



# KONGREYA STAR

AND ITS COMMITTEES

FIRST  
EDITION  
2018



Kongreya Star



The Diplomatic Relations  
Center of Kongreya Star



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## The Diplomatic Relations Center of Kongreya Star



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# 1

## ABOUT KONGREYA STAR

(THE STAR CONGRESS)

### Introduction

**T**he women's movement in Rojava, originally called Yekitiya Star (Star Union), was founded in 2005 to organize women and raise their political consciousness. There existed a long tradition of organizing of women which formed the basis to found Yekitiya Star. The union operated in secret, with women in towns and villages across the northern areas of Syria coming together to organize themselves as a women's organization for the first time. On the basis of democratic struggle, it was a great development in the history of the Kurdish women's movement.

The Star Union fought to consolidate democracy

in the face of violence and human rights abuses that harmed women in Syria. It worked to develop democratic activities, expose the arbitrary methods used to oppress women, and organize women in different civil society organizations. They worked to raise awareness of women's issues through media and in all other areas of society, hosted events to raise women's awareness of their political and social conditions, and strengthened organizational structures to show the strength of organized women's willpower. Through their work, they challenged the dominant male mentality in society.

Under the Ba'ath Regime, Yekitiya Star's work was difficult and dangerous. Activists were targeted by Ba'ath Regime, arrested, and even tortured. The fate of some women activists is still unknown. However, this oppression did not stop the women of Rojava from struggling for freedom. On the contrary, it formed a solid foundation for the breakthrough in women's' struggle in the beginning of the revolution.

When the democratic revolution in Rojava began on the nineteenth of July 2012, the women's movement played an active role and fought to ensure that the revolution that freed Rojava would free women as well. Yekitiya Star was able to work in the society, becoming one of the most important and essential political movements in the region. Since then, the organization has grown to include women of all ethnicities and religions. In 2016, the Star Union changed its name to Kongreya Star, becoming an umbrella for all organizations and institutions that had agreed to work within its charter.



## THE GOALS OF KONGREYA STAR (STAR CONGRESS)

**K**ongreya Star is a confederation for all women's groups in Rojava. It organizes its ranks according to the ecological democratic paradigm that believes in women's freedom. It seeks to develop a free Rojava, a democratic Syria, and a democratic Middle East by promoting women's freedom and the concept of the democratic nation.

Kongreya Star understands how politics relates to the society, and to women in particular. It has established women's organizations according to the democratic confederation principle. Kongreya Star is an autonomous organization within the autonomous

administrative system. Kongreya Star plays a leading role in the development of the autonomous management system on the principle of the equal participation. All female members of the autonomous management system are also members of Kongreya Star. In all areas, the woman's will to take decisions belongs to the woman herself. Each organizational unit addresses Kongreya Star in every matter that concerns women and reveals the organized women's will in the fields of politics, society, culture, environmental protection, economics, diplomacy, self-defense, education, health and problem-solving (Mala Jinê). It ensures that women participate in all social activities, according to principles of equal participation. Kongreya Star put a big emphasis in securing an ideological community, which means to strengthen the moral values of the society and its principles of acceptance and rejection. It aims to establish a political and basic democratic society; in which everybody takes part in decisions as well as in carrying their responsibility. This includes all parts of the society in Rojava: According to the principle of 'Democratic Nation', people from all different nations, religions, genders and ages participate with their own identity in a basic democratic system. The variety of identities and their special characteristics is regarded as richness and fertilizing the eco-system of society. No identity is allowed to oppress others or to consider itself better. Instead all the identities exist parallel with equal value and interact with each other.

Kongreya Star takes the development.

It takes the development of a revolution in the women's and all peoples' freedom throughout the Middle East as its basic goal, predicated on the development of such a revolution in Rojava and Syria. It struggles against the existing family structure based on male power, and sees the democratic family based on a free union and a common will between both genders as its goal. Kongreya Star was at the forefront of highlighting free society dependent on free life and free union. Self-defense is considered to be an existential and fateful principle, as it protects and advances moral and political values in society. Because of this, Kongreya Star is developing and promoting women's self-defense in every field and activity, so that women can protect themselves in the face of various attacks.

Women's involvement in democratic and participatory economics is also promoted. Kongreya Star recognizes the free democratic organizations of all the different peoples, religions, and cultures of Northern Syria. It allows different individuals and social groups to organize themselves according to their needs, and to participate in society as part of the moral and political community. It actively struggles against authoritarianism in all its forms.

Kongreya Star was the first organization to transform the democratic self-administration model which appeared in Rojava into a means by which women could create a democratic Syria, and to protect and develop the gains of all peoples in Syria.



# FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF THE ORGANIZATION



**1** Kongreya Star is based on the voluntary union of democratic organizations, institutions and democratic individuals, that aim for freedom. It is a confederal women's organization which organizes itself in the form of communes, assemblies, academies, cooperatives, foundations, associations, parties, etc

**2** Each organization, union or committee that joins maintains its identity. It joins Kongreya Star based on principles of mutual responsibility and interconnection. Kongreya Star recognizes the statutes of the different organizations, unions, parts and committees. It operates according to the principles of radical democracy.

**3** Kongreya Star is responsible for the coordination, implementation and supervision of the decisions and policies of different institutions, organizations and canton assemblies.

**4** Kongreya Star is flexible and embraces diversity and democratic participation.

## EVENTS

During the Syrian revolution, Kurdish women became active participants in all kinds of revolutionary activity. After that, they played a key role building the self-administration in Jazira, Afrin, Kobani, Gire Spi, Tabqa and Manbij.

Kongreya Star was able to form alliances with other women's organizations, affect public opinion related to women's issues, and empower women politically through the realization of the system of co-administration at all levels and fields of organization of the society. This means that in every position of administration and coordination there are one man and one woman equals working together. They have ensured that 50% of any legislative body would be made up of women, and ensured the recognition of women's civil rights and equal status in society. This struggle was difficult, and continues today.



The organization organized training and education for women. It worked to empower women economically through building up projects of cooperative production— including agriculture, dairy factories, bakeries, pastry factories, sewing workshops, and canned goods manufacturing.

It formed groups to train women in weapons and tactical skills so that they could guard their districts, cities, and villages.

The organization seeks to eliminate all forms of inequality in society, rejects family relationships based on ownership and control, and fights child marriage. Kongreya Star has worked to unify the front of women's struggle in Northern Syria. It has also participated in Syrian women's initiatives and gatherings, in order to find a political solution for the Syrian revolution and work on peacemaking.

All women who organize within the Democratic Society Movement (TEVDEM) and the local self-administration are members of Kongreya Star. They represent themselves with their own peculiarities in various institutions, including councils, communes, cultural and artistic institutions, martyrs' families' organizations, workers' committees, and service institutions.

Because of this work, women were present in all diplomatic fields, working for an end to the Syrian crisis and solutions

to the problems that caused it. Women from Northern Syria have been able to participate in many diplomatic forums and establish relations with many countries in the world. They are also members of international women's organizations, such as world women's march, the Peacemakers Congress, the Women's Consultative Council of the United States and the office of the UN Special Envoy for Syria.

## CONGRESS OF KONGREYA STAR

The Congress of Kongreya Star is held every two years. It convenes all of the organizations and groups that make up Kongreya Star, evaluates their work and makes resolutions for the future. The most important decision, which has been adopted by all Congresses, is the need to struggle for freedom of the leader Abdullah Ocalan.

- The First Congress was held on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Only a few women attended, and the conference was largely kept secret. They announced the formation of Yeketiya Star, which would address problems that women of all backgrounds faced in all areas of life. In response to Ba'ath regime policies, which had oppressed women across Syria, these

women began to reach out to women's social, political, and cultural groups.

- The Second Congress was held between July 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007. This time 61 women attended. The Congress made plans to expand the organization and involve more women, but the Ba'ath regime carried out a campaign to arrest these women activists. This terror, however, did not break the will of the women of Yekitiya Star to succeed.

- The Third Congress was held on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, with 81 women participating, under the slogan "we are not anyone's honor, our honor is our freedom." This slogan was chosen to call attention to the number of women and girls killed in the name of family honor. The Congress worked to raise awareness of and build a plan to stop the spread of prostitution and drugs, as well as combatting other social issues that harmed women.



- Under the slogan “To increase the pace of the women’s liberation struggle and build democratic self-administration.” The Fourth Congress of Yeketiya Star was held between July 29<sup>th</sup>-July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011, in Afrin. 100 women, representing all women’s organizations and institutions in western Kurdistan and Syria, attended the Congress. They worked to bring attention to the current situation in Western Kurdistan and Syria and the opportunities and challenges that came from it. The need for a radical democratic change in Syria, which could be achieved through a democratic solution to the Kurdish issue, was discussed. The conference also discussed the self-administration model, and the strict human rights and constitutional conditions that Syrian women faced under the current Syrian government. The current system of education and training in society was discussed, as well as the need for economic projects and the need to involve young people in various political work. The Congress eventually decided to build a self-administration, assemblies and communes; and elected a 31-member body that would become Rojava’s coordination.



*To increase the pace of the women’s liberation struggle and build democratic self-administration.*

- The Fifth Congress was held in April 2013, under the slogan “So that women will not remain outside of the organization.” 251 women from the region’s assemblies,

institutions and organizations attended. Decisions were made related to how assemblies organized on the levels of regions, represented by their affiliated committees.

- The Sixth Congress was held between February 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016, under the slogan “To build a democratic nation in women’s colour.” 251 women attended. The Congress discussed the process of rebuilding from communes. At this time, Yeketiya Star changed its name to Kongreya Star.





**JIN**

# 2

## THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

### Introduction

**D**iplomacy exists since the first communications between different social and cultural groups of humans, which established common agreements and friendship relations in order to achieve mutual benefit and peace. Nevertheless, in the process of development of a patriarchal system based on relations of domination and oppression, the character of diplomacy changed. The system of modern nation-states, however, has turned diplomacy into a means by which powerful states could achieve political and economic gains, consolidate their interests, and force poor countries into subservience.

“

*Democratic nation diplomacy serves the cause of peace and intellectual exchange among societies, opposes wars, and expresses a noble moral and political function. It plays an important role in developing and enabling continuity of mutually beneficial phases, and promotes relations between neighboring peoples and relative groups in particular.*

– Abdullah Öcalan

**T**hroughout history, women have played a major role in diplomacy, in achieving equality and justice between groups, and in ending wars and achieving international peace. This is clearly reflected in the history of the resolution of the earliest tribal and social disputes. There are many examples, like that of Adela Jaff Khanum, the first clan leader, who governed the biggest tribe in the Zagros region from 1909 to 1924.

Modern capitalism and nation-states, however, have fought to marginalize the creative role of women in this work.



## **THE AIM OF ESTABLISHING THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

We established this committee in order to bring women back to the diplomatic arena; to spread civil peace, dialogue, and communication in society; to organize and develop women's diplomacy based on democratic nation theory; to build strong relations between the peoples of Syria, based on solidarity and peace; and to spread the ideology of women's freedom and knowledge of their true identity.

The Diplomatic Relations Center of Kongreya Star was established in 2012. As its work expanded, a central office was opened on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Through that office, committees were formed in different cities and provinces. The aim of forming these committees in the provinces was to develop women's diplomatic capacity across all of society by developing relationships with women's organizations and with all relevant groups inside and outside of Rojava. The committee has done significant internal and external work in order challenge contradictions and international intolerance.

# 1. INTERNAL WORK

The committee reached out to all of the people of Rojava and Northern Syria, as well as to women's organizations, independent personalities, and political parties.

Through these meetings, the diplomatic field was introduced to all parts of our society, and was developed according to our society's needs. We also established partnerships with many organizations.

The women of the Kongreya Star have worked according to the principles and philosophy of Abdullah Öcalan, who we consider as our revolutionary guide in theory and practice. Kongreya Star is based on the

ideology of Democratic Confederalism and the democratic and ecological society which is based on women's freedom.

We act according to his principle that "we should build a relationship with society because it is a big and important area."

According to this principle, as women we have united women's abilities, solved our problems, trained and organized ourselves in society, and secured a democratic future that guarantees women's rights and freedom.

Kongreya Star has formed committees in different parts of Rojava to communicate with women within the Diplomatic Relations Committee and developed relationships between the members of all components of society.

*"We should build a relationship with society because it is a big and important arena.*

*– Abdullah Öcalan*





## THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS CONFERENCE OF KONGREYA STAR

The committee held its first conference on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, under the slogan “free women’s diplomacy is the basis of the democratic nation.” One hundred women participated in the two-day conference. Its main objective was to work more closely on developing relationships with women’s organizations in the Middle East and the world, in order to support women’s struggles globally.

## 2. EXTERNAL WORK

The Diplomatic Relations Committee of Kongreya Star has worked with women from the Middle East and around the world through participation in several international forums. Delegations and women’s organizations from other countries and backgrounds have visited Kongreya Star to learn about the women’s struggle in Rojava by Kurdish women as well as women from different identities and mechanisms of women’s self-organization. The committee has also worked to convey the represented

Abdullah Ocalan’s philosophy to the world and to claim his freedom as a mission that diplomatic women should spread widely.

Women’s diplomatic initiatives in Rojava have developed worldwide through:

## THE PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL WOMEN’S ACTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

In order to convey the women’s struggle in Rojava, which struggles against both capitalism and retrograde male violence, they have participated in actions such as Global Peace Day, International Day of Violence Against Women and March 8th (International Women’s Day).

The Kurdish women’s experience in Rojava was taken as a model for women in Syria. This is a victory for Kurdish women’s efforts, for the cause of peace, and for the Syrian people.

## JOINING THE PEACEMAKERS’ CONFERENCE IN LEBANON

The Diplomatic Relations Committee joined a peacebuilding conference organized by the UN in Beirut between May 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

The Diplomatic Relations Committee joined a peacebuilding conference organized by the UN in Beirut between May 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Syrian women from all backgrounds and representing all political viewpoints were invited to activate their role in the political process. Some of the most important decisions made by the conference were to separate the political file from the humanitarian file, and to involve all parties in negotiations.



The Kurdish women's experience in Rojava was taken as a model for women in Syria. This is a victory for Kurdish women's efforts, for the cause of peace, and for the Syrian people.

## ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE WOMEN'S CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF THE UN IN GENEVA

This council is a delegation composed of 12 Syrian women, which aims to amplify women's voices in peacemaking, put forward recommendations, and include all sectors of Syrian society. It is the only such council that has a viable pathway to the Geneva process and which includes members from all Syrian political backgrounds.

Our diplomacy has achieved many gains and victories and built valuable relationships. Its mission is to define the Kurdish women's struggle in Rojava, and to raise women's voices globally.



# 3

## THE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATORY ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

### Introduction

**T**hroughout history, women have been the most generous people and guards of the ethical values of society— attributes that are related to the role women had as mothers of the society, since the beginning of humanity. When a woman had a child, that child would need food, shelter and clothes, and the woman would have to protect it from all dangers. She would cut tree leaves to cover her child to protect it from the cold, shelter her family in caves for safety, and collect grains to feed her family and herself. Women bear a huge responsibility for the society.

Women were the first to discover agriculture and agricultural tools. Women learned to grow grains by watching spilled and forgotten grain sprout and grow after it was left alone for a certain period of time. They then learned how to cultivate, harvest, and store grain at a larger scale. This was not done for the profit and political power of an elite, but in order to feed their clans. The surplus was stored and spread when needed among the community or shared with other clans. With this friendship relations and good social reputation were strengthened.

This collective spirit is human nature and is the true essence of the economy.

These communities saw mothers as sacred and representative of the mother earth. They sculpted statues of generous and protective mother figures, like the goddesses Ishtar or Inanna. A lot of these figurines were found in depots of food, representing the live-giving, nutritive and fertile aspects of the human mothers and mother earth.

With time because of different reasons, society changed and an authoritarian masculine mentality came into existence. This was a long process, but finally women lost the role they had in the society and men managed to shape a hierarchical society, as they sought to control and possess all parts of society. These men underestimated women, and oppressed them through violent means. They sought to marginalize women in the economy and in society.

In patriarchy, women are confronted with economic exploitation and very often excluded from the economy.



Through these women became deeply dependent and controllable by men. The basic character of economy as a way of equal and just sharing according to the needs of everybody was destroyed. Instead, an anti-economy was established, which benefits an elite through the exploitation and oppression of others. It is this anti-economy which we are still faced with nowadays in the capitalist system.

When the Rojava Revolution began, women once again started to play an active role in the field of economy. In order to empower more women to become active and to build a united force against capitalist anti-economy, we women saw the need to form an organization for communal economy.

# THE GOALS OF THE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

**T**he Women's Economic Committee was established in 2015 in order to build a democratic social economy. It serves the needs of women and of all of Northern Syrian society, and works to build a new model "for effort and value." This model will revive the culture of collective economics in all communities, and thus will ensure that all people have the economic support they need to thrive. The economy takes in complimentary support, based on the principle that "an economy without capital is possible, but a capital without an economy isn't possible." Strengthening women's self-confidence in economic matters ensures that women can reach an economic independence which is necessary for the struggle for freedom as well as confronting capitalism.





## PROJECTS OF THE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

The Women's Economic Committee began to offer training courses in councils and communes so that women could understand their true economic identity, realize that they could play an important role in the society's economy, and give an ecological culture to the economy and society. Together, these courses presented an alternative to capitalist culture, which seeks profit at the expense of environmental preservation.

The economic committee established cooperative associations in order to develop women's roles in all economic fields, to provide social and economic support, and to ensure equality. The concept of the women's economy in Rojava/North Syria is not like the economic system of any modern state.



It is not limited to the bourgeois classes, but rather, equally includes all people from all backgrounds, in order to destroy racism and discrimination.

Each association consists of at least 7 women. They are created according to the people's needs, not within the framework of authoritarian power projects. Each association assesses needs and works on relevant projects.





## AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS

**K**ongreya Star has established agricultural cooperatives in which women do all of the agricultural work— including shares, cultivation of land, harvesting and other tasks— by themselves, without men. In these cooperatives, synthetic fertilizers are not used, so that crops do not become contaminated, and workers remove weeds by hand rather than with herbicides. Agricultural work is carried out jointly by all members of the cooperatives, and profits are distributed evenly.



They are overseen by The Associations' House, which supervises, organizes, and supports the projects.

86 associations, employing 7,000 women in total, have been established across Jazira province, in Qamishli, Amude, Derbasiye and other areas. A union of cooperative associations has been established.

15 thousand acres of land in Hassakeh have been set aside for these cooperative associations, which employ over 300 women. 4 thousand acres in Qamishli province, as well as other parts of Rojava, have been set aside for the same purpose.

## INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS

The committee equipped Hassakeh and Ras Al-Ain with large generators. It planned to establish associations in villages and towns for all of the region's women to improve their social and financial situation and increase tolerance.



## COMMERCIAL PROJECTS

Trade associations have been established for women, as well as associations for poultry, dairy, and cheese factories, canning factories, the Nergez detergent factory, and the Nesrin factory. The committee has also established

stores for pickles, bakeries, and sewing factories, as well as workshops for sewing ready-made clothes. A new wool factory was opened in Hassakeh, and an association for restaurants also has been established.

## IN KOBANI

An economic committee has been formed. The committee has established an agricultural association.

## IN AFRIN PROVINCE

Women have established an agricultural association to strengthen women's economic participation, and have established programs to display women's handicrafts.

They are planning to establish a special associations for martyrs' wives, as well as other associations to improve the financial and social situation of all communities who may need assistance.

# THE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC CONFERENCE

The first Women's Economic Conference in Northern Syria was held on May 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, 2017. 50 delegates from Kobani and Jazira provinces, as well as the cities of Manbij and Gire Spi, attended the conference. The conference resolved to:

- 1 Establish women's economic academies.
- 2 Establish special shops to sell women's products.
- 3 Develop agricultural and animal breeding projects in a creative way as a model for women's economic participation in the Middle East.
- 4 Strengthen women's projects and associations.
- 5 Ensure progress and development for women in industrial and commercial fields.

We have found that women have always helped to strengthen the economy of their homeland and have always worked for progress and development in society.

# 4

## THE WOMEN'S MEDIA COMMITTEE

### Introduction

**K**urdish media in Northern Syria was censored by the racist Ba'ath regime. Kurdish journalists faced arrest, imprisonment, and even assassination if they carried out their work. The regime prevented Kurds from spreading their culture and speaking their language through oppressive policies of assimilation.

However, Kurds have always rebelled against the most violent regimes. They were able to establish effective, powerful media, especially about the situation of women.

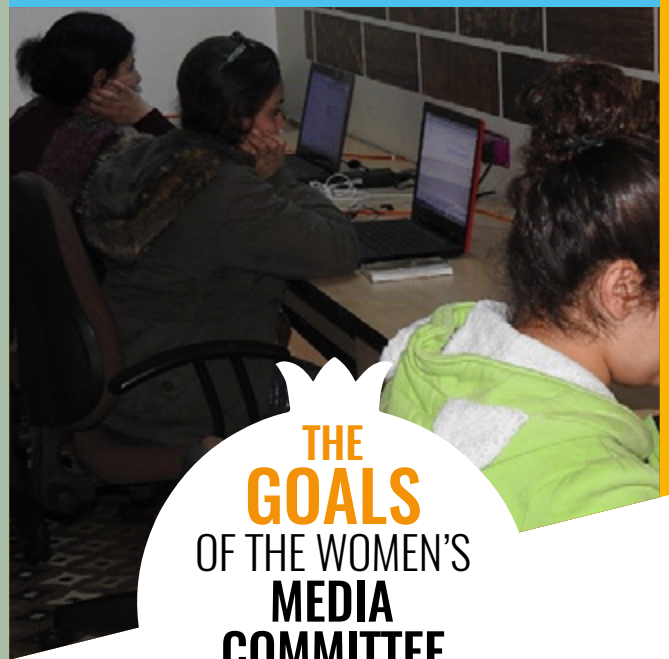
Eventually, the Rojava Revolution came, and Kurdish media was no longer restricted. Kurdish media was free to publish, and all people could hear news from a Kurdish viewpoint, regardless of whether they spoke Kurdish or Arabic.

Despite challenges from family and societal pressure and the authoritarian masculine mentality, women entered the media field and excelled in it. They put great effort into showing the struggles that their people faced in a powerful and effective way.

They brought the camera to the resistance battlefields to document their people's struggle, and proved their empowerment and their people's existence to the whole world.

## ESTABLISHING THE WOMEN'S MEDIA COMMITTEE

It was necessary to establish a committee for women's media, as this was one of the most important pillars of the democratic transformation. The Women's Media Committee was established in April 2014, during a general conference. Journalists from across Rojava attended the meeting. The conference decided to establish a women's media center in Northern Syria, which would become an umbrella under which women journalists could organize and unite their abilities.



## THE GOALS OF THE WOMEN'S MEDIA COMMITTEE

This committee sought to define and spread the democratic communal values of women, and to convey their struggle and resistance for their freedom, for their people's freedom, and for the revolutionary struggles of women worldwide in an effective matter.

It also worked to develop the capabilities of women active in the media field, so they would have the skills to spread an alternative viewpoint based on democracy and women's freedom.

## PROJECTS OF THE WOMEN'S MEDIA COMMITTEE

Women play an active role in Northern Syria's media landscape. Media institutions are about 57% women. The Women's Media Committee had issued two women's magazines, such as "The Life Sound" magazine, in 1998, in Arabic and Kurdish. This intellectual and political magazine was issued once every two months. In 2014, a second magazine, Asoya Jin (Women's Horizon), was issued. This magazine presented information on methodological, political, social, and educational issues.

The Jin News Agency and other women's media projects are coordinating within the media committee, which allows women journalists in all parts of Rojava to organize. They also started a live broadcast of Star FM radio on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

The Free Women's Foundation (Waqfa Jina Azad) announced the establishment of a Jin TV group in all provinces under the purview of the Women's Media Committee. The committee also supervises and provides guidance to all women's departments in all of the major media outlets in Rojava/North Syria, including Ronahi TV, Hawar Media, Ronahi newspaper, and Firat News Agency (ANF).



The general situation, the workflow, and the members situation are discussed in meetings with participation of women journalists and media committee members.



1 Open a women's media academy.

2 Establish an Arabic-language department in the women's news agency; as well as to establish a department for women in the Hawar News Agency.



## THE WOMEN'S MEDIA CONFERENCE

The second Women's Media Conference was held on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016. The conference resolved to:



# 5

## THE COMMITTEE OF EDUCATION

### Introduction

**E**ducation has always played an essential role in the development of cultures and civilizations by transferring experiences and knowledge from generation to generation. The first education a human receives is happening naturally through the mother and further social surrounding, giving us examples and teaching us how to act and interact in society. Throughout all our life we never stop learning. Therefore, another part of education is as well the planned and organized processes which aim at developing

information and improving behaviour towards becoming free, responsible and critical individuals as part of a harmonic and fertile society. We need to have the necessary knowledge in order to be able to protect ourselves from the extermination campaigns that we have faced and are still facing, as well as to ensure our freedom from colonialism, divisive and corrupt nation states, and capitalist modernity.





## THE GOALS OF THE COMMITTEE OF EDUCATION

This committee works to provide women with the expertise and knowledge they need to develop their intellectual abilities and administrative skills, so that they can make effective decisions and lead their communities. It seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE OF EDUCATION

AND ITS MOST IMPORTANT PROJECTS

The Kongreya Star Committee of Education was established in Jazira Canton on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. It has centers in Hassakah, Qamishli, Afrin, and Kobani.

The committee worked according to the principles it had adopted and established committees in every commune. Members of these committees were trained so that they could educate local women.

The committee does not only train Kurdish women. It has worked with women from all of the components of Northern Syria, including Arabs, Turkmen, Chechens, and others.

The committee has five departments, which work on the following issues:

1. *Research*
2. *Trainer education*
3. *Courses*
4. *Community heritage*
5. *Lectures*

## 1. DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH

This department researches issues faced by different communities in Northern Syria, especially women. It collects information through detailed questionnaires. After obtaining the required results, the research is presented as a report, and the results are transmitted to the community through panel discussions and lectures.

## 2. DEPARTMENT OF TRAINER EDUCATION

This department prepares our trainers for the task of educating others. It defines the fundamentals of training, prepares objectives, presents facts, and provides an effective intellectual challenge so that trainers can learn how to effectively educate others and achieve better results.



## 3. DEPARTMENT OF COURSES

This department has two main projects. The first is to provide training courses for women through a special program. The aim of these courses is to support women's efforts, develop their skills, provide them expertise and knowledge, address their weaknesses and struggles, and help them become active in political and social institutions.



The second project works to educate rural women through training programs designed to meet their needs. It helps rural women strengthen themselves and become active in all areas of life. This is done by visiting women's homes and conducting lectures about subjects like family planning, childcare, protecting women against diseases such as breast cancer, reproductive health, childhood diseases, economic empowerment, equality between men and women, literacy, and underage marriage.

## 4. THE COMMUNITY HERITAGE DEPARTMENT

This department documents women's experiences and talents, such as making medicines, making carpets, storytelling, and music; as well as archiving words, proverbs, and stories that represent the history and culture of all the peoples of the region.

## 5. LECTURES DEPARTMENT

This department prepares lectures and posters for the Committee of Education to use. It prepares lectures on culture, human rights, health, social and economic empowerment, management, gender equality, women's leadership, women's psychology, how to raise children, why and how to oppose child marriage, how to use the internet, community values, hygiene, and other topics.



# 6

## MUNICIPALITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

### Introduction

The environment is the physical and biological nature inside which social development happens and is based on. After women began to work in the municipalities in Rojava, they started to take more care about the environment and made it more beautiful in all areas through their participation and unique perspective. Many villages, cities and rural areas in Rojava suffered from massive destruction through the politics of the Baath regime and later through the hands of ISIS. Their terror even reached the first municipality, which was founded in Al-Qamishli on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014, in an attack that caused ten martyrs and many wounded.

Under the Ba'ath regime, women could only work in municipal government as secretaries or low-level employees. They had no special projects to specifically address the needs of women. The role of the municipalities themselves was limited to cleaning work and granting licenses for construction.

After the Rojava Revolution, women began to work in the municipalities on simple projects, ensuring basic needs— such as electricity, water, bread, maintenance of sewage networks, restoration of roads,

sanitation and cleanliness, and other public services neglected after the regime was pushed out of Rojava— could still be met. They started to build municipalities in seven districts in Qamishli as a first step, and then opened municipalities in sixteen districts and areas of Jazira. Soon, the municipalities were expanded to include eighty six villages, and were able to deliver important services to all parts of society.

## THE GOALS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PEOPLES' MUNICIPALITIES

The main objective of women's work in our administration is the establishment of free, democratic, ecological municipalities that are based on women's freedom. Women began to work in the municipalities to bring their unique perspective and aesthetics to municipal work. They managed to prove their broad abilities and importance through active participation in all aspects of the peoples' municipalities.



These municipalities were the first institution in all of Rojava/Northern Syria to implement the system of co-administration, despite the criticism from men who were not used to working with women as equals. Even the male co-presidents at first did not understand the idea that they could share their positions with women, instead viewing their female counterparts as deputies or assistants. Yet as women struggled and involved themselves in municipal work, this view changed. It was necessary to establish a special women's office in all municipalities, which would address issues related to women, protect their rights and solve their problems, and work to enhance their social autonomy and intellectual development by launching relevant projects.

Women's participation in municipal councils must be 50%— a figure significantly higher than that of many so-called 'advanced' countries, which may only have around 20% women – if even - in governments of important positions. This shows the extent to which women's participation is integral to Northern Syrian institutions.



An Academy for the Development of the Environment and Municipalities was opened for municipal members, in order to expand the professional capabilities of women workers and subject them to ideological and professional training. This allowed these women to take positive and effective steps within their cities to implement important projects and services.

Women have participated in all sections of the municipal councils on equal footing with men. Women have been able to break all of the barriers that stood in front of them, playing key roles in the most important municipal departments: the technical section, service section, accounting section,

supply section, municipal officer section, market security section, transport and communication section, and legal section. Recently, other sections have been added, relating to diplomacy, public media, and archives.

Because women are known for their integrity and effective management of the economy, they were first assigned as administrators for special departments, notably the technical, accounting, and cleaning sections.

## THE WOMEN'S LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND MUNICIPALITIES CONFERENCE

After years of work to establish general laws governing all the municipalities in Rojava/Northern Syria, the first



conference was held for local administrative bodies and municipalities on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, under the slogan “Ecology and democracy are the spirit

of women, and with the women’s spirit, we build a homeland.”

During the conference, the women who attended discussed

projects that had been undertaken and accomplished by

women in the three provinces, and the problems faced by women workers in these fields. The most important decision made by the conference was the allocation of 10% of the general budget of the municipal council to the women’s office. This decision gave the necessary financial autonomy to the women of Rojava/ Northern Syria to pursue projects.

“

*Ecology and democracy are the spirit of women, and with the women’s spirit, we build a homeland.*



## THE MOST IMPORTANT PROJECTS OF THE WOMEN’S OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITIES

Women have been able to work in the municipal offices across Jazira Canton. We have cleaned and beautified the environment around us by paying attention to the cleanliness of the cities, and expanding green areas and gardens. We have also opened restaurants and bakeries, nurseries to enable working women to secure safe and reliable child care, family development centers that give lectures on the family and society, and fitness clubs so that working women we can maintain our physical health.

A driving school has been opened in order to train women to operate large vehicles. Women have also opened sewing workshops and shops to sell and rent traditional Kurdish clothing, as well as a computer maintenance center.

In Afrin and Kobani Cantons, the committee has taken steps in the fields of management and administration. However, the administration has not yet implemented the decision to allocate 10% of the body’s budget for the women’s office, and so projects were carried out in the name of public municipalities.



The committee has developed relationships with various countries and municipalities, including: French municipalities, Britain, Kurdistan (Northern Iraq), Lebanon, and Sweden, as well as other countries.

We plan to establish parks and recreational forests to serve all members of society, to establish a women's society and to build a library in the name of Martyr Sara, as well as other projects that serve us women and strengthen our social position.





# 7

## THE WOMEN'S JUSTICE COMMITTEE

### Introduction



**S**ocial justice is a multidimensional concept which encompasses all fields of life. Suffering, inequality, marginalization, deprivation, and injustice are all part of the human experience. Nature has not been able to reduce or exclude them, and they have accompanied the tragedies that women face throughout history.

Since ancient times, a blindfolded woman with a balance in one hand and a sword on the other has been used to symbolize justice. The use of a woman, rather than a man, for

this figure is evidence that mercy is found in this concept of justice, inspired by a women's heart rather than a man's.

Women in Rojava have proved their ability to develop and introduce laws to restore what was stolen from them, by means of the Women's Justice Committees, women's houses, committees to solve problems that women face, and women's representatives in the mixed court of justice and other institutions concerned with the activities of justice. In order to strengthen and defend



women's roles in their families and communities, laws affecting women's issues have been issued. They have doubled their efforts to remove all the restrictions that women once faced, such as oppression, enslavement, and the dominant male mentality.

Women themselves are the only ones capable of feeling what women suffer from. Therefore, they have organized to defend themselves and solve their problems through several legal mechanisms.

## WOMEN'S HOUSES

Women's houses are civic and social institutions that work to raise awareness of women and family issues and to solve the social and human rights problems that women face. These houses work to spread awareness of social justice and to combat all inhuman practices against women.

The first women's house opened in Qamishli in March of 2011. It was operated by a group of women who, at the time, were referred to as the "suicide group." These women were ready to face challenges, threats, and arrest in order to achieve social justice.

At first, few women turned to the women's house to solve their problems, because of the fear and mistrust that had been planted in them as a result of traditional societal sexism, and because they didn't believe that the women's house could address the challenges they faced. However, over time, the women's house gained a positive reputation. The house addressed problems through social reconciliation and mediation. Women

were increasingly attracted to the women's house, and gained an institution that, before, would have been unimaginable—a place that defended their rights and worked on their concerns.

The number of women's houses increased in all regions until 2013. Today, there are 19 women's houses in Jazira province alone. The houses are managed by women who run administrative work, archives, problem-solving committees, training programs, and information committees, all working in coordination with the main women's center in Qamishli.

The first conference of women's houses was held on 11/11/2016, under the slogan "Justice is a sacred social value." 135 representatives from women's houses across Jazira, Afrin, Kobani, Damascus, and Manbij attended the conference.

Women's houses have resolved many important social issues, including marital and family disputes. Problems that cannot be solved by women's houses are transferred to the courts. When the women's law was issued in 2014, the women's houses were the first to implement it.

After the liberation of Hol, Tabqa, Raqqa, and other predominantly Arab areas in 2017, women's houses were opened in each area. This spread the concept to all the communities of Northern Syria.



*Justice is a sacred social value.*

## THE WOMEN'S PROBLEM-SOLVING COMMITTEE

**T**hese committees were established in all areas at all administrative levels, starting from the commune level—which is the basic administrative unit under the self-management system.



The committees worked to solve social and judicial problems in their communities and coordinated with women's houses to resolve women's issues.

Women have proved their role in their problem-solving committees since the beginning of the Rojava Revolution.

The problem-solving committees have been set up across the region, with 92 of such councils existing in Jazira alone.

The committees have trained the people they serve on their functions and their relationship to the court system. Their role in villages, cities, and provinces across Rojava has continued to grow.

## THE WOMEN'S COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Women's Council for Social Justice was established to empower women and to solve women's issues through self-organization. The council oversees all judicial and social institutions, and supervises all of the women's judicial institutions in Rojava.



Women today have organized themselves independently and effectively in the social justice system. They have been educated about the principles of a democratic and ecological society, women's freedom, and shared life. Women have a 50% stake in the social justice system, and contribute to the preparation of democratic bills related to women, children and family issues.

## THE GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE WOMEN'S COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Women in Rojava have struggled to develop a system of social justice and create a moral political society. They reject the principles of traditional society and the traditional international system, by taking the principles and values of their own political community as a basis for their struggle and their search for truth. Defending both individual and community rights is a humanitarian task for women. Women in the councils struggle against all forms of traditional patriarchal violence against women, such as honor crimes.

They work to replace masculine authoritarianism with social characteristics that come from women's nature, such as equality, cooperation, partnership, justice, and struggle against authoritarian ideologies, in order to remove authoritarianism from society and develop methods by which women can protect themselves from injustice.

## THE CONFERENCE OF WOMEN'S COUNCILS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

This annual conference was first held in 2015. Women involved in the social justice system from all parts of Rojava attended; they discussed all developments in the council according to the relevant social conditions.





# 8

## THE COMMITTEE OF CULTURE AND ART (THE GOLDEN CRESCENT)

### Introduction

**T**hroughout history, the Kurdish people have suffered greatly under tyrannical regimes which banned their language, culture, and history.

In the face of fascism and dictatorship, women had the most prominent role in preserving Kurdish heritage. They would sing songs at night for their children, while farming and doing housework, and in weddings. Through these small acts, they held onto their culture and passed Kurdish songs down to the next generation.

The oppression that Kurdish art and culture faced made it difficult for women to join folkloric teams. Despite this, they continued to work in secret, and the teams put on dance, theatre, and musical performances during Newroz festivals. Through this, they showed how the Kurdish people suffered to prove their existence. The Rojava Revolution, which was a revolution of freedom and democracy, freed all women, and gave the Kurdish people the right to enjoy and develop their language, art, culture and history.





Women were able to highlight the heroic deeds of the Kurdish people, reviving their heritage through poetry, revolutionary songs, and plays, performed on stage in cultural centers, in squares, and in the streets. Their work honored the Kurdish people's spirit of resistance and promoted our ethical and aesthetic values.

## THE GOLDEN CRESCENT

After the beginning of the Rojava Revolution and the expansion of women's roles into all areas of life, institutions for art and culture were opened across Rojava/Northern Syria. Many women have begun to participate in artistic and cultural activities. It was necessary to form a special arena through which women could display their art, so in 2016, the Golden Crescent (Kavana Zerî) movement was formed in Qamishli. The Golden Crescent movement allowed women to express themselves in a space without men, and to organize themselves in the cultural arena.

The committee of culture and art has worked to protect and develop our cultural values, and to educate women and prove their existence in terms of intellectual, culture and artistic, which represents the resistance spirit. The committee stood against all forms of capitalist modernity, which is dominated by material concepts and which has infiltrated all parts of modern life. Art has become a commodity in the global market, and cultures around the world have suffered. To fight against this, we must revive Kurdish folklore, art, and culture as well as all other cultures.

## WORKS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Golden Crescent centers have been opened in all provinces of Rojava/Northern Syria: Jazira, Afrin, and, most recently, Kobani. These centers provide women with cultural and artistic education, as well as courses to develop proficiency in Kurdish language and literature. The aim of these courses is to enrich the mosaic of Syria's languages and cultures through art.

The centers formed artistic teams, including the Martyr Sakina team for music, the Martyr Ihan team, and many others, to teach Kurdish folk dances and traditional dress. These teams participated in national events and celebrations. A special orchestra institute was opened to teach children to sing and play musical instruments. The committee organized many festivals such as children's festival, a cinema festival and a music festival.



The committee has also produced films that positively portray Kurdish culture and that promote important values. These films are important, as foreign films do not accurately fit the values and traditions of our society.

## FUTURE PROJECTS OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee plans to build an arts and culture academy, a women's cultural center, an exhibition of women's art, a children's art section, and an exhibition of the work of writers and artists from all parts of Rojava. In order to build an educated society, the committee will open arts, culture, and literacy courses for women, as women constitute half of society and raise up the other half. It will also work to strengthen relationships with cultural and artistic organizations across Rojava, and with local and international women's organizations.



## WOMEN'S CULTURAL CONFERENCE

The first conference of the Golden Crescent arts and culture movement was held on 20/10/2017 in Qamishli, under the slogan “With our cultural spirit, we will break the restrictions of Imrali and live a free and dignified life with the Leader APO.



210 delegates from all provinces of Rojava/Northern Syria attended this conference, which passed a number of resolutions. An internal system and a general coordinating body, comprised of seven women from all over Rojava/Northern Syria, were established. The conference resolved to develop mechanisms to promote women's culture and to strengthen

their capabilities in cinema, theater and all other areas of art and culture; and to establish educational programs about women's freedom and their role in building and developing their societies, especially in areas newly liberated from ISIS.

## WOMEN'S CULTURAL ASSOCIATION

This association coordinates women's artistic and cultural activities across Northern Syria. It is connected to the arts and culture body of the Democratic Self-Administration in Rojava/Northern Syria.

The association includes five groups: the Golden Crescent Movement, the educational women, the women writers, the Arab women, and the Assyrian women.

This association organized an art and literature festival that attracted people from all parts of society in Rojava/Northern Syria. The festival also attracted visitors from around the world, including America, Libya, Tunisia and other countries.

# 9

## WOMEN'S COMMUNAL SELF-DEFENCE FORCES

### Introduction

**T**hroughout history, all societies have had to defend themselves from threats and attacks. However, in most societies, this task fell to men only. However, Kurdish women have always defended their land and people alongside men— such as in the historic resistance against ISIS in Rojava, where women played an important part.



### GOALS OF THE COMMITTEE

After the Syrian regime pulled its forces out of Rojava, communes were established in districts and councils.

It was necessary to establish self-defence forces so that the people of Rojava could defend themselves against all forms of violence. For women, who are oppressed by patriarchy and male violence, it was also necessary to establish women-specific communal self-defence forces.



Women from all communities were organized and trained so that they could defend their land and people.

The Women's Communal Self-Defence Forces were organized in 2014, based on the concept that self-defence comes from self-training and access to a free personality, and that there is no use for weapons without free thought and a trained, free personality.

The Women's Communal Self-Defence Forces began to work voluntarily, without centralized organization, to defend areas that needed immediate protection. Later, they were organized under a committee.

Special meetings have been held for women to receive military training in order to defend themselves from all harms as women, children, and older people are confronted with. This is important in every society, but especially in a society that is confronted with war, because war typically addresses first women, children and older people.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WOMEN'S COMMUNAL SELF-DEFENCE FORCES**

The Women's Communal Self-Defence Forces are responsible for having thorough knowledge of the security situation and current events in any given area.

Their work includes:

- 1 Facilitating community reconciliation by mediating disputes in their districts without taking sides.
- 2 Guarding public events and other large gatherings of people.
- 3 Participating in guarding barriers.
- 4 Documenting the number of immigrants to their province.
- 5 Investigating cases prostitution and alerting security.

## FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE WOMEN'S COMMUNAL SELF-DEFENCE FORCES

The first Conference of the Women's communal self-defence forces was held on 2/8/2016, with 400 women participating. The conference evaluated the progress of the units and discussed organization, education, and other needs.

After the conclusion of their conference, the Women's communal self-defence forces have become more organized, and are ready to face any emergency they may face.







10

THE  
**SOCIAL  
COMMITTEE**  
AND ITS ORGANIZATIONS

**Introduction**

**T**he Social Committee is responsible for the oversight and organization of plans and projects related to such issues as human rights, peace, sports, faith, health and social relations, as well for the development of children, the elderly and the disabled. It may form relevant institutions, in accordance with needs. It also develops educational and organizational activities. The committee strives to further democratic national consciousness. It also works to democratize the fundamental unit of society: the family.

It commits to a radical stance against all mentalities that maintain and the existence of sexism within society, and fosters the the idea of free togetherness.



# 10.1

## THE COUNCIL OF MARTYRS' FAMILIES



**I**t's necessary to pay attention to the concerns of the martyrs' families, to address the problems they face, and to return a small part of the sacrifices that they offered for their land and people.

The Council of Martyrs' Families was established in 2014. The women's committee within the council provides aid, both moral and financial, and provides necessary services, including household items, education, and health care, to make their lives easier.

The committee provides awareness sessions for the martyrs' wives and children so they can learn to be self-reliant, prepare themselves psychologically to return to normal life, and feel equal to others.

**// Our martyrs  
are the light  
that illuminates  
our path,  
giving their lives  
and blood for the  
liberation of  
our land.**

## 10.2

### THE WORKERS' COMMITTEE IN JAZIRA



**T**his committee was established on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. May 1<sup>st</sup> marks International Worker's Day.

The committee supervises the organizing and training of three categories of workers:

1. Factory, agricultural, municipal, and government workers.
2. Drivers.
3. Engineers.

Workers' committees have opened across Northern Syria, and women have taken active roles in all levels of committee work. Some women are administrators, organizing and training the workers, as well as providing them with educational programs on culture, ethics and women's struggle. These programs ensure

that working women can learn to rely on themselves and understand their rights.

The committee resolves the problems of the working class and makes it a source of strength in all spheres of life. It is working to abolish the bourgeois class, which had previously controlled the means of production, the leadership of the state, and the welfare of the people.

The committee works to protect the rights of women workers. It prevents factory owners from exploiting any workers by setting fair work hours and raising salaries. This ensures that workers have a fair standard of living, and do not work for long hours for unfairly low pay.

# 10.3

## RELIGION AND SOCIETY INSTITUTION



In its foundations the religion Islam was compatible with democracy and a religion to enhance the society. But Islam, like many other regions can be and has been used as a tool of suppression. It is our aim to understand islam again in a way that is moderate, compatible with democracy and is tolerant to other religions. We are striving for an interpretation of islam which defends the rights of all human beings, regardless of race, religion or creed. Islam rejects the inhuman practices of killing, forced displacement and dissension, and promotes dealing fairly with all members and components of society.

A union of religious scholars in Rojava/ Northern Syria has been established to address religious issues and problems related to religion within society.



Because of the importance of women in society and their vital role in the development and modernization of society and civilization itself, it was necessary to establish an institution dedicated to women's affairs, with a specific focus on religion and ethics. The Religion and Society Center (RSC) was established on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 in Al-Qamishli, and similar women's

institutions were opened in Ras Al-Ain, Hassaka, Derek and the villages of Tel Brak.

Upon its initial establishment, RSC encountered some difficulties. Religion is a sensitive issue in society, and opening religious centers for women under these circumstances was very challenging. Local religious clerics rejected the idea of women participating in these institutions, as this was in violation of the customs and traditions of a male-dominated society.

Women from these institutions began hosting awareness lectures for women in villages and cities, gathering them together to discuss the concept of religion as a proponent of justice and equality in society, and to explain how radicalism is a result of the misunderstanding of religion.

These women's institutions promote the belief that one of the main problems in society is this wrong interpretation of religion, and that women should distance themselves from this ideology and those in society who are advocating it.

The institutions focus on democratising the family and focus that equality between men and women and rights of women in society are important values compatible with Islam.



Without equality between men and women a democratic family nor a democratic society is possible. Women, in addition to their responsibilities, also have rights that they are entitled to protect, including the right to protect their children, to leave the house at will, to work and to establish their own projects.



## THE CONGREGATION OF RELIGIONS

A congregation of religions opened on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, in Al-Jazeera province. It works to strengthen the bonds of love, interdependence, spiritual and moral unity between religions, and to foster the idea of living together under the umbrella of justice,

equality and solidarity. It strives for the advancement of humankind –especially women– in ways that will allow them to reach their potential, discover their capabilities and guide them toward a constructive future.

The Institute of Religion and Society (IRS) rejects unjust laws and practices such as polygamy, underage marriage, violence against women and others. These laws, customs and traditions violate the rights and freedom of women, whereas the institution seeks to raise the role of women in society and establish them as examples for society to follow.

Preparations are underway for the establishment of a huge religious university in the Amoud, Tel Hebbash area, where the foundation stone has been laid. The curriculum will include all divine religions, and will serve to deepen communication, love and peace between the diverse religious and other components of society. The university's slogan, "Love, Justice, Peace," reflects its core mission of bringing together people of all religions in the region.



# 11

## THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

### Introduction

**T**he Political committee is responsible for creating and administering democratic nation's policies on the basis of the women's confederal organization. It represents a political tool for women within current political parties and structures. It develops the democratic societal administration of women against the practical system. It forms local, regional and national women's assemblies in neighborhoods, villages, towns and cities. It works to implement the co-chairing system in all the institutions and organizations of democratic society.

It prioritizes the forming of relationships with women in the international sphere, in order to further democratic politics and the organization of different identities, cultures and believes. It develops its own institutions –primarily academies– in accordance with need.

# THE SUCCESSFUL RESISTANCE OF THE PEOPLE: AFRIN




The “Women Rise Up For Afrin” campaign was launched on February 8th, 2018, by Kongra Star Afrin. It drew attention on the attacks on Afrin and connected women all around the world in solidarity. A part of it was also the mobilization for March 8th, 2018– International Women’s Day, where hundreds of women went to Afrin under the continuous shelling and bombardment of the Turkish army to show solidarity directly and physically. At that time, Turkey and its jihadist proxies had been attacking Afrin Canton, a peaceful region of Northern Syria, for over a month. The invasion posed a threat not only to pluralism and democracy in Northern Syria, but to women’s freedom everywhere in the world.



“Women Rise Up For Afrin” is a call to the women of the world issued in response to the invasion, to protect the women’s revolution from everywhere in the world and to unite against fascism, occupation and terror.

Before the Turkish invasion, Afrin’s women played key roles in all areas of life. They defended Northern Syria as members of the YPJ— Arin Mirkan, hero of the battle of Kobani, was from Afrin. They had equal roles in politics— by law, as in all of Northern Syria, every elected body had to include at least 40% women. They participated equally in the economy as Afrin fought to be self-sufficient in the face of hostile neighbors.

Afrin’s women built a pluralistic and democratic




society for all. When they fought to defend their land, they fought to defend a women's revolution that had transformed millions of lives— but their struggle was ignored by the so-called “international community.” Rather than relying on the false and exploitative support of governments, they asked for genuine solidarity and support from women everywhere.

Today, the Turkish occupation forces kidnap, rape and torture women, force religious minorities to convert to Islam, burn agricultural land that locals had cultivated and developed for centuries, and crush non-Turkish and non-Islamic culture, the second phase of the “Women Rise Up For Afrin” campaign has begun. The women of Afrin continue to resist fascism and defend their people in refugee camps established in Shahba— Berxwedan, which houses 2,865 people, Serdem, which houses 2,931, and Afrin, which houses 428. There, they have organized schools and hospitals in order to ensure that children continue to receive an education and that medical patients can be treated.

The schools opened in Shahba serve over 1,000 children in the three camps. Many schools were bombed during the invasion, so children experienced a serious interruption in their education, along with significant trauma. Schools in Shahba still lack textbooks, supplies, and proper psychological support resources for displaced children.

Medical workers from Heyva Sor and from Afrin's main hospital— which was bombed by the Turkish military in mid-March— have established a hospital in Fafin and several medical points in other villages. These hospitals have saved many lives— but cannot help the most vulnerable patients due to a lack of supplies and equipment. Small children, pregnant women, and the elderly are especially in danger; and treatable conditions are compounded by malnutrition, unclean water, and a lack of electricity for air conditioning or heat.

**Facing these conditions, the women of Afrin and all Northern Syria we repeat our call for global solidarity. We ask the world to support displaced people in Shahba and to speak out against the occupation so that, one day, the people of Afrin can return home, secure and free. We call on all women to support Northern Syria's resistance against occupation— whether the occupation forces are ISIS, al-Qaeda, or Turkey— and to remember that what is under attack is especially the women's revolution. Therefore the liberation of Afrin is a milestone on the way for liberation of women everywhere.**

 [www.womenriseupforaftrin.org](http://www.womenriseupforaftrin.org)

 [fb.com/WomenRiseUpForAfrin](https://fb.com/WomenRiseUpForAfrin)

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