



## Fact Sheet: Kobanê -

### Why Turkey Is Attacking The Symbol Of Resistance

Erdogan is constantly threatening to occupy Kobanê, seeing this free city and all it stands for as a personal affront. Over the last weeks, Kobanê has been constantly attacked by air, and through the shelling of villages in region. Attacks which drew widespread condemnation targeted the infrastructure of the area, such as the destruction of the Corona hospital in the city of Kobanê on November 20, the destruction of the school in the village of Koran on November 22, or the attacks on the health clinic in the village of Qaramox on November 22.

### Why Is Kobanê Important?

- On July 19, 2012 the Rojava revolution officially started in Kobanê, when the city declared its autonomy, later followed by the cities of Cizîrê and Efrîn canton. The local self-defense forces had driven out the Syrian Regime forces.
- The city of Kobanê became known worldwide in 2014/2015, when the historic defeat of ISIS there became a turning point in the war.

### Geography and History

- Situated on the foot of the Meştenûr Plateau, the city of Kobanê (in Arabic: Ayn Al-Arab) is overlooking the Sarouj Valley.
- The mainly Kurdish populated town (currently around 200,000 inhabitants) historically centred around the train station of the imperial railway project, which connected Berlin with Bagdad. It was further populated by Armenians and Kurds that fled from the genocide in 1915.
- There are around 300 villages in the area of Kobanê, mostly populated by Kurds. In the countryside, keeping sheep and goats, as well as agriculture and harvesting olives, are the primary sources of income. These economic activities are very limited at the moment due to the constant shelling by Turkey and its mercenaries.

### The Historic Defeat Over ISIS

Shortly after it declared its autonomy in 2012, Kobanê canton was encircled on all sides: by Turkey in the north, and Turkish mercenary groups in the east, west and south. ISIS started to prepare for an attack on the city in September 2014. At that point it was armed with the arsenal of weapons acquired from the Iraqi and Syrian armies, who had fled their bases in Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor and Mosul. ISIS launched its



attack on 15 September, and just after 3 weeks reached the fringes of the city. Over 134 days, YPG and YPJ fighters managed to inflict unprecedented casualties on ISIS, engaging in direct street battles. Hundreds of guerillas from the free mountains of Kurdistan as well as youth from northern Kurdistan had joined the fighting after a call out by Abdullah Ocalan to defend the city.

This heroic resistance resonated globally, with protests sparking in 93 countries around the world and millions of demonstrators participating. They called on governments to act while dozens of fighters were defending the last neighborhoods of Kobanê. On November 1, the International Day of Solidarity with Kobanê was announced.

At the same time, the city's small streets were still witnessing a violent conflict: in the face of car bombs and suicide bombings, young Kurdish men and women were fighting a battle of existenc, Using whatever weapons they had, and a collective strength of mind, they freed Kobanê house by house, street by street, until they achieved the great victory. ISIS mercenaries were expelled from the last streets of Kobanê on 26 January 2015, and liberation battles in further parts of north and east Syria began.

The victory in Kobanê was the beginning of the collapse of the Turkish influence in Syria. During the height of the battle, Erdogan anounced that "Kobanê is about to collapse". Turkey's plan was building on employing ISIS along its borders to Syria. After the defeat of ISIS, Turkey has been continuing to work on implementing this project, through occupying areas liberated from ISIS and employing former ISIS mercenaries.

### Why Kobanê Has To Be Defended

- Turkish backed mercenaries, ISIS will gain strength again. By taking over Kobanê, the AKP-MHP would take revenge for the defeat of ISIS.
- Kobanê is the symbol of the women's revolution: It was the first canton declaring autonomy on 19th of July 2012. The occupation of Kobanê would mean the destruction of people's self-determination and democracy.
- In the case of invasion, Kobanê would be turned from a lighthouse of women's freedom into a region characterised by drug production and trafficking, fascist ideology, and looting. It would become a Turkish colony, and thousands of Kurdish and Arabic families would lose their homes, or would be subjected to harassment, rape, robbery, and cultural genocide.

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