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# WOMEN UNDER TURKISH OCCUPATION

Femicide and gender-based violence  
as systematic practice of the Turkish  
occupation in Afrin



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## 1. Introduction

This dossier documents violence against women in Afrin, proceeding from Turkey and the jihadist groups supported by Turkish state. Since Turkey attacked and occupied the north-western region of Syria at the beginning of 2018, people, especially women, have repeatedly been subjected to abductions, violence, including in particular sexual violence, and murder. This violence in general and the gender violence are consequences of the occupation and the mentality of the Turkish state and its jihadist groups.

As Kongra Star, a women's movement in Rojava (West Kurdistan / North Syria), we observe the social developments and especially the situation of women. We have offices all over Rojava as well as contacts all over North and East Syria, which help to observe the situation and collect data. These data collections are compiled and evaluated by the central research and statistics committee in Qamishlo. The developments we have observed in the Turkish occupied territories over the last two years are very worrying. With this dossier we want to give an insight into the violence that the population in Afrin, especially women, are exposed to and experience on a daily basis. We can assume that this violence and the number of women who have been victims of it is much higher and more comprehensive than we have been able to document here in this dossier. Access to information in the occupied territories is very difficult because of Turkey's tyranny and the fear from the population.

## 2. Turkish Occupation in North Syria

In January 2018, the Turkish state invaded the Canton of Afrin with the help of jihadist groups and attacked the region with all military means at its disposal. By March 2018, Turkey took control of the area and established a long-term system of occupation and oppression, as well as gradually implementing its plan for demographic change. Any reports on the situation there document serious human rights violations in Afrin, which continue to these days on a daily basis. With the invasion of the Turkish state and its allied jihadist militias, about 300 000 people, half of the total population of Afrin, were displaced and forced to leave their homes. The majority of them, around 157,000 people, have chosen to stay near Afrin and now live in the Shehba region, mostly in IDP camps and shelters.

On October 9, 2019, Turkey continued its invasion attacks with the help of its jihadist groups by massively attacking the region of North Syria and the population along the Turkish-Syrian border. After these attacks in October 2019, hundreds of thousands of people were once again forced to flee. The Turkish invasion took place immediately after the withdrawal of US troops from the region and in full view of the international community, which remains silent to this day.

Following this invasion, the regions of Serê Kaniyê and Girê Spî are now also under Turkish occupation. In addition, Erdogan continues to threaten to occupy other areas



and continues his attacks day after day, also with the help of the jihadist groups he supports. The current invasion of North and East Syria must be seen as part of a long history of Turkish state oppression against people in the Kurdistan region. Already in the 20th century, there were a number of forced expulsions, genocides and massacres of ethnic minorities in the areas that today form North and East Syria and North Kurdistan/South Turkey.

The aim of the Turkish state is to establish a cultural and ethnic hegemony and to subjugate, expel and replace the local ethnic groups with another hegemonic group by enforced demographic change. At the same time, tensions between the different peoples are being stirred up in order to prevent them from living together. The Turkish state continues this policy of assimilation and occupation in its modern form, especially against the Kurdish population. Last but not least, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom has also noted that in the Turkish-occupied areas of North Syria, including Afrin, there is deliberate ethnic and religious manipulation of the local population and targeted demographic change.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these attacks, invasions and a civil war in Syria that has lasted for more than 9 years, the peoples in the North and East Syria region have achieved to establish

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/Syria.pdf>

**Afrin**



democratic self-governing structures that include all ethnic and religious groups of the region. Thus this region of self-government of North and East Syria has become one of the safest places where people from all over Syria have found refuge. The system established here is based on an ethical society with grassroots democratic administrative structures, based on democratic, ecological principles and gender liberation.

One of the main aims of the population in this region is to build a democratic system in which women and all ethnic, religious and social groups can live freely and together. This pluralistic system gives Kurds, Arabs, Turkmen, Circassians, Chechens, Yezidis, Suryoye, Assyrians, Chaldeans and Armenians the opportunity to organize and represent themselves. The freedom of an individual group should not deny the freedom of the others but encourage them to give them their own space to organise themselves and all groups together and respectfully. For this reason, the rights of each individual community are also protected, there is the possibility for them to study in their own language, to profess their religion and to develop their lives without oppression. This form of administration has demonstrated its value in recent years.

But this alternative social and democratic system poses a threat to the Turkish state with its nationalistic, patriarchal state policy. For this reason, the Turkish state launched the invasion of this region with the help of jihadist gangs and mercenaries. The aim of this was, on the one hand, to expand Turkish territory and, on the other hand, to force a demographic change through policies of expulsion and resettlement<sup>2</sup>, in order to finally realise the dream of a new Ottoman Empire. To this end, the Turkish state cooperates with jihadist groups composed of, among others, many former IS fighters, and continuously supports them, materially as well as militarily and logistically, in their attacks against the democratic self-government of North and East Syria. However, this support from the Turkish state is based not only on the ethnic origin of the fighters but also on their belief in and conviction of a jihadist ideology.

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2 Kongra Star Dossier "Women and children in the Turkish invasion: Genocide, Femicide, and demographic change", Kongra Star Research and Statistic Comitee Qamişlo, Januar 2020.

### 3. The situation in the occupied territories, especially in the Afrin region

Daily life in Afrin as well as in the other occupied regions of Serê Kaniyê and Girê Spî in northern Syria are characterized by violence.

A report by the International Commission of Inquiry of the United Nations General Assembly on the Syrian Arab Republic documents numerous cases of crimes in Afrin. There are reports of arrests, killings, physical violence and abductions, as well as widespread looting and appropriation of civilian housing by a large number of armed groups operating under the umbrella of the Syrian National Army.<sup>3</sup> In addition, there are almost daily shootings, car bomb explosions and other attacks with improvised explosive devices in the regions under Turkish occupation, which have so far resulted in a large number of civilian casualties.

In Girê Spî (Til Abyad), Serê Kaniyê and Afrin, everyday life is marked by arbitrary arrests of civilians carried out by the occupation forces there.<sup>4</sup> It is a common method of the jihadist groups to kidnap mainly young people and women and to blackmail them for ransom from their families. The tragic case of 50-year-old Zeynab, a mother of three children, is just one of many. Zayneb wanted to return to the Serê Kaniyê region occupied by the Turkish state, where her house and all her possessions are located. However, she was arbitrarily kidnapped by armed groups and held captive for two weeks. She was only released after a ransom was paid for her. During her arrest she witnessed killing and torture scenes that left her seriously traumatised.<sup>5</sup>

It can be observed that the arbitrary hostage-taking or arrest of people is one of the common methods used by jihadist groups to demand a ransom but also to spread fear and terror. This serves to establish their hegemonic power, which is based on the oppression of the local population and is enforced through violence. But it also serves as a deterrent and thus to promote demographic change, as it forces many people to leave their homes. The houses, land and shops of the displaced persons are illegally appropriated by the jihadist groups, with frequent clashes between the armed groups over the plunderers' right to

<sup>3</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G20/022/08/PDF/G2002208.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hawarnews.com/en/haber/videoed--demonstrations-expand-in-gir-sp-people-attack-occupations-armored-vehicles--h16954.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://shar-magazine.com/arabic/2019/12/%d9%84%d9%85-%d8%aa%d8%b9%d8%af-%d8%aa%d8%b7%d9%8a%d9%82-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%aa%d8%ad%d8%af%d9%91%d8%ab-%d9%85%d8%b9-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b1%d8%ac%d8%a7%d9%84/>

possession. Due to the looting and destruction of infrastructure, there are also shortages in the supply of basic groceries. The people in Girê Spî, for example, are exposed to the most difficult living conditions, since basic goods such as water, bread and other food are only available in small quantities and prices have risen drastically.<sup>6</sup>

It is thus clear that since the invasion of Turkey in October 2019, these regions have developed into places where people live under the most difficult conditions and fear on a daily basis. This can also be seen in the deprivation of all women's rights that were gained in the last years before the occupation. In Girê Spî, for example, women in many places are not allowed to leave the house without veiling and are exposed to more systematic violence.<sup>7</sup> Turkey is trying to establish its Islamist and fascist misogyny in the region.

The situation in Afrin is much more serious as this region has been under Turkish occupation and control for more than two years now. The society in and from Afrin have been attacked in recent years with all kinds of means and at various levels. The population of Afrin is also exposed to the physical violence and economic expropriation mentioned earlier. In the meantime, administrative structures supported by the Turkish state have built up and established themselves there in order to further accelerate the demographic change and the occupation solely by means of violence.

The brutality and scale of the attacks is very worrying. This became clear, for example, during the artillery attacks by the Turkish occupying forces on a residential area in Til Rifaat on the afternoon of 2 December 2019. Til Rifaat is a town in Shehba region, which is also home to many displaced persons who have already been driven from their homes by the occupation of Afrin. This attack was targeted at a school garden where children had been playing outside. In the process, 11 civilians, including 8 children, were killed and several other people were seriously injured, most of them children.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, there is a systematic cultural destruction of the region. The burning of fields and the cutting of hundreds of trees, mainly olive trees, not only destroys the economic basis of many people there, but also the local nature and the land, which is always part

6 <http://www.hawarnews.com/en/haber/what-happened-to-tal-abyad-city-during-3-months-of-occupation-h14093.html>

7 <http://www.hawarnews.com/en/haber/what-happened-to-tal-abyad-city-during-3-months-of-occupation-h14093.html>

8 Kongra Star Dossier "Women and children in the Turkish invasion: Genocide, Femicide, and demographic change", Kongra Star Research and Statistic Comitee Qamişo, Januar 2020.



of the people and their culture. Public institutions and schools are being transformed into prisons and military bases. Historical sites are deliberately destroyed and the Kurdi language is banned in schools and replaced by the Turkish language in all public facilities and places. This is where the project of ethnic cleansing comes to the fore, among other things by means of targeted cultural destruction in an attempt to destroy the roots as well as history and thus the entire society.<sup>9</sup>

This is happening above all against the background that before the invasion the region of Afrin, as the centre of the 'women's revolution', played a central role in the development of democratic structures in North and East Syria. Here, women's institutions based on direct democracy were established and worked to overcome gender inequality and other social challenges. Women actively demanded political equality at the level of law and politics, and most of this equality was put into practice by those institutions. At the level of the Communes, which represent the basic unit of self-organisation of the entire region, women's communities were established in parallel to the mixed-gender ones. These played a decisive role in the construction and development of the political system in North and East Syria. It is a pluralistic system within which the different ethnic groups are protected and preserved, self-organised and entitled to their own representation. The basic democratic system, which was built by the people in North and East Syria, has thus been built up with the leadership and example of women in particular and on the basis of women's laws and gender equality.

So it is also this grassroots democratic and pluralistic system that Turkish state fascism regards as a threat to its ideology and self-justification and is therefore trying to eradicate. Its aspirations as well as patriarchal mentality, racism and nationalism are clearly visible in its attacks and invasion. This mentality serves Turkey as an ideological instrument to enforce state, power and violence. It is clearly visible in the targeted destruction of the pluralistic system that has been built up until then, the living together and the annihilation of the Kurdish and other minorities. The systematic violence against women is an integral part of the practice of genocide and is used as a weapon against society. Because violence against women is always at the same time violence against society itself.

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<sup>9</sup> Turkey's track record: The occupation of Afrin' by Rojava Information Center, 5 November 2019.

## 4. Gender-based violence as a result of the mentality and goals of the Turkish state

The documented crimes and violations of the rights of women and girls in Afrin show the inhuman and brutal extent of the systematic violence to which women and the population in this region are exposed on a daily basis. For women, life is like a prison, they are oppressed, humiliated, abused, forced to marry, including many underage girls, subjected to torture as well as physical and sexual violence, culminating in rape and femicide. Many women no longer leave the home for fear of punishment and violence. The women are deprived of all their previously acquired rights.

These acts of violence are clearly evident in recent events. At the end of May, it was revealed that many local Kurdish women are being detained, abused and tortured under the most inhuman conditions in the prisons of the pro-Turkish militias. There are reports of abducted or murdered girls and women almost every day. All these are clear violations of human rights and far from humanitarian principles.

In this practice of the Turkish occupiers and its jihadist groups, the same patriarchal, violent mentality is evident, which is reminiscent of the cruelties under the Islamic State (IS) regime. With this mentality, an Islamic caliphate under Islamic law is to be established, based on conservative Islamic laws. Thousands of jihadist fighters and their families are purposefully settled in the region in order to further implement this ideology. We can see in this a systematic and specific attack against women, but also against society. Femicides, in other words the murder of women, have long been a central tactic in the destruction of societies, ethnic groups or communities. Just like violence against women and demographic change, they are integral parts of the practice of genocide and should be understood as such.

## 5. Statistics and methodology

The statistics presented here are a record of women kidnapped and murdered in this region from the occupation of Afrin in 2018 until today. It is a compilation of documented cases that have been compiled by various human rights organisations such as the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria<sup>10</sup>, the Violation Documentation Center in North Syria<sup>11</sup> and the Kongra Star Statistics and Research Committee Qamishlo.

The cases of abducted and murdered women summarized and reported here in figures refer to the cases identified and published by name, the least that could be documented so far. For the most part, under the current conditions of the occupation of Afrin by the Turkish state, it is difficult to identify all murdered and abducted women, let alone record them at all and publish their names and incidents. For example, there is no local press or local institutions to record these acts of violence and human rights violations.

Year	2018			2019			2020		
	Kidnapping		Murder	Kidnapping		Murder	Kidnapping		Murder
		released			released			released	
January	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	5	-
February	-	-	-	5	-	1	7	3	2
March	2	-	1	3	1	-	4	3	-
April	1	-	-	4	-	-	6	2	1
May	6	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
June	4	-	1	3	1	-	1	-	-
July	1	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-
August	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
September	1	-	-	16	10	1	-	-	-
October	1	1	1	2	1	1	-	-	-
November	1	-	1	10	4	1	-	-	-
December	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/Human-Rights-Organisation-Afrin-Syria-114977619885802/?ref=page\\_internal&path=%2FHuman-Rights-Organisation-Afrin-Syria-114977619885802%2F](https://www.facebook.com/Human-Rights-Organisation-Afrin-Syria-114977619885802/?ref=page_internal&path=%2FHuman-Rights-Organisation-Afrin-Syria-114977619885802%2F)

<sup>11</sup> <https://vdc-nsy.com>

This dossier is only a sample of the violence to which people, and women in particular, are subjected on a daily basis. The cases of abductions and violence against women listed here, together with the statistics and figures, are a tiny fraction of what has been documented so far. However, the number of cases is estimated to be much higher.

Access to information in the occupied regions is very difficult due to the occupation of the Turkish state and its allied mercenary groups. This also makes the documentation of acts of violence and crimes very complicated. Therefore, the figures given here can also only be a selection and do not claim to be a complete survey.

Furthermore, violence is also used as a deterrent and causes fear among the population. In many cases there are difficulties in documenting the crimes, because the families or relatives still have relatives in the occupied territories and fear that this will have negative consequences for them. Especially in cases of sexual violence against women, there are only a few documented incidents and reports that narrate the experiences or even mention that sexual violence was committed, due to shame and a strong sense of honour.

However, the cases and experiences of women presented here in our dossier are at the same time symbolic of the violence to which women in the occupied territories are subjected to and which they have to fear on a daily basis, since they are the expression of an inhuman and patriarchal mentality of the occupying forces. We can therefore also assume that the daily violence is far greater.

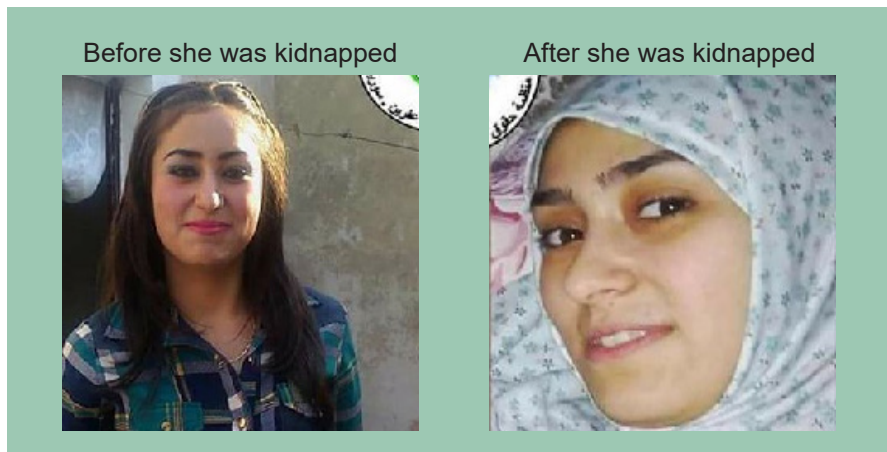
## 6. Single cases

### 6.1. Women who got kidnapped

Since the occupation of Afrin in 2018, far more than 1564 women have been the victims of attacks and violence in these areas occupied and controlled by the Turkish armed forces and their supported jihadist groups.

A report by the human rights organisation - Afrin, Syria documented more than 1000 abductions and disappearances of women, including at least 290 cases of arbitrary arrests of both women and children. Below we have compiled the circumstances of some of those abducted women that occurred between 20 January 2018 and 1 June 2020.

**Valentina Mustafa Hasan**, a 22-year-old woman from the village of Darwish in the Sharan district, who later lived with her husband in the town of Midanky, was kidnapped, just like her husband, after the Turkish state and its mercenaries occupied the Afrin region and thus the town at the beginning of 2018. After her abduction she was subjected to sexual violence and physical extortion and the mercenaries who kidnapped her took photos with her and sent them to her family.



In late 2019 and early 2020, she contacted her mother after she had been abducted for more than a year and a half. In her phone call she informed her family that she had been abducted to the town of Kafr Nabl in the Idlib Governorate. After this last call more than six months ago, contact with her was broken off and her fate is still unknown.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> <https://vdc-nsy.com/archives/35661>



**Estirvan Esed Hesen**, from Kefer Sefra village, and her two children were kidnapped by the Al-Hamza Division on 20th May 2018.<sup>13</sup>

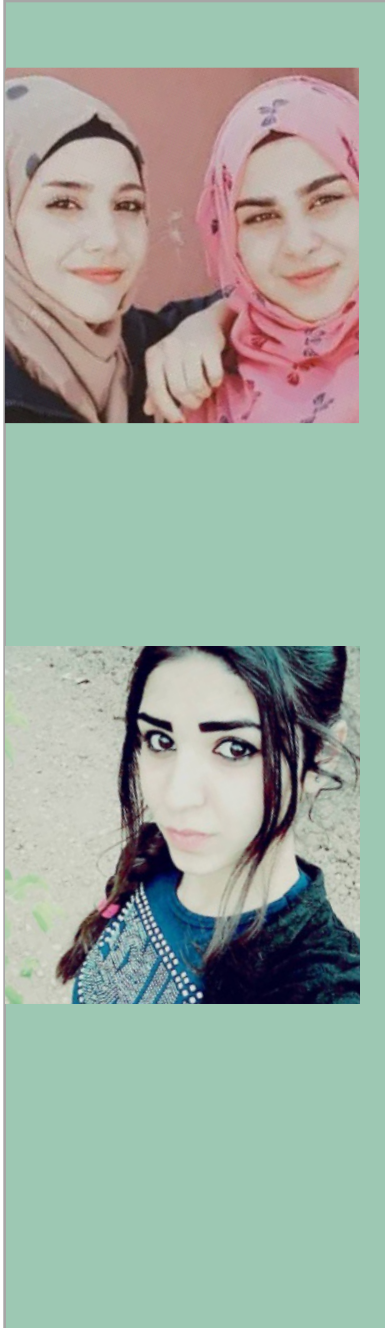
**Erbil Hesen**, a 18-year-old woman from Kodele village, was kidnapped on the 25th June 2019.<sup>14</sup>

**Ghalia Daoud** from the village of Cumazno in the Mabataa district was kidnapped on 24th July 2019.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria

<sup>14</sup> 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria

<sup>15</sup> <https://twitter.com/afrinactivists/status/115437060771227648>



**Leyal Xalid Dêrî**, a 17-year-old teenage girl, and **Beyan Xezwan Hemo**, a 16-year-old teenage girl, were kidnapped on 24th September 2019 when they went together to school.<sup>16</sup>

**Sara Abdullah Muhammad Ali**, a 16-year-old teenage girl from Maaraske village in Sharaan subdistrict, had been kidnapped and imprisoned for more than six months. At the end of September 2019, she was abducted by the Turkis-backed Levant Front in coordination with the so-called military police. As she was accused of “high treason and terrorism” by the “Terrorism Court” formed by the Turkish occupation, she was subjected to various forms of abuses and brutal torture. After some time she was locked up in the central prison of Maratah in the west of Afrin city. She was finally released in April 2020 after more than six months of violent detention and after her family paid a ransom of 3 million Syrian pounds.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020’ by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin,

<sup>17</sup> Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020’ by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria



**Roya Mustafa**, 15-year-old Kurdish girl, was subjected to arbitrary detention for 20 days and to brutal forms of physical torture in the middle of November 2019.<sup>18</sup>

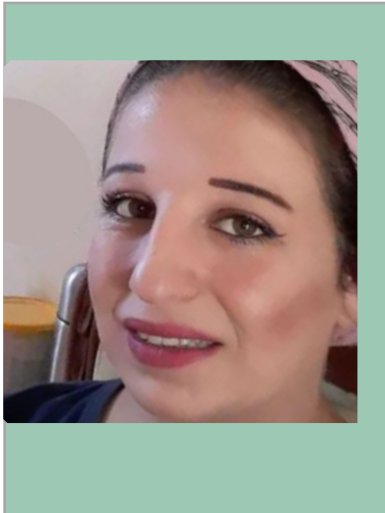


In the end of January 2020 **Zaleekha Othman**, 20-year-old woman from Hassan / Hassan Kalkawi village in the Rajo district, was abducted, tortured and raped by the Turkish-backed Al-Hamza Division. They brought her to one hospital in Idlib, because of severe bleeding in her body caused by the rape. She was found after almost 10 days.<sup>19</sup>

18 <https://www.ezdina.com/2020/03/Reportag-Ezidi94.html>

19 Kongra Star Statistik and Research Center Qamishlo

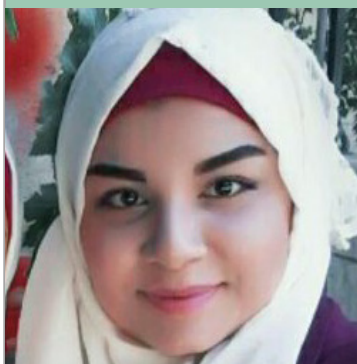




**Aisha Xalil Kadro** from the village of Kafr Safra was kidnapped on 17th February 2020. Further informations are missing.<sup>20</sup>



On 6th February 2020 **Laura Hassan**, a 19-year-old teenage woman from Faqiru village, with the later given pseudonym Nawroz Khilo, was abducted, locked up 11 days in arbitrary detention and subjected to psychological torture. The Yazidi girl was subjected to harassment inside the prison by armed men in order to violate her human dignity. They tortured her psychologically and compeled her to either change her religious belief or face coercion and force her to falsify unrealistic charges to herself.<sup>21</sup>



**Fatima Mihemed Hassan**, a 22-year-old woman from Aleppo who then lived in Afrin, was kidnapped by Turkish-backed mercenaries near Ma´rat Massrin on 27th April 2020.<sup>22</sup>

20 Kongra Star Statistik and Research Center Qamishlo

21 <https://www.facebook.com/ezdina.net/posts/2577579932513265>

22 Kongra Star Statistik and Research Center Qamishlo



**Hêvîn Xeyal More**, a 17-year-old teenage girl from the village of Celem in the Cenderis district, lived with her mother and brother. One of the mercenaries of the Al-Feyleq Alsham Division demanded to marry her more than three times, but as these mercenaries are known for their brutal violence, her family did not allow it. On 12th May 2020 she was kidnapped by the mercenaries and forced to marry by force. Her family searched for her, but couldn't find her.<sup>23</sup>



**Malik Nabih Khalil Jumah**, a 16-year-old teenage girl from Darwish village in Sharan district, was kidnapped on 23 May 2020. At that time, the region was under pro-Turkish occupation and the Sultan Murad Division. Malik Nabih Khalil Jumah was abducted 5 o'clock in the morning on the day of Eid Al-Fitr by militias affiliated with the Sultan Murad Division. The girl's family had previously announced the engagement of her daughter to one of her relatives from the village of Isaka in Shirawa district to protect her from abduction and forced marriage, knowing that these cases had previously occurred in other villages. Her fate is still unknown.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria

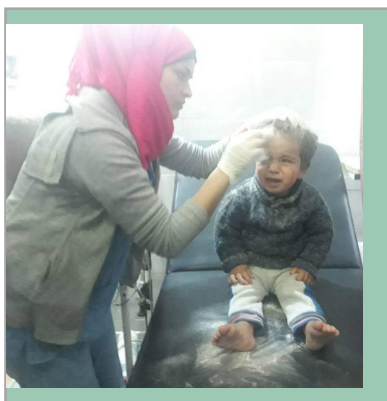
<sup>24</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=2153633011615621&story\\_fbid=2536257370019848](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=2153633011615621&story_fbid=2536257370019848)



On May 29, clashes occurred in the city of Afrin between the Turkey-backed faction “Al-Hamza Division”, members of “Ahrar al-Sham” from Damascus’ Al-Ghouta and armed loyalists of the militias “Army of Islam”. As a result, a number of women, among them also Kurdish women, who had been unjustly abducted and kidnapped for a long time, were found naked and tied up in detention center of the “Al-Hamza Division” at that time. A video, which appeared in social media, shows 11 women and a one-year-old child in a secret prison, all of whom were kidnapped for ransom and found abused in that place. Some of the women could be identified from the pictures. Some of them had already been deported during the Turkish invasion in spring 2018, others only this year. The women were in a pitiful state that no laws, customs or social values would accept.

After the publication of this video, some of the women’s families went to the office of the Turkish occupation governor in Afrin, whose headquarters were located in the former Legislative Council of Afrin, to find out what happened to them after the women were discovered and where they were taken. No further information about the fate of the women was given there. So they are still being abducted with the knowledge of the Turkish occupying forces.<sup>25</sup>

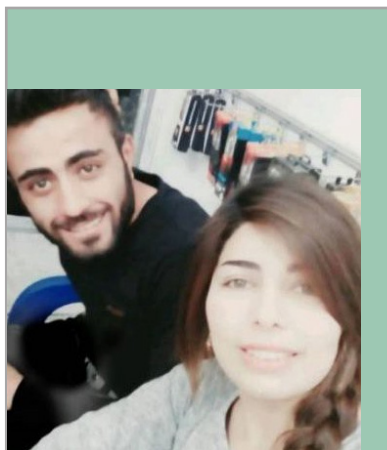
In the published video the following women could be identified:



**Haifa Al-Jasem**, an Arab nurse who previously worked in the hospital in Afrin, who was accused of working for the self-government and subsequently was kidnapped.<sup>26</sup>

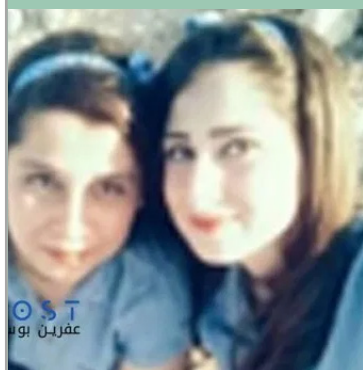
25 [https://medium.com/@\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_mjb/one-woman-held-in-an-sna-black-site-in-afrin-has-been-reported-released-others-are-still-missing-9c6638159034](https://medium.com/@_____mjb/one-woman-held-in-an-sna-black-site-in-afrin-has-been-reported-released-others-are-still-missing-9c6638159034)

26 <https://www.ezdina.com/2020/05/News-public362.html?m=1>



**Nadia Hassan Suleiman**, a 20-year-old woman from the village of Quzilbasha in the Bulbul district, was kidnapped in 2018. After she and her husband Ahmed Rashid left Afrin because of the Turkish invasion in January 2018 after a period of time they decided to return to occupied Afrin. There she was kidnapped along with the family who hosted her shortly after the kidnapping of her husband.

According to reports she is one of the women who appeared in the leaked video in May 2020 of women in one of the detention center of the “Al-Hamza Division.”<sup>27</sup>



The two sisters **Lonjin Muhammad**, 24 years old, and **Rojin Muhammad Khalil Abdo**, 19 years old, have been abducted for more than two years and were recently also recognised in the published video.

On the night of 25th June 2018 Lonjin and her father were kidnapped by masked gunmen who stormed their house in the village of Dumlia, in Mabata subdistrict. She was charged because she had a driving licence issued by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria. her father was also arrested because he was charged of working for the Autonomous Administration. Nine days later, in the beginning of July 2018, the masked armed men returned and kidnapped her sister Rojin along with their uncle. Their fate and whereabouts remain unknown.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> <http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/06/mother-of-a-kidnapped-young-kurdish-woman-calls-the-world-for-her-release-from-the-prisons-of-al-hamzeh-militia/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Human-Rights-Organisation-Afrin-Syria-114977619885802/>



**Roka Manla Mihemed**, a 27-year-old woman from Jouqeh village belonging to Afrin city, was kidnapped along with her husband, brother and father from Mabata district by members of Al-Hamza Division along with her husband, brother, and father on 6th September 2018.<sup>29</sup>



On 6 September 2018, **Roshan Amouna Mohamed Amin**, a 35-year-old woman, was abducted by the Al-Hamza Division from the village of Dargirê/Dar Kabir in the Mabatli district of Afrin, together with her husband and several relatives. She was also identified in the published video of the abducted and detained women.<sup>30</sup>



**Arin Dli Hesên**, a 21-year-old woman from the village of Kimar in the south of the Sherawa district, was kidnapped on 27th February 2020 by a group of the Al-Hamza Division under the command of military Commander Abu Shahir. She was taken to the Al-Hamza prison.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> <http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/06/rokan-menla-one-of-the-kidnapped-kurdish-women-in-al-hamzeh-squad-prison-what-are-the-reasons-behind-kidnapping-her-and-her-relatives/>

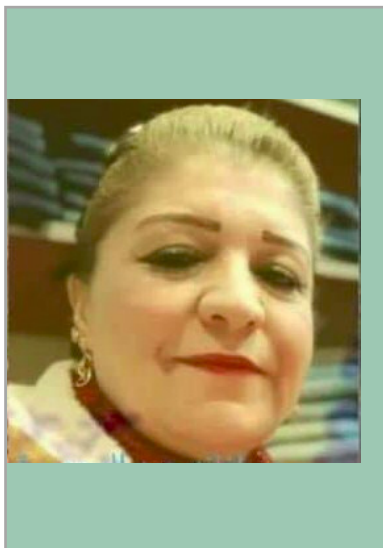
<sup>30</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=287881062595456&id=114977619885802](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=287881062595456&id=114977619885802)

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ezdina.com/2020/05/Reportag-Ezidi160.html?m=1>



**Newroz Anwar Bakr**, a 17-year-old girls from Reca village in Mabata, was according to reports identified as one of the detained women in the detention center of Al-Hamza Division. As other reports stated, she was released on th 1st June 2020.<sup>32</sup>

At the end of May the abduction of another woman was published. The fate and whereabouts of many women remain unclear to this day.



On 31 May, armed men of the military police stormed the house of **Silvana Abdel-Rahman Qara Gul**, a 45-year-old woman, from Satya village / Mu'tabli district, located in the Ashrafieh district of Afrin. After the search of her house she was taken to an unknown place.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <http://afrinpost.net/en/2020/05/al-hamzeh-militia-leader-receives-the-kidnapees-from-the-military-police-militia/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://vdc-nsy.com/en/archives/6836>

## 6.2. Forced marriage of minors

Since the establishment of democratic structures in the region of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, a new women's law has also been introduced on the basis of women's liberation. This was published on October 22, 2014 by the Women's Office of the Autonomous Administration of Cizîrê Region in order to anchor women's rights in the new political system.

The law contains points that establish certain rights of women and prohibit practices that are considered oppressive. The law was passed by the Afrin, Kobane and Cizîrê regions. One of the most important rights and freedoms enshrined in the law is the prohibition of forced marriage of minors.<sup>34</sup>

In the course of the occupation of Afrin, these acquired women's rights were again denied and the forced marriage of minors is yet again one of the common misogynistic practices of the jihadist mercenaries, as is evident in the following two cases.

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Fatima Mohammad Khalil, a 14-year-old girl from the village of Shaytana, was forced to marry a member of the Syrian National Army (SNA) in October 2019. Her family tried in vain to resist this forced marriage and, moreover, of an underage girl.<sup>35</sup>

In December 2019, Shirin Maryam, a 16-year-old girl from downtown in the Rajo sub-district, was also forced to marry an armed rebel from Ahrar al-Sharqiyya. Her family tried to refuse this forced marriage of a teenager, but was pressured and received death threats so they had no choice but to give in.<sup>36</sup>

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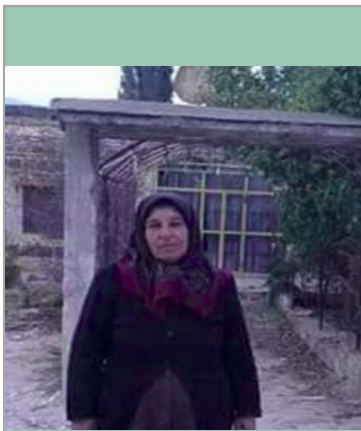
34 'Beyond the frontlines. The building of the democratic system in North and East Syria.' Rojava Information Center, 19. December 2019, p. 42.

35 <https://www.facebook.com/114977619885802/photos/a.122012835848947/178611926855704/?type=3&theater>

36 <https://www.facebook.com/114977619885802/photos/a.122012835848947/178611926855704/?type=3&theater>

## 6.3. Femicide - Women who got murdered

According to a report by the human rights organisation - Afrin, Syria, the murder of 50 women by the Turkish state and its jihadist militias in occupied Afrin was documented in the period from 20 January 2018 to 1 June 2020. The following are some of the murdered women and the circumstances under which they were murdered.



**Zilux Mihemed Hesên Daxeli**, a 60-year-old woman from Sheha, was shot dead by Turkish-backed mercenaries on 3th March 2018.<sup>37</sup>

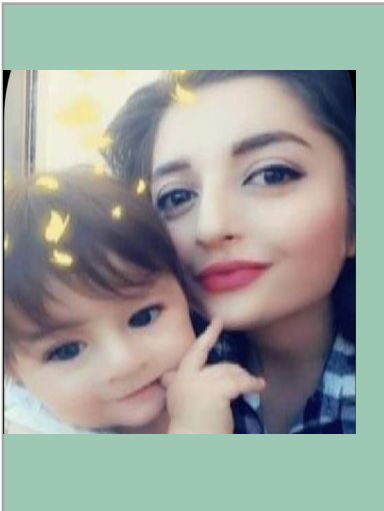


**Fatima Himke**, a 66-year-old woman from the village Qetima in Sheran district, was killed by a bomb attack which hit her house on 27th June 2018.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> <https://ar-ar.facebook.com/afrinnow/posts/1653404901434208/>

<sup>38</sup> 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria





**Tolfin Biro**, a 16-year-old teenage girl, is said to have been killed by a mine explosion on 22nd October 2018, together with her little boy and husband. The human rights organisation - Afrin, Syria, doubts this, as the photos do not show the effects of a mine explosion and there are clear signs of beatings on their bodies, suggesting that they were tied up and tortured before they were killed.<sup>39</sup>



On 8th November 2018 the Turkish-backed Al Hamza Division broke into the house of **Aisha Henan**, a 80-year-old woman, in Burc Ebd Elo village and stole her belongings. When she resisted, she was brutally suffocated by the mercenaries. Her son, meanwhile, had been locked up until the morning of the next day.<sup>40</sup>

39 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria

40 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria



**Hediya Ehmed Murad**, a woman from Cilbira in the Sherawa district, was killed by the Turkish police on the Syrian-Turkish border when she tried to cross the Syrian-Turkish border on 9th February 2019.<sup>41</sup>



**Horiya Mohemed Bekir**, a 74-year-old woman, and her husband were killed on 6th September 2019, after being tortured, assaulted and robbed of their belongings some days before.<sup>42</sup>

41 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria

42 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria



**Zeyneb Mîstefa Musa** after she was injured in an explosion in the Cenders district, was brought in a hospital in Turkey on 24th September 2019. There she died on the 1st October 2019.<sup>43</sup>

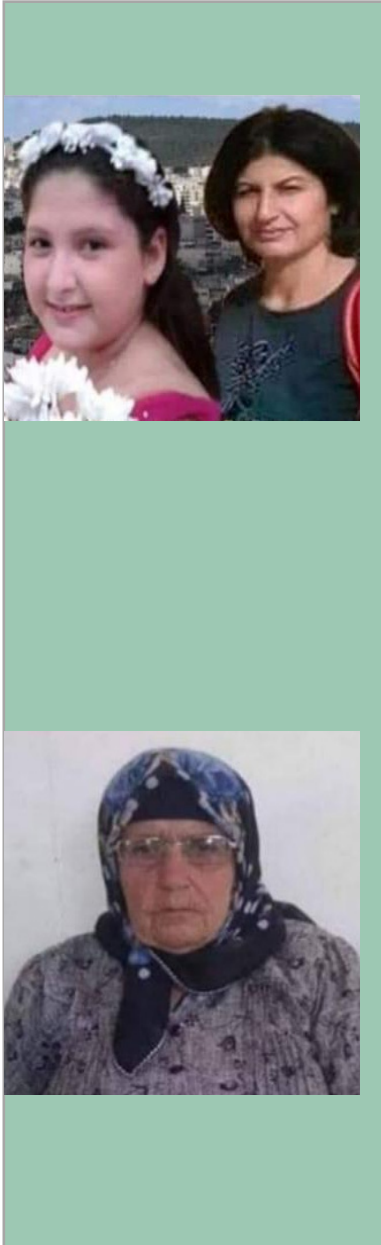


On November 17th 2019 **Narged Dadu**, 23-year-old Yazidi woman from Kemar village, was brutally killed by armed persons. She had been shot by ten rounds of ammunition.<sup>44</sup>



<sup>43</sup> 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.ezdina.com/2020/03/Reportag-Ezidi94.html>



In the Turkish state's bomb attacks on the village of Uqeyba on 26h February 2020, **Fatima Ehmed Eli**, a 50-year-old woman, and **Sirosht Hesén Mohamed**, a 12-year-old girl, were murdered.<sup>45</sup>

At the end of April 2020 **Fatima Kane**, a 80-year-old woman, was found dead inside her home in Haikaja village in the Shia district in Afrin, which is controlled by Turkish-backed militants. Signs of strangulation were found around the victim's neck along with clear traces of physical assault on her body.<sup>46</sup>

45 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria

46 'Violations by the occupation - Report on violence against women by Turkish factions and their armed affiliated groups in Afrin from 20.01.2018 to 1.06.2020' by the Human Rights Organisation - Afrin, Syria

## 7. Conclusion and demands

This ongoing offensive of violence and the targeted attacks against women violate all morals and international rights.

With their strength and their collectivity, women are a guarantee for the maintenance of any society. Fighting for women's rights and against violence against women in all its forms also means fighting to protect society as a whole and to build a better world. That is why the efforts for the grassroots democratic, ecological and gender-liberating project in North and East Syria under self-government must be supported.

Through self-government, concrete structures have been established to enable the different population groups to live together peacefully and to pursue the goals of a democratic society defending women's rights.<sup>47</sup> We must defend these structures against these attacks.

We as Kongra Star call on the international institutions and actors to take responsibility and act to prevent further genocide and femicide as well as forced demographic change.

The following demands should be realized immediately:

- An immediate no-fly zone to be established over North and East Syria
- Serious steps for the immediate withdrawal of the Turkish occupying armed forces and all related armed groups from the territory of Syria
- The establishment of an international community peacekeeping force on the Turkish-Syrian border
- Immediate economic sanctions to be implemented against Turkey and the cessation of all arms trade with Turkey
- Immediate humanitarian assistance to the region of the Autonomous administration of North and East Syria
- Human rights organisations must be given immediate access to the regions occupied by Turkey in order to monitor the situation on the ground
- The practices of genocide and femicide must be stopped immediately and the Turkish state and its allied jihadist groups must be held accountable and be brought to justice
- Establishment of an international criminal court to prosecute human rights violations and war crimes in North and East Syria

<sup>47</sup> 'Beyond the frontlines. The building of the democratic system in North and East Syria.' Rojava Information Center, 19. December 2019.

Dossier compiled by Kongra Star Statistics and  
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