

Syrian Deputy FM to separatist Kurdish militias: Do not throw yourselves to perdition

By Basma Qaddour

Source: [Syria Times](#)

The Deputy Minister of Expatriates and Foreign Affairs Dr. Faisal al-Miqdad has reiterated that Syria will never ever accept the occupation of any inch of its territories, calling on the separatist Kurdish militias not to throw themselves to perdition.

“Once again, we say to those who lost everything: DO NOT LOSE YOURSELVES. The homeland welcomes all its citizens and we want to resolve all the Syrian problems in a positive way and far away from violence with preserving every inch of the country,” al-Miqdad said in a statement to the Damascus-based al-Watan.

He affirmed that the homeland’s fate cannot be manipulated. “The Syrian state won’t accept anything less than the liberation of its total area, 185.000 square kilometer . They have to understand that.”

“Anyone who is not loyal to his country and sells it at the lowest price, he/she will find themselves thrown out of the history. We have warned for many times of these conspiracies against the homeland and the Syrian people, and we said that those who throw themselves into the lap of the foreigner, the foreign will kick them out when the time is right,” al-Miqdad said.

He underscored that the US is being defeated all over the world and Syria will defend its territories.

Manbij: A Convenient Killing of US Troops

By Finian Cunningham

Source: [Strategic Culture](#)

With unseemly haste, US news media leapt on the killing of four American military personnel in Syria as a way to undermine President Donald Trump's plan to withdraw troops from that country.

The deadly attack in the northern city of Manbij, on the west bank of the Euphrates River, was reported to have been carried out by a suicide bomber. The Islamic State (ISIS) terror group reportedly claimed responsibility, but the group routinely makes such claims which often turn out to be false.

The American military personnel were said to be on a routine patrol of Manbij where US forces have been backing Kurdish militants in a purported campaign against ISIS and other terror groups.

An explosion at a restaurant resulted in two US troops and two Pentagon civilian officials being killed, along with more than a dozen other victims. Three other US military persons were among those injured.

US media highlighted the bombing as the biggest single death toll of American forces in Syria since they began operations in the country nearly four years ago.

The US and Kurdish militia have been in control of Manbij for over two years. It is one of the main sites from where American troops are to withdraw under Trump's exit plan, which

he announced on December 19.

Following the bombing, the New York Times headlined: "ISIS Attack in Syria Kills 4 Americans, Raising Worries about Troop Withdrawal". The report goes on, "the news prompted calls from Republicans and Democrats for President Trump to reconsider his plans to withdraw troops from the country."

A more pointed headline in The Washington Post was: "Killing of 4 Americans in Syria Throws Spotlight on Trump's Policy".

The Post editorialized, "the bombing showed that [ISIS] is likely to be a force to be reckoned with in Syria for the foreseeable future." It quoted politicians in Washington claiming the "bombing deaths... were a direct result of a foolish and abrupt departure announcement [by Trump], and made the case for staying."

Democrat Senator Jack Reed, who sits on the Senate Armed Forces Committee, said: "From the beginning, I thought the president was wrong [in ordering the withdrawal]. It was a strategic mistake for the whole region."

With macabre smugness, anti-Trump politicians and news media appeared to exploit the death of US troops in Manbij to score points against Trump.

The president's claims made just before Christmas of having defeated ISIS were widely replayed following the Manbij attack this week by way of ridiculing Trump's order to pullout US troops from Syria.

Nevertheless, despite the deaths, Trump and his Vice President Mike Pence stated they were still committed to bring the 2,000 or so US troops home. Some military figures also went on US media to defend Trump's pullout plan in spite of the terror attack in Manbij.

There clearly is a serious division in Washington over Trump's

policy on Syria. For Democrats and supportive media outlets, anything Trump does is to be opposed. But there are also elements within the military and intelligence nexus which are implacably against, what they see as, his “capitulation to Russia and Iran” in Syria. That was partly why his Defense Secretary James Mattis resigned days after Trump made his announced withdrawal at the end of last month.

Having invested years and money in regime-change machinations in Syria, there is bound to be US military and intelligence cabals which are resistant to Trump’s move to pack up. Not that Trump’s move portends a peace dividend for the region. It is more a “tactical change” for how US imperialism operates in the Middle East, as his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in Cairo last week.

That is why Trump’s order to take troops out of Syria may not be a clear-cut withdrawal. His National Security adviser John Bolton on a tour of the Middle East last week has already tried to undermine Trump by attaching all sorts of vague conditions to the troop pullout. Bolton and Pompeo have talked about the need to ensure the total defeat of ISIS and of the countering of Iranian presence in Syria.

This brings up the question of who may have carried out the bombing in Manbij? Was it really a suicide bomber? Was it really ISIS? Several observers have pointed out that ISIS have not had any presence in Manbij for the past two years since the Americans and Kurds took control of the city.

As always, the key question arises: who stands to benefit from the killing of the American troops? The scale of the attack suggests it was carried out with a sharp political message intended for Trump.

One potential beneficiary are the Kurdish militants who are being abandoned by the putative US withdrawal. Without their American sponsor on the ground, the Kurds are in danger of

Turkish forces launching cross-border operations to wipe them out, as Ankara has vowed to do. A Machiavellian Kurdish calculation could be to “disprove” Trump about “ISIS being defeated”, and that US forces are needed to prevent any resurgence of the terror group in Manbij and northeast Syria.

Another sinister player is the CIA or some other element of US military intelligence. It is certainly not beyond the realm of plausibility that the CIA could facilitate such an atrocity against American personnel in order to discredit Trump’s withdrawal plan.

Certainly, the way the anti-Trump media in the US reacted with such alacrity and concerted talking points suggests there was something a bit too convenient about the massacre.

It would in fact be naive to not suspect that the CIA could have pulled off such a false flag in Manbij. As in 1950s Vietnam, as told by Graham Greene in ‘The Quiet American’, the CIA have been doing such dirty tricks with bombing atrocities and assassinations for decades in order to precipitate wars in foreign countries that the agency calculates are in America’s geopolitical interests.

Syrian Activist Nidal Rahawi Provides Rare Insight into the Deteriorating Conditions in the Northeastern Region

Source: [Global Research](#)

In this exclusive interview Syrian Nationalist/Outspoken Activist/Artist Mr. Nidal Rahawi a Qamishli native and resident, provided us with crucial direct insight into the most recent tragic events that have taken place in his hometown in north eastern Syria. An Arabic version of this interview will be available on The Rabbit Hole.

Mr. Rahawi discussed how life has drastically changed under the illegal rule of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and their military wing the People's Protection Units (YPG) which is the Syrian arm of the Turkish PKK who are considered a terrorist organization by the US, Turkey and other countries. The YPG was later rebranded into the Syrian Democratic Forces under the guidance and suggestion of US forces that wanted to distance their allies from the PKK association.

Mr. Rahawi spoke about the concerted effort by separatist Kurds and their western backers to establish Kurdish nationalist sovereignty in north eastern Syria. In a must-read article titled Romancing Rojava: Rhetoric vs. Reality by Max J. Joseph and Mardean Isaac refer to this as the "Rojava Project".

As I have noted in previous articles, Kurds as an ethnicity are not a homogenous or collective group and therefore should not be painted with a broad stroke paint brush. The focus of this and other articles has primarily been on the actions of Kurdish militias and their political councils not the people themselves, who are located around the world, nor the ones that live in the four countries that some Kurds inaccurately claim historically belongs to them (Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran). Some Kurds do not agree with the aspirations of their political or military leaders. It's important to keep in mind that tribal identities and political interests often supersede a unifying national allegiance.

In Part I of this II part article, Mr. Rahawi explains what

the past, present, and future may look like for Qamishli. Part II will discuss some of these items in more detail along with videos from the demonstration that took place on August 28th against the Kurdish militias latest wave of school closings.

Sarah Abed: It's my understanding, that you are responsible for organizing a demonstration in Al Qamishli in northeastern Syria that took place on August 28th 2018. What prompted the demonstration? What was the outcome?

Nidal Rahawi: In fact, I was not behind the uprising, but the frustration that the people of Hasakah governorate in general and Christians in particular had felt, accumulated over the past six years because of the actions of the so-called (Kurdish) self-administration against citizens at all levels, and their takeover of the state institutions including schools, and shutting them down, was the main motive behind this demonstration, which was called upon by all the people of the city, especially the Christians.

This demonstration was after the Kurdish self-administration conducted an armed attack – through members of the Syriac Union party that works under the cloak of the separatist plan – on the (Private) Christian Church Schools and shut them down. Afterwards, they deployed their gunmen in the yards of schools and churches from the inside on 28/8/2018. And then we the people of Qamishli city with representatives from the Arab Tay tribe arranged a sit-in in front of our churches and schools to get them back from these gangs, and we were led by some clerics and representatives of a number of religious communities such as the Syriacs and Evangelists.

But the initiative of these gangs to use live bullets in our face just because they saw us, despite the presence of clerics at the forefront of our march contributed to turning our sit-in into a real uprising, and we were able to get back our

schools and churches and our inherited right which we have earned through generations.

(I'd like to make a quick note here that multiple local sources had notified me about Mr. Rahawi's brave involvement in organizing the demonstration that took place on August 28th. As you will read later in the interview he references this demonstration again and his involvement) – Sarah Abed

Sarah Abed: What changes has the Kurdish PYD self-administration implemented in the area? Do they have the authority to make these changes and demands? Can you tell us more about the school closures, and what they are trying to achieve? How long has Kurdish self-administration prevented education in Arabic? Are state schools still open?

Nidal Rahawi: The changes implemented by the so-called "self-administration" in all the lands that they have seized, while taking advantage of the state's preoccupation with other fronts, in addition to the endless support that they receive from the US administration, these changes have affected everything: such as changing the names of towns, villages and public utilities, rejecting all the licenses that belonged to citizens, and their properties and their activities, imposing taxes as they like, and even issuing a Military Service document of their own alongside the official requirements and daily life need ... etc. in addition to the issuance of personal status laws that do not match the religious beliefs of the Syrian people.

Of course, all of this was imposed by the administration with the power of arms because it does not have a legitimate authority and the people did not and will not accept them – this is what was proven by the reality on the ground during the last (few) years of the war and until now, and most of their leaders are either Turks or Iraqis and this means that all the decisions they make against the citizens in our region are being issued by non-Syrians. The biggest evidence of this

is the pictures of their leader, Abdullah Ocalan (Turkish), that they are putting in all the institutions they have seized, in addition to the PKK flag they carry everywhere. And even their curriculum, which they want to impose on schools, we note that the main purpose is to Kurdify the region and close any school that does not recognize this curriculum (which is unrecognized by anyone) and therefore we see that they closed all the schools of the state, perhaps there are no more than four or five schools that are still opening their doors within the security blocks of the state authority in the region. This is what the administration has done for three years now. This also applies to the private schools.

Sarah Abed: Can you tell us about the ambush attack that took place on September 8th, 2018 by the Asayish killing 14 Syrian Arab Army soldiers? Who are the Asayish? What do you think about the SDF's apology? Do you think the Syrian government will react?

Nidal Rahawi: On the morning of 8 September, at around 9 am, three cars carrying members of the Syrian Arab Army moved towards a guard post at Zawra, which is located at the entrance to the city (Al Qamishli), in order to replace the members of rotation on this barrier controlled by the State, which was part of a daily routine that has been going on for a long time. But the Asayish forces had ambushed them in one of the streets of the city where the ambush had been set for them since 4:00 am, and they deployed the snipers on the roofs that are overlooking the road that the Army members will pass, and deployed gunmen in the corners of the streets, so they surprised the army members, stopped them and then started to shot at them directly while most of them were still inside their cars. It is not true what Asayish later reported, saying that the patrol was arresting civilians within the control area of the Asayish belonging to the so-called self-management, this lie does not mislead anyone, especially us, the people of the region, because we know that the state can

not enter these areas, and this was clear in the video clips that was photographed by the citizens. The evidence is that the operation took place on a public street that connects the city with the outside, also the pictures and video clips show that they did not have any medium weapons possessed by the murdered members.

Since the decline of the state control over a lot of Syrian territories as a result of the war, the Syrian branch of the PKK (Turkish Workers' Party) began to expand its influence on the Syrian Jazeera (north eastern region) under the pretext of protecting the region from the Takfiri organizations. (They received a lot of support from the Syrian state before they turned on it to the favor of the American plan that suited their aspirations), so then their true intentions towards secession from Syria has appeared, and they began to create new names for the region, such as Rojava and the province of West Kurdistan, for the purpose of Kurdification. They also formed many militias, including the Asayish militia, which they recently changed its name to (Internal security). By the way, even the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces, which were established with purely American support, are also under the control of the PYD, even if they try to cover it with some Arab members, and proof of that, as I said earlier, is the pictures of Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the (Turkish) PKK. This is why, we the people in the region do not buy these apologies from some of their factions every time another faction of them conducts an attack, and that is exactly what was happening when the Asayish were attacking us in Al Wusta neighborhood (which has a Christian majority) we had lost many martyrs as a result of their repeated assaults, while at the same time the rest of their factions were repeating the play of apology.

U.S. Bases Strategically Placed to Prevent Syrian Military From Advancing; Outlining Borders of Kurdistan

Of course, they are taking advantage of the circumstances and the preoccupation of the state, and the American support to

continue these attacks on citizens and their personal properties, and on the state also, realizing that the state can not respond to them at this time because of priorities on other fronts and battles in the rest of the Syrian geography. The words of President Bashar were clear (about two months ago) when he said regarding the Syrian democratic forces "Qasad- SDF": if they do not accept the dialogue, we will restore the entire Syrian territory with the US presence or without it.

Sarah Abed: On September 8th, 2018 the Syriac Patriarch was interviewed on Al Mayadeen, what do you think of his statements?

Nidal Rahawi: Many disagreed about what was said in the speech of the Patriarch in that interview on the subject of the private schools, where despite that he was late to make any statement or position since the attack on schools in 28/8, they saw that his speech was not as important as the event and did not touch on the real injustice that occurred to Christians in general and the Syriac community in particular. But let me go to his interview that was published on 9/14 on the Facebook pages in a meeting with Christian youth in Damascus (as I believe). His speech was clear and unequivocal – stating he categorically rejected the curriculum that the Kurdish so-called Education Authority in the self-administration had imposed on them. He described their movement against the Christian schools as (attack and closure of churches and schools). He declared that the Christians and their churches were and will remain with the Syrian state as they have been since the beginning of the establishment of Syria (he said).

Sarah Abed: Can you describe to us what life was like in Al Qamishli before the war in 2011? How has life changed? Do you think at some point things will return to how they were prior to 2011?

Nidal Rahawi: I remember as a child that there was a description for Qamishli city as (Syrian Paris), and the history of this city is very modern dating back to the 1920s, where the first of its builders and residents were Syriac and Armenians (1923 – almost), thus they were able to paint the city with their culture, folklore, customs and lifestyle, the most important characteristic of which was joy, tolerance and the acceptance of other expatriates later, including Kurds.

Until 2011, the city was full of life in the same style as the big cities, despite its smallness. Everyone shared a very close social life without paying attention to differences of religion, ethnicity or sects. The relations between all of its inhabitants were brotherhood and common living relations, without any party trying to control the other or impose its wishes or dictates on it, especially Syriac, who we all know to be the indigenous people of this region.

Unfortunately, I do not think that things will return to what it was before 2011, even after the state regain control of the region, and this is because of the policy adopted by these gangs that claim democracy, the same policy practiced by the Zionist gangs in Palestine until they were able to pass a UN resolution that recognize them, this policy based on the forcible displacement of indigenous peoples and changing the demographic reality to make it easier for them to Kurdify the region after emptying it from its original inhabitants (Syriac).

The character of the city has now changed completely with a direct American help (and the Americans have several military bases in and around our city), they are not only seeing what these gangs are doing with the citizens and the city, but they directly manage, nurture and support them in all possible ways, including weapons of course.

With all this I do not expect the return of life to the city as it was before 2011.

Sarah Abed: We hear about many Christians fleeing your region, have you thought about leaving? What is your message to those that have fled? Do you think they will return at a later date? Have any returned already in your area? Do most people in your area support President Assad?

Nidal Rahawi: Yes, unfortunately most of the Christians emigrated (forcibly) and this was not because of ISIS, but because of the abuses committed by the so-called self-management against them by various means, including economically besieging them. For me, I did not think about leaving my city and my country, but I still defend our rights in our land and our presence with those who remain here. This is what I see as a duty for every Syrian citizen.

Many immigrants are contacting me, expressing their intention of return and their regret because they have left their homeland, complaining of the humiliation they have suffered in their expatriation, but the situation now and their own circumstances there do not allow them to return. Many of them now come home and return to their new countries, but unfortunately who returned and stayed here are very few, we can count them on the fingers of one hand.

In any case, this war contributed in one way or another to the emergence of the national sense and the spirit of citizenship, the spontaneous and sincere belonging of the homeland by most Syrians, especially the people here in the region and even those of them who left. Not only that, but this war has also established in the hearts of the majority a great affection and support for President Bashar al-Assad, which was already planted in their conscience before the war, he proved to his people that he was a strong and intelligent leader in choosing his alliances, and was able to stand up with our army in the face of this war, in which America and some of its agents conspired with it against us.

Sarah Abed: How has the war impacted you on a personal level?

Has your life been threatened for speaking out and leading a demonstration? What precautions do you have to take to insure your safety? I heard that you had a restaurant and that it was a target of a terrorist act. Can you tell me what happened?

Nidal Rahawi: In fact, the issue of threatening my life by assault, kidnapping attempts, and murder attempts are nothing new or because of my involvement in the recent demonstration. I've been living with these repeated attacks for three years now, since I was an investor of Domino restaurant that is located in Al Wusta neighborhood, and now I'm forced to refrain from doing any business after all of these treacherous attempts against me.

We in Al Wusta neighborhood, did not accept the to surrender our neighborhood or ourselves to the so-called (Kurdish) self-management, but we stayed defending the state authority and our Syrian flag, this is what bothered these separatists, with the Syriac Union Party, which had intended to give us to these gangs, so they started harassing us and annoying us through their militants (Asayish and members of the Syriac Union Party, whose Christian members do not exceed 15). We have often had to arm ourselves to confront them with the help of Sootoro, which was responsible for protecting Christians in Al Wusta neighborhood.

A lot of skirmishes happened between us and them without being able to get our steadfastness, and our insistence that we are Syrians and we will stay with the Syrian state, we lost some martyrs because of the attacks they were carrying out against us.

After they were sure that we will not bow to them, they resorted to other methods like explosive devices which they planted several times between our cafés, our restaurants and our gatherings, one of them was in New Year's Eve (2015/2016), where Christians gathered to celebrate, in that night alone we lost nearly 25 martyrs, and then their terrorist attacks

continued against us civilians and against our businesses, and of course including myself, through several attempts to kill me, specifically targeting my restaurant, this is because I was one of the most prominent resisters to them, and have been exposing their kurdification plans. One time a head of an Asayish patrol, that was trying to attack us, said to us when he saw the large crowd of Christian civilians who had resisted them: "This is Rojava and you will leave, or we will burn Al Wusta with everyone in it." This was the last time they harassed us. After that the terrorist attacks, which lasted for more than six months, began with several bombings – claiming that those who carried out these terrorist operations were ISIS. Of course, this lie did not mislead anyone in the city.

Sarah Abed: Do you think there is a political solution for the current situation in Al Hasakah governorate or will there be a military response from the SAA and the Syrian government?

Nidal Rahawi: I believe that the possibility of a political solution for the situation in the province of Hasaka with these gangs has become very difficult because of their recent practices against the citizens and the state, especially in this last period after the army went to Idlib. Even if the state accepts any kind of political solution, I will still have to ask: How can I, as a citizen like the rest of the citizens and with all that we have suffered of terrorism by these gangs, accept a political solution?

Sarah Abed: In your opinion, what is the solution that Christians and Muslims wish?

Nidal Rahawi: In my opinion, the only solution that citizens can accept (that I'm aware of) is the return of the state and the restoration of its full authority over the facilities, as was the situation before 2011, without giving anything to these separatists except granting permits to the rest of the Kurds to establish their own schools, like other ethnic groups

and sects.

Make Art Not War

Mr. Rahawi risks his life every time he speaks out against the criminal and inhumane actions of Kurdish militias' in his hometown. He has made it a point to explain how their illegal actions have negatively impacted the lives of the majority of Syrians in the region in many different ways. They have essentially made life in one of the most oil and agriculturally rich areas in the country almost unbearable. Unless a person is living under these dire circumstances it's hard to imagine the amount of stress and trauma residents go through on a daily basis.

Mr. Rahawi had mentioned during our phone call that he was an artist, but couldn't go out much to buy supplies due to various reasons including availability and the risk involved in leaving his house.

I underestimated his artistic talent until I looked at his paintings on his Facebook page. It's upsetting to think that such a talented artist can not pursue his passion especially during this depressive and stressful time of war.

A tragedy that not too many people are aware of is that the people being targeted the most whether it be by Kurdish militia's or other terrorist factions in this particular area, are the indigenous people, the original inhabitants: the Assyrians and Arameans. These are the native people whose roots dig deep into the fertile Mesopotamia soil and will not be easily uprooted. Not only have they had to endure coordinated attempts to kick them out of their homes, steal their land, ransack their businesses but they have had to deal with cultural appropriation and historical revisionism which is at the center of the Kurdish imposed curriculum. =

Many of the Syrians I have spoken to in the north eastern region over the past few years, have expressed the same frustration that Mr. Rahawi touched on. At this point, the remaining residents that have weathered the storm fully acknowledge that they need to fight for their right to exist and can only do so if they are united, just as we saw during the demonstration on August 28th, 2018.

In part II of this article, we will expand on the issues brought on by the unrecognized yet strictly imposed Kurdish self-administration curriculum on Kurdish and non-Kurdish children alike in the north eastern region of Syria.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Sarah Abed is an independent journalist and political commentator. Focused on exposing the lies and propaganda in mainstream media news, as it relates to domestic and foreign policy with an emphasis on the Middle East. Contributes to various radio shows, news publications, and forums. For media inquiries please email sarah@sarahabed.com. Her articles can also be seen at The Rabbit Hole. She is a frequent contributor to Global Research

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © Nidal Rahawi and Sarah Abed, Global Research, 2018

Kurdish Militias in Conflict-Ridden Northeastern Syria Turn to Kidnapping, Conscription, ISIS-like Tactics

Source: [Mint Press](#)

Independent journalist Sarah Abed speaks with Aramean Christians about the systematic discrimination and human rights violations they often face in the Kurdish enclaves of northern Syria.

AL QAMISHLI, SYRIA (War Report) – Over the past few weeks, multiple independent on-the-ground sources have provided and corroborated information regarding disturbing events taking place in and around the Al Hassakah governorate in northeastern Syria.

One of the most startling allegations made is that the People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have been arresting and kidnapping men aged 18 to 40 in the Al Hassakah governorate, which includes Al Qamishli and other towns under their control. They are taking these men against their will to Kurdish militia training camps, where they will stay for some time and receive training before being forced to fight in the so-called "New Syrian Army" or "North Syrian Army." I was told that some of these men are being taken to the front lines to fight in Afrin as well.

According to RT, in late December:

Russia's Reconciliation Center for Syria issued a statement accusing the U.S.-led coalition of creating the so-called 'New Syrian Army.' The group comprises remnants of Islamic State

(IS, formerly ISIS), the Al-Nusra Front and others, and is based at a refugee camp in north-east Syria, which is located 20 kilometers from Al-Shaddadah town. Local refugees, returning to areas freed from IS, say the refugee camp has been used by the coalition as a training ground for militants for over six months.”

Surge in kidnapping by Kurdish YPG and Asayesh

Eddie Gaboro Hanna – founder of Patriarchal Relief Care Australia, a group that provides aid to Christian families impacted by wars in Syria and Iraq – stated on January 20th, that a few days prior:

The Kurds started a new operation [whereby] they are taking young Christian boys by force to sign them up for the Kurdish military & send them to the front line at Afrin where a new battle has just commenced with Turkey on the border. ... I’m with Sootoro now. That’s who I stay with – the good Sootoro of course, not the Kurdish one (Sutoro). Pretty much the Christians are treated as second-class citizens [here] in their own land. ... Just like how ISIS has the Islamic tax they have their own Kurdish one. They’ve replaced ISIS.”

In late January I was able to question Eddie in detail about his role and his view of these events:

Sarah Abed (SA): Can you tell me about yourself, your mission, and why you are in Syria?

Eddie Gaboro Hanna (EGH): I’m the founder of Patriarchal Relief Care Australia. For the past five years I’ve been organizing fundraising events and sending funds to our Patriarchal diocese in Damascus, to be dispersed to the most needy Christians suffering in war zones in Syria and Iraq.

I’m now on my second aid mission to Syria and am working on projects such as repairing damaged and bombed homes of displaced families, in hopes they can return to their homes. I’m also aiding over 400 orphans and over 160 widows, as well

as purchasing and supplying medical equipment, allowances and supplies to ill and disabled children.

I made a documentary called “Tears of Another Genocide” to help raise awareness and show the world the persecution and genocide against Christians in the Syrian war.

SA: How long have you been in Syria during this trip?

EGH: I’ve been in Syria for exactly five weeks now.

SA: What areas have you visited during your trip thus far?

EGH: I visited Damascus, Saydnaya, Maloula, Homs and villages in the province of Homs, Sadad, Aleppo, Qamishli, Hassakeh, and Khabour.

SA: Did you receive protection from Sootoro or the SAA? If so in what areas? What type of protection?

EGH: Sootoro, as in the Christian Sootoro not the pro-Kurdish fake Sutoro, picked me up and accommodated me for a week in northern Syria. In every other part of Syria I was in, which were all under the control of the SAA (Syrian Arab Army), I didn’t need any protection – only in the Kurdish (controlled) areas of Northern Syria I needed protection.

SA: Have you received any threats while in Syria?

EGH: No, I haven’t received any threats.

SA: Has your life ever been in danger while in Syria? If so where, why, and by whom?

EGH: Yes, my life was in serious danger New Year’s Eve in the Christian town of Bab Toma. I was outside among thousands in a crowd celebrating New Year’s Eve and at exactly 12:02, just past midnight, the Free Syrian Army started firing mortar shells and one landed approximately 30 to 50 meters from me killing two Christians that night.

SA: What do Syrians want foreigners to know about the war in Syria?

EGH: Syrians want the foreigners to know that it was never a revolution nor a peaceful protest, because in 2009, two years before the war, the terrorists started digging tunnels and stashing massive arms preparing for this brutal war.

SA: What are some of the complaints you've heard from Syrians?

EGH: Non-Kurds are treated as second-class citizens by the Kurds. They are forced to pay special taxes simply because they are non-Kurds. Christian homes have been confiscated. Kurds write on the homes that this property now belongs to the Kurds, exactly like how ISIS writes on homes they take. Syrians complain more about America and the Kurds than anything else. America funded the opposition who started the war and destroyed over a hundred thousand Christian homes, and they've also funded the Kurds, who are oppressing the non-Kurds and even some Kurds who disagree with their political ambitions.

Eddie told me that he had "recorded a video of the writing they wrote on the wall of an Armenian home, exactly like how ISIS writes on the properties of Christians when they confiscate them."

In a more official rendering of the experiences Eddie recounted a World Council of Arameans press release, titled "Kurdish YPG / Asayesh Forces Kidnapped More Aramean Christians in Northeast Syria," which states:

Local Christian sources, fearing for their lives and speaking on condition of anonymity to the World Council of Arameans (WCA), report that they are facing more and more harassments from the Kurdish YPG and Asayesh (security forces).

On Friday, 19 January, the first grave human rights violations of the new year included the abduction of seven Christians –

four Armenians and three Arameans (otherwise known as Syrians). Nevertheless, following intense negotiations, all of them were released except for the 20-year young Aramean, Saliba A., who was snatched in daylight out of his shop in Qamishli by the Asayesh.

After the threat of ISIS, the current wish of the Arameans is for the nationalist Kurds to leave them, their organizations, schools, churches and their self-defense of Sootoro in peace. The Aramean-led Sootoro even includes Arabs, who are also being seized by the Asayesh and enrolled by the YPG.”

Eddie and Qamishli resident Samer, a reliable local source, provided me with further insight into on-the-ground conditions and human rights violations they witnessed in Syria. These included soaring real-estate prices as wealthy Kurds buy up as much property that they can get their hands on, often paying the owners double the property’s value.

Kurds are able to offer more for these properties due to illegal control of Syrian industry – including the oil, transportation, financial sectors – imposing unlawful taxes, and charging fees for everyday things such as renewing licenses or carrying out normal business activities. If one wants to sell a certain good, they are directed to a Kurd who is in charge of collecting a tax on that particular good. They are doing this for almost everything and the local population is suffering as a result.

Eddie went on to say:

YPG, PYD, SDF, MSF, they are all the same. The SDF have aligned themselves with the Free Syrian Army who openly work side by side with Jabhat Al Nusra [Al Qaeda]. The Kurd[ish militias] have recruited ex-ISIS members.”

I explained that when I had written about the connections between Daesh/ISIS and Kurdish militias, some people were shocked by the association, he responded: “It’s not shocking

when you remember the Kurds were the ISIS of 1915, except they slaughtered Christians on a much larger scale then.”

Much of Kurdish culture is borrowed from Assyrians, Armenians, and Aramean culture. In fact, much of the land in Eastern Turkey that the Kurds now claim once belonged to Armenians. It is hardly surprising, then, that the Kurds assisted in the Turkish genocide of Assyrians and the 1915 genocide of Armenians.

Eddie told me that the taxes being charged are similar to what ISIS was forcing civilians to pay in areas it controlled. Samer stated that the prices of food, clothing, etc., are about 25 percent higher than in other governorates in the country, such as in Damascus. Electricity is scarce; people are using generators and have noticed a lot of cars without licence plates. He said it has become a “military society.” Education is also being negatively affected. Samer went on to say “guns are everywhere; people are buying guns like it’s food.”

Eddie Gaboro Hanna told me: “They [the Kurdish militias] are still taking land and property from Christians by force and charging the Christian businesses a tax.” They are also destroying historical sites and claiming Assyrian artifacts to be Kurdish in origin. Historical revisionism is taking place, and the indigenous people are crying out for the world to stop these violations.

An article by reporter Paul Antonopoulos, originally published by the website Fort Russ and republished by AINA, states:

Reports of ethnic cleansing have been consistent in areas controlled by the SDF/YPG, with Arab villages entirely evacuated and re-inhabited by Kurdish settlers.

In the most recent case, ... Tabqa, a city made up primarily of Arab Sunnis and a small Christian Assyrian minority, has seen SDF tyranny continue since they captured the site from ISIS in

May 2017. Houses that were emptied by people escaping the fighting and SDF rule have seen their houses confiscated and taken over by the SDF-controlled Tabqa Council.

The Tabqa Council says that the newly vacant homes are to be given to the families of SDF fighters who have died in battle.”

Kurdish independence has been falsely portrayed as an ethno-religious, democratic, feminist, revolutionary cause by mainstream and even some alternative media outlets. However, these media sources completely ignore facts and realities that contradict the romanticized version being publicly displayed. A point they often disregard is that the Kurds are not the original inhabitants of the lands that they now claim. Assyrians, Aramaeans, Armenians and other Christian minority groups are indigenous to the Levant. Aramaic, the language spoken by Arameans, dates back 3,000 years and is the language that Jesus Christ spoke. Many members of the Syriac Orthodox church still speak Aramaic and it's an important component of their religious liturgy.

Sarah Abed is an independent journalist and political commentator. She covers a broad range of issues relating to the Syrian war, Kurdish issues in Iraq and Syria, as well as U.S policy in the Middle East. The following is an account of Sarah's conversations with Aramean Christians living under Kurdish rule in occupied northern Syria, as well as her personal take on the issues surrounding those conversations. MintPress News could not independently verify the information given by Sarah's sources.

Syria: Kurds claim Russia and SAA have bombed SDF positions in Deir ez-Zor

By Adam Garrie

Source: [The Duran](#)

Local Kurdish language media in Syria have reported that both the Russian Aerospace Forces and the Syrian Arab Air-force have bombed positions of the Kurdish led US proxy militia SDF, in Deir ez-Zor, as originally reported in English by Al-Masdar.

While the reports are not yet confirmed by Syria or Russia, the Russian Defense Ministry recently stated that if the Kurdish led US proxy militia SDF continues to attack Syrian and Russian positions, Russia would not hesitate to target the SDF. Syria has also said that they will target the SDF as an enemy force if they continue to prevent the liberation of Syrian territory by the Syrian Arab Army.

Today's unconfirmed reports from Kurdish media also comes less than 24 hours after the Russian Defense Ministry released photos showing battlefield collusion between ISIS, SDF and US special forces in Deir ez-Zor.

Yesterday, Russia confirmed the death of Lieutenant-General Valeriy Asapov, who was martyred in Deir ez-Zor after his position was shelled by ISIS terrorists.

While the story of Russia and Syria targeting the SDF is still unconfirmed, the story is similar to a previous report wherein, Russia shelled ISIS positions in Deir-ez Zor and hit SDF fighters. This was yet another sign of battle field collusion between the SDF and ISIS. The only way that SDF fighters could have been hit in the previous attack, is if

they were in the same positions as ISIS fighters. Today's events could be a similar scenario.

Russia shines light on the shady anti-Syrian coalition of the US, Kurds and jihadists

Russia has made a statement with only two logical conclusions: Either the US and its Kurdish proxies are lying about the nature of an alleged strike on SDF positions or otherwise, the Kurdish led SDF is embedded among ISIS.

Russia has rejected claims from the United States and their Kurdish led proxy militants SDF that the Russian Aerospace Forces along with the Syrian Arab Air force targeted an SDF position in Deir ez-Zor East of the Euphrates.

Legally speaking, the entire argument is moot as Syria has declared the SDF an illegal group and therefore a legitimate target as Syria works with its legal partners to liberate Syria. Syria has said openly it will fight the SDF if necessary in the battle to liberate Syria from all illegitimate forces. Hence the notion of some sort of agreement between the SDF and Syria, tenuous as it always was, can now be confirmed as 'fake news' or perhaps better put, wishful speculation by pro-Kurdish elements.

However, in practical terms, it highlights the very real possibility that as ISIS continues to dwindle as a formidable military force, Syria and Kurdish militants may very likely come into increasingly intense conflicts in a 'rush for territory' in formerly ISIS occupied parts of what is legal Syrian territory, even as Russia seeks to prevent further clashes without directly interfering in Syrian affairs. In this sense Russia's ability to stop such clashes is self-limiting due to Russia's respect for the realities of international law. [More](#)

Syria: Who is behind Kurds claim for autonomy on Syrian land?

By Sarah Abed

Source: [Global Research](#)

The Kurds are the largest group of nomadic people in the world that have remained stateless since the beginning of time. This fact has allowed Western powers to use the “stateless” plight of the Kurdish people as a tool to divide, destabilize and conquer Iraq and Syria, where colonial oil and gas interests run deep.

The U.S.-led coalition of war criminals is using elements of Syria’s Kurdish population to achieve its goal of destroying the non-belligerent, democratic country of Syria, led by its popular, democratically-elected President Bashar al-Assad.

Washington seeks to create sectarianism and ethnic divides in a country that, prior to the Western-launched war, had neither.

However, Kurdologists reject this characterization because it does not fit into their account of historical events that attributes a state to them at one point in time. Their estimated population is 30 million, according to most demographic sources. They also reject the idea that they are being used as pawns.

Responding to a question about where the autonomous administration would “draw the line” on U.S. support and the support of other superpowers, the co-leader of the Syrian

Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), Salih Muslim Muhammad, stated

“Our guarantee is our mindset. It depends on how much we educate and organize our people. If we defend our morals and ideology, then bigger powers cannot use us as pawns.”

The Sykes-Picot agreement, officially known as the Asia Minor Agreement, was a secret 1916 agreement between the United Kingdom and France, to which the Russian Empire assented. It set the borders for countries like Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, but the Kurds held little or no influence. The main purpose of the agreement for the French and British was to bolster their own influence and power in the region. The Kurds have made the argument that they were promised land at the time, but were then cut out of the deal at the last minute.

Kurdish history in the 20th century is marked by a rising sense of Kurdish nationhood focused on the goal of establishing an independent Kurdistan in accordance with the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920. Countries like Armenia, Iraq, and Syria were able to achieve statehood, but the prospective Kurdistan was in the way of the newly founded state of Turkey, established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The state of Kurdistan has simply never existed.

The only areas in the Middle East where the Kurds were able to establish some semblance of legal autonomy are the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq – where minorities are well-protected under new laws– and Israel.

As a result of the disparity between areas of Kurdish settlement and the political and administrative boundaries of the region, a general agreement among Kurds could not be reached regarding borders.

However, the Treaty of Sèvres was not implemented and was superseded by the Treaty of Lausanne. The current Iraq-Turkey border was agreed upon in July 1926.

While Article 63 of the Treaty of Sevres explicitly granted full safeguards and protections to the Assyro-Chaldean minority, this reference was dropped in the Treaty of Lausanne.

It's worth noting that the Iraqi Kurds are situated on the country's oil-rich fields. Syria's Hasakah province – which the Kurds are illegally claiming as their territory and which includes their self-appointed capital, Al Qamishli – also contains some of Syria's most valuable oil fields. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the U.S. is putting its money on the Kurds.

Attempts to rewrite geographic history

An estimated 30 million Kurds reside primarily in mountainous regions of present-day Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. They remain the world's largest nomadic population without a sovereign state. The Kurds are not monolithic, however, and tribal identities and political interests often supersede a unifying national allegiance.

Some Kurds, particularly those who have migrated to urban centers, such as Istanbul, Damascus, and Tehran, have integrated and assimilated, while many who remain in their ancestral lands maintain a strong sense of a distinctly Kurdish identity.

A Kurdish diaspora of an estimated two million people is concentrated primarily in Europe, with over a million in Germany alone.

These migratory wanderers never possessed their own country at any point in their history but were always part of a larger country or empire that took them in and provided them refuge.

The version of events that the Kurds present is in staunch contrast with the account that is supported by most historians. This has proven to be a point of contention

between the Kurds and the citizens of other countries.

The Kurds claim to have been conquered and occupied throughout their history, for instance.

Here is an example of their attempt to rewrite history to fit their narrative:

“The Kurdish region has seen a long list of invaders and conquerors: Ancient Persians from the east, Alexander the Great from the west, Muslim Arabs in the 7th Century from the south, Seljuk Turks in the 11th Century from the east, the Mongols in the 13th Century from the east, medieval Persians from the east and the Ottoman Turks from the north in the 16th Century and most recently, the United States in its 2003 invasion of Iraq.”

Sarah Abed is an independent journalist and political commentator. Focused on exposing the lies and propaganda in mainstream media news, as it relates to domestic and foreign policy with an emphasis on the Middle East. Contributed to various radio shows, news publications and spoken at forums. For media inquiries please email sarahabed84@gmail.com.

[Why A Kurdish Enclave in Syria Is a Very Bad Idea](#)

[Kurdish PKK and YPG's Hidden Notorious Crimes: Kidnapping, Murder, and Narcotics Trafficking](#)

[A History of Violence: Towards a US Sponsored Kurdistan in Syria](#)
