



Jin will follow the case through the court, providing advice and their opinion to the judges, and offering support to the women.

When women is victim in a criminal acts, the cases is sent directly to the Court. The Mala Jin designate representatives to attend court sessions and assist them in defending their rights.

Mala Jin are opened during the day, but their work often continues after the office closes, visiting families or participating in meetings with other structures in the evening. A women running away from a violent situation at home might not be able to find help directly at the Mala Jin if they aren't in the office. In that case, they can turn to the Women Internal Security Forces (Asayîşa Jin) who will afterwards contact the Mala Jin.

### Women's Protection Houses - Mala Parastina Jinê

When a woman needs protection against violence, the Mala Jin

will refer the case to the Women's Commission (Desteya Jin)<sup>16</sup> which administrates the Women's Protection Houses (Mala Parastina Jinê), temporary shelters where women can find refuge.

There are two types of Women's Protection Houses:

- > Short-term shelter, where women can stay until a solution has been found and she can return safely to her house or her family.
- > Long-term shelter, when a woman's home situation is life-threatening and she cannot return home safely. In this situation there is no time limit on her stay in the shelter. The women will be able to stay as long as necessary.

While the woman are staying in the Mala Parastina Jine, the members of the Mala Jin work with the families to find a solution and ensure the woman's safety when she returns home.

15 Ibid.

16 Desteya Jin of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria is equivalent to a Ministry.



# The Mala Jin in the Women's Justice System

## Mala Jin and the Women's Justice Council

The Mala Jin are part of the justice system and work directly with the Women's Justice Council system. The Women's Justice Council was established in 2015, partially to facilitate collaboration between the Mala Jin and the other existing justice structures. Before this date the Mala Jin, the Social Reconciliation Committee system<sup>18</sup> and the Justice Council<sup>19</sup> were not working closely together.

Prior to 2015, the collaboration between these three structures was limited. That year, the Mala Jins and the Social Reconciliation Committees came together to address key issues they were facing in their work at the community level including:

- > the overlap of their responsibilities that could occur between the different structures working on reconciliation case within the community
- > the impact on their work due to conflict with the law enforcement
- > the impact of these conflicts on the community

That year, the Mala Jin, the Reconciliation Committees and the



The democratic justice system solves the problems related to justice and social rights through peoples' participation and self-organization. Its vision of justice is based on the moral principles of the democratic society. It aims at building a society which adopts a democratic approach and vision and an ecology that believes in the freedom of women and societal life and organizes itself on the basis of the democratic society. Services of justice are conducted through social participation and the organization of democratically formed local units.<sup>18</sup>



Justice Council held extensive meetings and decided to convene a conference. The conference structured for the first time the coordination between the three institutions. The coordination of all three led to the creation of the Women's Justice Council, which now over-

sees and coordinates the work of the Mala Jins, the Social Reconciliation Committees and the Justice Council in cases involving women's rights.

The Women's Justice Council was first established in the Cizire region. In 2018, a second conference

17 2016 Social Contract, Article 67 - <https://internationalistcommune.com/social-contract/>

18 The Social Reconciliation Committees are responsible for the social rights of the community in general such as disputes between families, matters such as agriculture and trade..., not just having to do with women. They work on bringing reconciliation in the community cases.

19 The Justice Council is part of the legal department and is responsible of tribunals, the coordination of justice executive and prosecution

was organized to help implement a system at every level of the Autonomous Administration from the communes up. The conference was organized with the support of the Civil Defense Force (Hêzên Parastîna Civakî - HPC), Women Internal Security Forces (Asayîşa Jin), the Women's Commission and Kongra Star. The objective was to implement the system all over North and East Syria.

Since then, the six other the different regions of the AANES have successfully integrated a Women's Justice Council within their Justice Council. These new structures have enabled better communication between the different structures working on similar issues and therefore better and more equal access to justice for the women they serve.

## Mala Jin and the Court

As discussed above, Mala Jin and the court coordinate their work through the Women's Justice Council. Every month, the Mala Jin regional center sends a detailed report to the regional court. They work closely together, meeting monthly to discuss and coordinate their work on the cases related to women.

Each case is judged by three people (men and women). Members of the Mala Jin, who follow the case in court, will be included in the process and their advice and suggestions will be heard by the court to help them reach a decision.

The court will hear the cases that cannot be solved within the Mala Jin, such as criminal cases, or as

mentioned above, when a previous agreement reached within the Mala Jin has been violated.

However, as discussed above, the court is involved in approving and filing contracts of agreement for many other types of cases, such as the ones related to divorce. The court will grant the official and final judgement of divorce, but the mediation terms of most divorces will be dictated by the Mala Jin's process. If the mediation with the Mala Jin does not succeed and no agreement can be found, the Social Reconciliation Committee will be involved. In the case mediation fails again, the court will take over the case to settle the divorce.



Photo of the Mala Jin first conference held in 2016. 135 representatives from Mala Jins across Cizire, Afrin, Kobani, Damascus, and Manbij attended the conference.



Picture of an internal Education session.

# Women's empowerment through education

As mentioned above, self-defense is one of the four key pillars of the revolution in Rojava and education is its core of self-defense's principle. Women's Education is crucial for raising awareness around community issues, strengthening community ties and capabilities as well as supporting personal empowerment. This is especially true for the female population. To this end, Educational sessions are organized on a regular basis for members of Mala Jin. In turn, the education committees within the Mala Jin organize education for women and men throughout the community society.

## Education for the members of the Mala Jins

When new members join the Mala Jin, they take a two month long education course to develop their understanding and critical thinking skills around political and social knowledges on topics such as ideology, society, law, politics, gender relations and more. Once they finish

their education, every new member works under the supervision of a more experienced member at first, to ensure they can handle the work. Once in the Mala Jin, new members will rotate into a new position every six months to one year in order to give her the opportunities to learn, develop her knowledge of the Mala Jin system, and take herto the work that suits her best.

Education are also provided to members during the year. Members will have the possibility to follow internal and external education.

Additionally, most Mala Jin organize on-going education for their members on various subjects, every two weeks. They also work with external structures such as Kongra Star or the Zenobia Council, to provide additional opportunities for members.

External educations will be organised under the responsibility of Kongra Star. At the time of writing, Kongra Star was organizing educations on law and women's right every week for the Mala Jin in Qamishlo. In order to make sure that

member who wishes can attend they have implemented a rotation system.

## Educating society

Women's education is foundational to improving systemic issues facing the community, and for strengthening community ties and autonomy. Education takes time to change mind-sets, but, self organisation and the social relations allow to work on the change of mentality of the community. This reflected in the Mala Jin's work, as more and more women become aware of about their rights and the existing structures set up to help them.

The educations provided by members of the Mala Jin education committee are conducted in the name of the Women's Justice Council. They organize education for the communes on many issues such as women's rights, women's health, problems faced by married couples, underage marriage and more.

# Syriacs Mala jin

The Syriac-Assyrian population has a long history in the region, dating back to 2500 BC converting to Christianity between the first and third centuries.

Throughout their history, the Christian population of Syria (which also includes the Armenian population) has faced discrimination, threats and genocide. During the Baathist regime, like other ethnic minorities, the Syriac-Assyrian population was denied the right to publicly express their identity or engage in cultural or religious practices<sup>20</sup>. Before the Syrian Civil War in 2011 about 300,000 Christians were still living in the region. As of 2021, the Syriac-Assyrian population has dropped to about 100,000 inhabitants.

The history of discrimination, repression, assimilation and even forced conversion of the religious minorities in Syria has led to a need to reclaim their history, language, and culture. As in the case of the Kurdish women, the Syriac-Assyrian women did not wait for the revolution to start to begin organizing amongst themselves. In the early years of 2000s, Syriac women were already starting to work actively in the defense of their rights.

The Syriac-Assyrian population is well established in the region, and they have their own institutions, both civil and religious. The Christian community, for exam-

ple, does not face problems such as polygamy and underage marriage, and cases of divorce are managed by the Church. At the same time, Syriac women were still in need of support, and able to act as a bridge with the other Syriac-Assyrian structures.

The first Syriac Mala Jin opened in Hessekeh in 2014 followed, in 2018, by the opening of a second Syriac Mala Jin in Qamishlo. These two Mala Jins are fully integrated in the general Mala Jins organisation and follow the same principal to achieve social justice, defend women facing patriarchal violence, and helping women to develop their free will and abilities to defend themselves.

Ten women work now in the two

Syriac Mala Jins: 5 in Qamishlo and 5 in Heseke.

Their work is not limited to the Syriac community as Arabic, Kurdish, Yezêdi... and Syriac women come to their houses searching for help and support.

Both houses are affiliated to the Syriac Women's Union<sup>21</sup> and followed the same process as the other Mala Jins. They follow the same training and report to the same institution. When a case is transferred to the court, members of the Syriac Mala Jin will accompany the victim to the court.

This example illustrates the ability of the different communities within North and East Syria to integrate a project such as Mala Jin that work for the benefit of the whole.



Members of the Syriac Mala Jin in Heseke

20 After ISIS: Ensuring a future for Christians and other minorities in North and East Syria, Rojava Information Center, Septembre 2020

21 Syriac Women's Union is organised under the umbrella structure of Kongra Star



# Conclusion

It has been 10 years since the first Mala Jin opened its doors. During these 10 years, the region went from civil war to revolution. These years have transformed the society, the region, the whole social structure. All families were affected in one way or another by these years of war, leaving a traumatized population, grieving families and a region to rebuild.

Women were facing patriarchal violence long before the war started, but the war only reinforced this situation. The work of the Mala Jins

has opened a way for a real change. A long and difficult change, but one that is bearing fruit not only for the women but for society as a whole.

We can now see a strong structure, integrated into all relevant civil society structures. The work of the Mala Jin evolving according to the needs and problems that women face but also according to the evolution of the situation in the region. The war has changed form, the occupations of Afrin, Gire Spi (Tel Abyad) and Sere Kaniye (Ras Al-Ayn) has displaced hundred of

thousands of people. These regions being now governed by Turkish-backed militias, while continuing to bomb the front lines at Tel Tamer and beyond. The worsening economic situation, the impact of the water crisis, the continuous attacks by the Turkish-backed militias in the occupied regions... All of these things put immense pressure on women in the region. The work of the Mala Jins continues despite all the difficulties.

# Further research

Each chapter would deserve a brochure in itself. Mediation and reconciliation is central in the justice system in North and East Syria. Different structures have committees dedicated to this work, from the commune to the Social Reconciliation Committee. A deeper research on it would allow to better

understand the process put into place.

Furthermore, the Mala Jin have done fundamental work in the refugee camps scattered around North and East Syria, which concentrate societal issues, especially for the women living there. Specific research into this work would be

insightful as well.

Additionally, further research into the relationship between the Mala Jin and other structures such as Mala Parastina Jine are needed.

We hope these works will be made in the future to give a better understanding of the Mala Jin.



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