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31 October, 2019

Henrik Dam Kristensen
Danish Parliament
Prins Jørgens Gård 1, 1218 København, Denmark

Dear Mr Speaker,

We, the signatories, as representatives of Kurdish, Arab, Christian (Syriac-Chaldean-Assyrian and Armenian), Turkmen, Chechen, Alevite, and Yazidi communities, women and men, appreciate the efforts of the Denmark aimed at finding a political solution for the ongoing crisis in North and East Syria and Rojava. Over two weeks ago, the armed forces of the Republic of Turkey have initiated a long-threatened campaign of military invasion, violating Syria's borders and showing blatant disregard for international law, human rights conventions, and Syria's territorial integrity, executing this military campaign in coordination with various jihadist proxy militias. The Turkish government has made the aims of this military operation clear – their goal is to eliminate the institutions of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES), occupy Syrian land, and settle Syrian refugees originating from other parts of Syria in this region, changing the demographics of North and East Syria and likely, in some cases, violate the principle of non-refoulement.

In particular, the attacks of the Turkish state and its allies target the historic gains that women in Northern and Eastern Syria have managed to obtain over the course of seven years. Against the sexual violence of ISIS and similar groups, women from all ethnic and religious communities have built up their own structures to create a life in freedom and equality in the region. As the execution of Kurdish politician and women's activist Hevrin Khalaf and the torture of the corpses of female Kurdish fighters by Turkey's allies show, systematic violence against women appears to be a major objective of the military aggression.

The Turkish government's objectives are identical to those of the Turkish military invasion of Afrin in March 2018, which resulted in the occupation of Syrian land and forcible change in the demographics and identity of the region. The indigenous Kurdish population are not the only target of this latest campaign of Turkish military aggression – Arabs, Christians (Syriac-Chaldean-Assyrian and Armenian), Turkmens, Chechens, Alevites, and Yazidis are also suffering. Religious and ethnic minorities of Syria, including the Yazidis and Christians who recently experienced genocide at the hands of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS), are particularly fearful of being targeted by the Turkish armed forces and their Jihadist proxy militias, and many members of these communities have already fled their homes.

When Turkey invaded Afrin last year, the Turkish presidential spokesman asserted that Turkey was exercising its right to self-defense pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, claiming there had been over 700 attacks against Turkish cities originating in Afrin. This claim was demonstrably false. The invasion of Afrin and its subsequent occupation by Turkish forces and Turkish controlled, armed and funded Jihadist groups has forcibly displaced thousands. Turkish forces and Jihadist militias under their command in Afrin have committed atrocities such as kidnapping, extortion, murder, torture, rape, and other forms of gender-based violence, which Amnesty International has denounced as war crimes per the definition in Article 8 of the Rome

Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Confirmed reports and video footage disseminated over the last two weeks indicate that the Turkish forces and their Jihadist proxy militias are committing similar crimes now in newly invaded parts of Syria.

Throughout years of bloody conflict in the country, North and East Syria, a region with a population of 5 million, was an oasis of stability and coexistence in which all communities had their rights guaranteed and all were given a voice in their own affairs. This most recent campaign of Turkish military aggression has changed this overnight, has already displaced hundreds of thousands within Syria, and threatens to cause large-scale death and destruction and exacerbate the Syrian refugee crisis.

Dear Mr Speaker,

Turkey's unprovoked use of military force against North and East Syria and Rojava is a clear act of aggression as defined in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations and UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX), and within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Even though Turkey is not a state party to the Rome Statute of the ICC, the ICC's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression allows the UN Security Council to refer a situation for investigation by the prosecutor under Article 13 of the Rome Statute of the ICC.

Turkey's ongoing invasion of North and East Syria and Rojava is a violation of the prohibition of the use of force set out in Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations, which is not only a treaty obligation but is also a principle of customary international law. There is no exception to the prohibition of the use of force under the right to self-defense in these circumstances.

Dear Mr Speaker,

The consequences of tolerating the Turkish military invasion and occupation of North and East Syria are dire. As explained many times by Turkish President Erdogan, ethnic cleansing is one of the key objectives of the ongoing campaign of military aggression against North and East Syria, and, if the ongoing campaign of Turkish military aggression is allowed to continue, ethnic cleansing and genocide will take place in front of the eyes of the world. Such actions would constitute serious crimes of concern to the international community as defined in Articles 6 and 7 of the Rome Statute of the ICC.

To preventing the ethnic cleansing and genocide of the Kurdish people as well as Arabs, Christian (Syriac-Chaldean-Assyrian and Armenian), Turkmens, Chechens, Alevites, and Yazidis of North and East Syria, we urge you to use your influence in the Folketinget to inform all political parties and parliamentarian groups to take united approach in order for Denmark to accomplish the following urgent tasks from United Nations:

1. Call for and enforce the unconditional and immediate withdraw of all Turkish forces from North and East Syria, including Afrin
2. Provide guarantees for the safety of the peoples of North and East Syria
3. Establish and enforce a ban on all flights in the airspace of North and East Syria (with the exception of flights whose sole purpose is humanitarian)
4. Establish a United Nations peacekeeping force including international military observers to be urgently deployed along the border between Turkey and North and East Syria
5. Officially recognise the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES) and invite representatives of the NES to participate in the constitutional committee on Syria recently organised by the United Nations

We thank you for your consideration and attention to this urgent matter.

Yours faithfully,

- Kurdistan National Congress (KNK)

- Congress of the Kurdish Democratic Society in Europe (KCDK-E)
- Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)
- The Democratic Union Party (PYD)
- Movement for Change
- European Syriac Union (ESU)
- Kurdish Women's Movement in Europe (TJK-E)
- Kurdistan Toilers Party
- The Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria (P.D.K.S)
- Kurdish Left Democratic Party of Syria
- The Modern Movement of Kurdistan-Syria
- The Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria (el-parti)
- The Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party in Syria
- Democratic Left Party of Syria
- Kurdish Union Party in Syria
- The Syrian-Kurdish Democratic Reconciliation (Rêkeftin)
- The Kurdish Reform Party in Syria
- Green Party of Kurdistan-Syria
- Kurdish Democratic Party-Syria
- Kurdistan Communist Party-Syria
- Syriac Union Party (SUP)
- The Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK)
- The East Kurdistan Democratic and Free Society (KODAR)
- The East Kurdistan Free Women's Society (KJAR)
- Iranian Democratic Platform
- Yarsan Platform
- Horam Platform
- Zagros Platform
- Revolutionary Workers' Society of Iranian Kurdistan (KOMALA)
- KOMALA- Kurdistan Organization of Communist Party of Iran
- Kurdistan Revolutionary Party
- Union of Kurdistan
- The Union of Revolutionaries
- Yarıkkurd Movement
- Yarsaniyan · Yarıkkurd
- Yarsan Democratic Organization
- Yarsaniyan Democratic Movement
- Kurdistan Independence Party
- Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK)
- Organization of Kurdistan Workers-Iran
- Mesopotamia Freedom Party
- Mesopotamia Solidarity Association
- Communist Party of Kurdistan (KKP)
- Islamic Party of Kurdistan (PIK)
- Kurdistan Islamic Society (CIK)
- Federation of Alevi of Kurdistan (FEDA)
- The Federation of Yazidis Associations (NAV – YEK)
- Umbrella organization of the Yazidis women's councils
- Kurdish Center-Berlin
- Kurdish Institute -Germany
- Kurdish Institute -Brussels

- Shingal Exile Assembly (MSD)
- The Teachers Union of Kurdistan (YMK)
- The Yazidis Union of Syria (YES)
- Kurdish Municipality of Brandenburg-Berlin
- Kurdish Community Stuttgart e.V.
- Kurdish House-Berlin
- Rojan Writers Association-Germany
- Kurdish Society-Berlin
- Rojava Associations-Berlin
- The Kurdistan people's house- Berlin
- Kurdish women in exile-Berlin
- Free Kurdistan Center-Berlin
- World Kurdish Organization (WKO)
- Union of Kurdistan Families in Berlin (YEKMAL)
- NAVEND- Center for Kurdish Studies e.V.
- Democratic Kurdish Federation of Canada
- Federation of Democratic Kurdish Society-Australia (FDKS-A)