



PARLAMENTOLAR ARASI BİRLİK (PAB) TÜRK GRUBU
TURKISH GROUP TO THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)



Ankara, 23 January 2018

Dear Madam President,
Dear Colleagues,

I am writing this letter to bring the following issues to your attention on the 'Operation Olive Branch' launched by the Republic of Turkey on 20 January 2018 against terrorist elements in Afrin region of Syria.

As the armed conflict in Syria continues unabated in its seventh year, the spill-over effects of the war have exceeded the borders of Syria and its immediate vicinity. The terrorist organizations that found a fertile ground remain a serious threat to the regional and international security, as well as to the territorial integrity of Syria.

Turkey's national security has been under direct threat from the Syria-based terrorist organisations, among which DEASH and PKK/KCK's Syria affiliate PYD/YPG are at the top of the list.

In countering the threat of terrorism, our response has always been proportionate, measured and in line with the right of self-defense as depicted in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

As such, Turkey has successfully concluded the "Operation Euphrates Shield" last year, through which 2015 km² of land was cleared from DEASH and a safe haven free of terror could be established, having enabled some of the displaced Syrians to return safely and voluntarily to their homes.

However, the threat of terrorism from Syria targeting our borders has not ended. The recent increase in rocket attacks and harassment fires, directed at Hatay and Kilis provinces of Turkey from the Afrin region of Syria, which is under the control of the PKK/KCK/PYD-YPG terrorist organization, resulted in the deaths of many civilians and soldiers and left many more wounded.

The risk of DEASH elements infiltrating into Turkey via this area and targeting the security of Turkey as well as the European countries is also heightened due to the recent movements of DEASH terrorists coming into the Afrin region from other parts of Syria. Furthermore, the violence and conflict prevailing in our borders and terrorist organizations in the region forced 3 and half million innocent people, including 370 thousand Kurds to leave their home country. These people have fled to Turkey where is the only safe haven in the region.

TEL : +90 312 420 6088-89
FAX : +90 312 420 6768
mail : ipu@tbmm.gov.tr



TBMM - ANKARA
TURKEY



**PARLAMENTOLAR ARASI BİRLİK (PAB) TÜRK GRUBU
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In order to counter this terrorist threat, Turkey initiated a military operation on 20 January and ground operation began on 21 January against these terrorist elements. The operation aims at ensuring our border security, neutralizing terrorists in Afrin and saving the brotherly Syrians. As such, the operation will only target terrorists and their hideouts, shelters, emplacements, weapons, vehicles and equipment. All precautions have been taken and utmost sensitivity is shown to prevent civil people from being harmed.

This measure was essential in order to ensure Turkey's border security and our national security based on our right of self-defense as defined in Article 51, but also within the context of the responsibility attributed to member states in the fight against terrorism including through UNSC Resolutions 1373(2001), 1624(2005), 2170(2014) and 2178(2014).

I would like to underline that Turkey, unequivocally committed to the territorial integrity and political unity of Syria, undertakes this measure with a view to contributing to and furthering these basic principles.

I remain at your disposal for any further information.

Sincerely,

Coşkun ÇAKIR
President of the Turkish IPU Group

TEL : +90 312 420 6088-89
FAX : +90 312 420 6768
mail : ipu@tbmm.gov.tr



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TURKEY