



Joe Biden

President of the United States of America

Mediation between Kurds and Turks – Turkey must end its war against the
Kurds

Göttingen, June 10, 2021

Dear Mr. President,

At the age of 14, Zainab Hussein got killed in an attack by the Turkish army. Nine other children were killed in a further Turkish attack against another village in the same region – all of them Kurds from the northern Syrian region of Afrin who were forced to flee from the Turkish army and its Syrian Islamist allies in 2018. Turkey might very soon be able to achieve its goal of driving the entire Kurdish population out of Afrin. The Christians were already driven out of Afrin – and the Yazidis and Alevis are next. Under the eyes of the world, an entire people is about to be destroyed; because of their language, their culture, and their religion, with all their diversity.

Meanwhile, Turkey continues its attacks on Kurdish, Christian, and Yazidi villages with modern fighter planes and drones.

While the Turkish attacks against Afrin took place under the eyes of the Russian army, which controls the airspace, there were also attacks against Kurds, Christians, and Yazidis in the north-east of the country and in northern Iraq – under the eyes of the US military, which is present in the region and controls the airspace there.

According to our sources, about 1.5 million people are currently on the run from attacks by IS fighters and from the Turkish military intervention: around 350,000 people from Afrin in north-western Syria, about 300,000 from Ras al-Ain und its surroundings, and about 350,000 from other regions in Syria. Many of the Kurds, but also members of the Yazidi and Christian population groups, were forced to flee during the first years of the war. According to experts, we have to

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Eingetragener Verein

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assume a total number of approximately 1.450.000 Kurdish, Yazidi, and Christian refugees from northern Syria.

We are not aware of any other case in which a state can rely on help by both the United States and by Russia when attacking a specific population group – as it is the case here. Neither the UN Security Council nor the UN General Assembly have condemned the Turkish attacks, which have been going on since the founding of the republic of Turkey.

Thus, it is all the more important for your administration, dear Mr. President, to take care of what the Trump administration left behind – and to advocate for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. The Kurdish people might not be of particular relevance for the United States and NATO with regard to geopolitics, but they played a key role in fighting – together with the United States – against the so-called "Islamic State" over the past years. The Kurds and their allies lost at least 11.000 men and women in the war, and 21.000 were injured.

Dear Mr. President, you will meet Turkish President Erdogan in the course of the NATO-Summit. Please talk to Mr. Erdogan about the suppression of the Kurdish people and other minority groups within and outside of Turkey. Erdogan will try to persuade the United States to support his activities against the Kurds. He will try to present himself as an ally of the US. In reality, Turkey is cooperating with Russia and Iran – against the interests of the west. Kurds and other minorities in Turkey, Iraq, and Syria must no longer be persecuted, displaced, and murdered by the Turkish army and its Islamist allies. The Turkish war against the Kurds must stop! It is not Islamists like Erdogan, but the Kurds who promote "western" values such as democracy, minority rights, women's rights, and religious freedom. Thus, the United States must not tolerate or support any more Turkish attacks against the Kurds.

We are asking you, Mr. President, to use your talks with Mr. Erdogan to demand him to

- stop all attacks of the Turkish army against the Kurds and other minority groups in and outside of Turkey.
- ensure that Turkey will grant journalists and aid organizations free access to Afrin, Ras al-Ain (Sare Kaniye), and other regions in Syria that are occupied by Turkey.
- put an end to Turkey's policy of displacement and forced resettlement against the Kurds and other minority groups in Syria and Iraq. Recep Tayyip Erdogan is trying to change the population structure in the

occupied regions, aiming to turn the Yazidis, Christians, and Kurds into small minority groups so as to increase his power. This is a gross human rights violation and a crime against humanity.

- ensure that Turkey will withdraw its troops as well as its Islamist allies from northern Syria.
- allow the Kurds, Yazidis, Christians, and Alevis to return to their homes – under international civil observation.

Dear Mr. President,

We would also like to ask you to make all further support for Turkey dependent on whether Turkey – as a NATO member – will ensure a minimum of human rights, freedom rights, and women's rights in the country. Also, the Turkish government must immediately release tens of thousands of political prisoners.

Finally, we would like to ask you to mediate between Turkey and representatives of the Kurdish people in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, in order to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question and to bring stability to the Middle East.

Best regards,

Jan Diedrichsen,
Federal Chairman of the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) Germany