

The Democratic Society Movement, TEV-DEM



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ISIS standards in Afrin

The canton of Afrin, which is occupied by the Turkish military and FSA groups, is subject to similar rules as those introduced by the ISIS in its former "capital" Raqqa. According to local sources, women in Afrin are now prohibited from leaving the house without black veiling and male escorts.



Over 300 civilians killed

The Turkish army and its FSA mercenaries killed more than 300 people from the civilian population, including 56 women and 46 minors, starting from January 20, under the cynical name Operation Olive Branch. The population of the northern Syrian canton resisted the second largest NATO army and the militia it recruited for 58 days. When the occupation forces were just outside the town of Afrin, on March 18, the bulk of the population was evacuated to the neighboring canton Shehba.

Afrin factually annexed

After the occupation of the city center of Afrin, an "Afrin Council" was founded in Antep on 19 March, the coordination of which is managed by the Governor of Hatay. Thus Afrin has been effectively annexed by Turkey. For Afrin a separate governor from Ankara is to be appointed.

Kidnappings and rape

The actions of the occupying power in Afrin and the villages in the region put the remaining population under extreme pressure. Particularly affected by the regime, which complies with the standards established by the ISIS, are the women. Abductions and sexualised violence are commonplace. What has become of the women abducted by militia is not known. There are also real abductions with ransom demands instead.

Villages are Arabized

According to the Democratic Council of Syria (MSD), approximately 4,000 families of FSA militia have been settled in the city and villages. The village of Kafr Jina in Shera district has been completely Arabized. At least 300 families have settled in the village of Kafr Safra alone.¹

Settling Islam Army's families in Afrin

As a part of the plan to change the demography of the area, families of Islam Army's mercenaries from Qalamoun, a suburb of Damascus, have been settled in Afrin under a Russian-Turkish agreement.

This slipped from the tongue of one of the commanders of Islam Army through audio recording obtained by ANHA agency from a reliable source. The commander said that his destination is Afrin, not Jarablus as claimed by some media close to Turkey.

The source pointed out that some families refused to enter the homes of the people, adding that the occupationist Turkish army housed them in camps they established in the village of Mohammedia in Janderes area.

The sponsors of the deportation agreement threatened the mercenaries of the Army of Islam to kill them if they refused to go to Afrin.

A reliable source from Sherawa said, the jihadists had increased the number of their mercenaries in the villages of Sherawa. They have 30 families in the villages of Burj Suleiman, Burj Haider and Faferteen, it added.

Skirmishes took place between newly arrived mercenaries and the former ones about the remaining of the aforementioned people, demanding to take out the original villagers from their villages.

This pattern of displacements and settlements come under the Russian-Turkish agreements aiming to change the demography of the region.²

Women's delegation from Germany visits Shehba and Sherawa

Following the invasion attacks of the Turkish state and affiliated Al-Nusra, ISIS and FSA gangs against Afrin, hundreds of thousands had to move to Shehba and Sherawa. Settled in these areas, Afrin people are continuing their lives under challenging conditions.

¹ <https://anfenglish.com/women/isis-standards-in-afrin-26510>

² <http://hawarnews.com/en/haber/accommodating-islam-armys-families-in-afrin-h1262.html>

Four doctors from various institutions in Germany, Dr. Swantje Illig, Daniela Nischik, Silvia Hauffe and Sylvia Gabelman, have made observations in Shehba Canton and Afrin's Sherawa district to see the situation of displaced people from Afrin for themselves.

“STOP ARMS SUPPORT TO TURKEY”

Following three days of observations, the delegation held a joint press conference with women's movement Kongra Star in the Berxwedan Camp in Shehba Canton.

The press statement was read out by Dr. Swantje Illig who called attention to the troubles and tragedies experienced by the displaced people of Afrin and called on all NATO member states that provide weapons to Turkey, including Germany, to immediately stop giving arms to Turkey.

“WE HEARD TRAGIC STORIES”

The press statement said the following; “We are feminist women. We are all working in healthcare services. We came to Shehba and visited three refugee camps here. We talked to health workers, mainly officials from Heyva Sor a Kurd (Kurdish Red Crescent).

We came here for an observation of the circumstances surrounding the refugees from Afrin. We heard several tragic stories including cases of violence and disappearance. We condemn the Turkish state and allied gangs trampling on human rights and laws in this manner. We condemn the NATO states and Germany for their support to the Turkish state. We support Afrin people's demand to turn back to their homes safely.”

“URGENT MEDICAL AID NEEDED”

The delegation underlined the need for urgent medical aid, remarking that this is of great importance for particularly women and children in Shehba.

“We want the people of Afrin to be treated as refugees in international arena and we want them to get support. We want that institutions like UNHCR provide support for these refugees. Arms support for Turkey must stop immediately.”

CALL TO WOMEN

The delegation urged international observers and media outlets to go to Afrin and called on all women to rise up for Afrin.³

³ <https://anfenglish.com/women/women-s-delegation-from-germany-visits-shehba-and-sherawa-26544>

IS leader wounded but still alive in Syrian desert: Iraqi security

Multiple Iraqi security officials claim that Islamic State (IS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is likely wounded but still alive and hiding out in Syrian desert regions near the border with Iraq.

There have been no confirmed public sightings of the elusive Baghdadi since July 2014, when he was filmed declaring himself the "caliph" of the world's Muslims at a mosque in Mosul. There is currently a \$25 million bounty on his head.

"The last information we have is he is in Al-Hajin in Syria, 18 miles from the border in Deir al-Zor province," Director General of the Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism office at Iraq's Ministry of Interior Abu Ali al-Basri told Fox News on Sunday.

He added that intelligence on the whereabouts of Baghdadi was being used to conduct a "multi-force raid" by security forces from Russia, Syria, and Iran.

Hisham al-Hishami, a member of Iraq's National Reconciliation Commission, also told Fox News, "I met with people and some of Baghdadi's assistants who been captured and they said he is able to hide because he moves without a convoy or bodyguards."

"There are just three people with him: his son, his son-in-law, and his friend and driver."

Another Iraqi official who spoke to the news organization, Ministry of Defense Spokesperson Brig. Gen. Yahya Rasool said, "He has been injured at least three times, twice in Iraq and once in Syria," adding, "He has severe injuries to his legs and his health is not good."

A "well-placed American intelligence insider" is also quoted in the report as saying that Baghdadi "is very much alive."

Although Iraq declared a military victory over IS in late 2017, fighters from the jihadist group continue to carry out bombings, ambushes, kidnappings, and other attacks on a regular basis, often in areas near the Syrian border.⁴

School turned into prison and torture centre in Afrin

Afrin continued to live under terror after the illegal occupation by the Turkish state and its mercenary allies. Those groups keep carrying out every kind of violence, from plundering to abducting citizens and extortion.

The people who stayed in the city are subjected to the worst of violence, while many public institutions have been turned into prisons and torture centres. Such as the case of a school in the village of Hakja, which belongs to the Shiye district. The school has been turned into a prison to keep the Afrin citizens abducted by the gangs.

⁴ <http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/999cf0e2-0ec4-4e3c-a4f0-b438d6695d31>

Sources in the region told ANHA that scores of Afrin citizens who had been abducted were taken here. Some are said to have surrendered to Turkish troops after being held for some time in the village prison but no information was available on their whereabouts and conditions.

The mercenaries turned a house in the village of Merwaniyê into an intelligence centre. It is understood that the house belongs to a man named locally as Hesên Darmeci and known to be an informer.

Sources in the region also said that the Turkish soldiers and their mercenary allies are monitoring any movement by people from the control point they built just beside the water deposit in the village of Hakja. It is understood that the border villages of Hakja, Marwaniya, Sinara and Anqala are under a lot of pressure.

It has been confirmed that the Turkish state has settled some of the jihadists and their families they had brought from East Ghouta in the village of Anqala. Sources also confirmed that Faylaq Al-Sham group set up a military base in the border village of Dêr Belût.⁵

Five top ISIS officials captured in Deir ez-Zor operation

As the final phase of the Syrian Democratic Forces' (SDF) operation in rural Deir ez-Zor continues on its 10th day, five top ISIS officials have been captured.

Army Colonel Ryan Dillon, Spokesperson for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), the US-led coalition against ISIS, announced that top ISIS officials for Deir ez-Zor have been captured as a result of coordination between Iraqi forces and the SDF. Dillon said the capture was “a significant blow” to ISIS.

4 of the captured ISIS members are reported to be from Iraq and the other from Syria.

The final phase of the Operation Cizîre Storm was launched on May 1st and aims to clear eastern Deir ez-Zor and border area with Iraq of ISIS.

SDF fighters have advanced 20 km since the launch of the campaign.⁶

⁵ <https://anfenglish.com/rojawa/school-turned-into-prison-and-torture-centre-in-afrin-26551>

⁶ <http://hawarnews.com/en/haber/5-is-commanders-arrested-within-al-jazeera-tempest-h1315.html>