

Stop the Imminent and Destructive Turkish Invasion of the Self-Administration of North East Syria

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The European Syriac Union deeply regrets the unilateral decision of US President Donald Trump to allow the Turkish army to invade the Self-Administration of North East Syria (SANES). The peoples of SANES and the SDF – with its ally the USA – defended their territory against ISIS and the authoritarian Assad regime with the blood of thousands of Kurds, Syriacs, and Arabs. Based on their struggle, they created a stable and peaceful territorial co-existence. The US President has decided to wave this away, handing over its ally to Turkey and forfeiting historic democratic progress to the Turkish president. This decision benefits the Assad regime and Russia and removes any incentive to change Syria into a free democracy.

Turkey's aggression is a clear and present danger to the stability of SANES and its peoples. It will ensure the comeback of ISIS. Leaving the responsibility for the ISIS prisoners and fighter cells to Turkey would be a disastrous mistake. Turkey has shown its two-faced and insincere policy in Syria by supporting ISIS and arming controversial rebel groups. The result of the Turkish invasion will cause thousands of the ISIS prisoners and jihadi's to escape or be released. Turkey's aggression and its negative outcomes are a clear and present danger to the safety and security of the EU. Furthermore, it will jeopardise the fragile stability in Iraq and Syria. People in Iraq and Syria crave for peace, safety, and the Rule of Law. The people of North and East Syria founded the Self-Administration to ensure this. Through jointly defeating ISIS and establishing local governance, they achieved the beginnings of a lasting peace. A Turkish invasion will again lead to casualties, displacements, huge refugee flows and to the horrible images of dangerous journeys to find peace and hope in Europe – images unworthy of civilised countries.

As co-initiators of SANES, we the Syriac Christians have a long and bloody history with the Turkish Republic. We remind the international community and public opinion of the Turkey-perpetrated and instigated Genocide of 1915 which decimated its Syriac Christian population. We remember the unpunished killings of Syriacs, the ongoing unlawful taking of their possessions, and the fact that less than twenty thousand Syriacs remain in Turkey today.

The European Syriac Union calls on the EU to apply pressure on Turkey to prevent this disaster in the making by a fellow NATO-member. The EU should help the US in the security of SANES. The European Syriac Union calls upon the President of the USA, the State Department and the Pentagon to reverse its decision to withdraw. We call on President Trump to fulfil his promise and continue protecting the Syriac Christians of the Self-Administration North and East Syria against Turkish aggression.