



## **Afrin Under Occupation (258):**

### **The Death of a civilian, Drying up of the Afrin River, Arbitrary Arrests, Continuation of Turkification, Beatings of Civilians, Death Threats, Stealing of an elderly woman Imposition of Royalties**

**B**y spreading the Turkish language and culture among all sectors of the local societies by a variety of ways, especially among children, Turkish occupation authorities openly intend to Turkify northern Syria. That is exactly what Sharaf Atish, head of the Yunus Emre Institute, expressed in his speech during the inauguration of the institute's branch in Al-Bab on 25/08/2023 when he said, "the new campaign aim at teaching the Turkish language and integrating 300,000 children into the Turkish culture. We have started a Turkish mobilization campaign throughout the region." It's worth saying that it has recently opened three new branches of the institute in (Al-Bab, Jarabulus, and Afrin).

#### **The current developments include the following:**

##### **= Killing of a Civilian:**

After staying for several days in ICU at Ibn Sina Hospital in Afrin due to the falling of a shell on his house in Ghazawiya-Shirawa on 22/08/2023, the civilian Ibrahim Ali Ali, also known as Biro Shirawa, passed away on 28/08/2023.

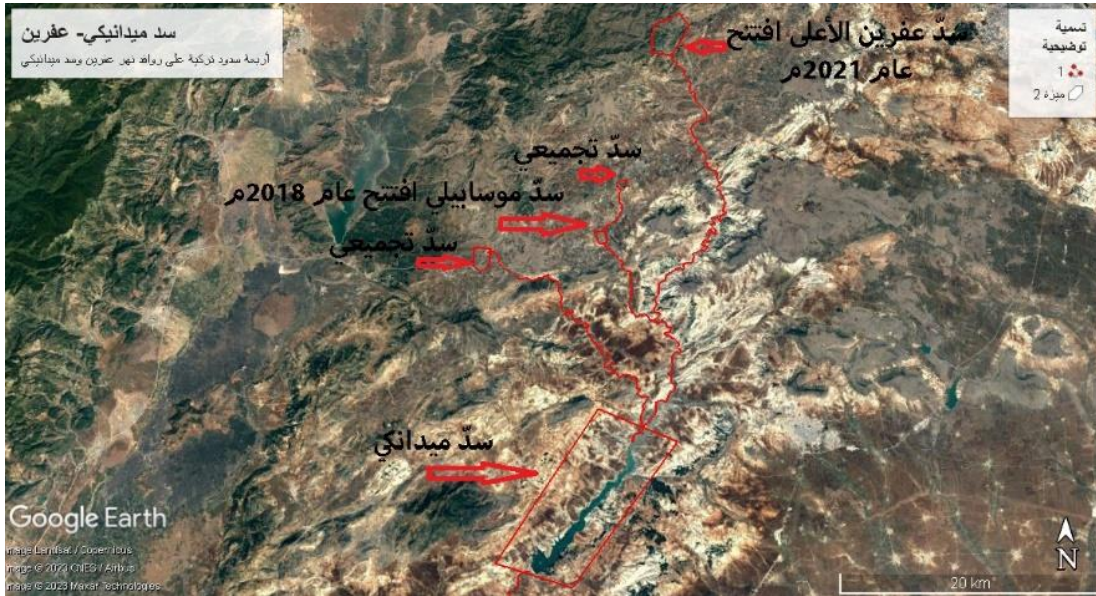


##### **= Drying of the Afrin River:**

With a length of about 35 km from Burj Abdalo Dam up to the village of Molla Khalila, on the Turkish border to the west, Afrin River is going this summer through the worst condition ever. It has almost completely dried up. The remaining water that reaches this dam is being directed through an irrigation channel, controlled by the militias of Hamza Division, for irrigating the lands that have been seized and leased by them. This has caused a great damage in terms of low production and deterioration of some fruit fields, as well as high costs of irrigation from artesian wells 90% of which have dried up. Therefore, many farmers are forced to dig sea wells at a depth of more than 350 meters.



Despite the fact that groundwater level has decreased, and precipitation percentage has decreased, yet the Turkish authorities, are also responsible for this bad situation. On the one hand, they have built four dams on the tributaries of the Afrin River inside the Turkish territory (the Musabali Dam opened in 2018, the Afrin Upper Dam opened in 2021, an embankment bank on a tributary of the Afrin River, and another dam on the Sabunsi River). Therefore, water supply from the outflow basin decreased in Maydanki Dam (April 17 Dam). On the other hand, the Turkish coordinator supervising the dam opened an excessive flow during the three last winter seasons, shortly after the opening of the Reyhanli / Hatay Dam - the mouth of the river in October 2020, whose storage capacity reaches up to 900 million cubic meters, and also under the pretext of February 6 earthquake.



According to a private source, the regular storage volume of Maidanki Dam (190 million cubic meters) is at the level of 335 meters, and the minimum storage volume of (12.5 million cubic meters) is at the level of 298 meters, while the current level is 322 meters, and the minimum level for the work of the dam is 320 meters.

Due to the lack of maintenance of irrigation pipe networks and canals and their equipment, which have been subject to theft and vandalism, there is a large amount of water wasted. There is also no specialized department to supervise irrigation projects.

In addition, the irrigation stations of Gamruk, Tal Taweel/Aster, Jomka and Bablit are out of service, with nothing left but empty buildings due to thefts. Burj Abdalo station that was renovated and operated at the



expense of the residents of the village and its surroundings in previous years, has almost stopped working this year. The occupation authorities have not taken any initiative to re-establish the damage and lost infrastructure from Maidanki Dam and other irrigation facilities.

It is noteworthy that the Local Council of Afrin announced on its Facebook page on 28/08/2023 that the agricultural police had fined a number of farmers "who did not adhere to the irrigation water program". A local source confirmed that Khalil Darwish, Jihad Hassan, Fadi Hassan, Hassan Nabi Einat from Burj Abdalo village were fined TL2000 for drawing water from the canal to irrigate their fields! At a time when the militias control the irrigation operations in their favour.



#### = Arbitrary Arrests:

- On their way back to home from displacement the civilians Darwish Abdul Manan Habib, 55, his wife Ramzia Hussein Habib, 50, their minor son Dewar, 14, and the minor Rashid Nazmi Kolin Habib, 16, from the village of Qurneh-Bulbul, were arrested at the beginning of last August by the militias of the Military Police in Azaz on charges of having relations with the former Autonomous Administration. They were handed over to Afrin Police. Ramzia was released after four days and the minor Rashid after two weeks of their detention. A financial ransom was imposed on both of them. Later, Dewar was released while Darwish is still under arbitrary detention.

- On 05/08/2023, the civilian Mustafa Saeed Tobal, 42, from the village of "Bililko" - Rajo, was arrested for two days by the Military Police of Rajo shortly after his return from displacement to his home. He was released after imposing a fine on him.

- On August 26, 2023, on the way back to their homes, the occupation authorities in the town of Mare' arrested the two females Malek Batal, 26, and Nareen Kanaan, 24, along with their children. Their husbands, Anwar Muhammad Ali Muslim 32 and Salah Ali Battal, 27, who previously resided in their village, Maska-Rajo were also arrested, even though they brought two approval documents from the Military Police of Rajo for the return of their families. Nareen, Salah's wife and children, were released. The other three are still under detention.

#### = Inauguration of the "Yunus Emre" Institute:

In conjunction with the Turkish celebration of Victory Day, August 30, Yunus Emre Institute branch was formally opened in the city of Afrin. The institute had been initially opened on 22/09/2021; in the building of the Industrial High School, which was targeted by Turkish bombing in mid-March 2018, and the militias stole all of its equipment, machinery and contents. It was renovated and furnished so that the Turkish flag could be raised on it and in its halls.



It was opened with an official Turkish presence (Sherif Atish, head of the institute, Yusuf Turan, deputy governor of Hatay, Fikret Çetnak, coordinator of the "safe zone" in Syria, Mahmoud Çınar, dean of the Faculty of Education in Afrin - Gaziantep University, Murad Kondakji, commander of the Afrin police), deputy of the local council of Afrin, and others with wide Turkish media coverage.

It is noteworthy that the institute commenced its activities in 2009, and it has got around 63 centers all over the world.

#### = Other violations:

- On August 22, 2023, a settler, close to the militants of Samarkand Brigade, from Jabal Al-Zawiya / Idlib insulted and threatened the two brothers, Hussein, 42, and Dijwar Muhammad Mahmoud, 35, from the town of "Kafar Safra- Jindires tried to hit them and fired live bullets between their legs and in the air. The fight broke out as the two brothers asked the settler to move his tent and birds net that had been put up within their cucumbers field, as it harms their harvest and hinders the working women. The two brothers were forced to file a complaint with the security official of Samarkand, who prevented them from complaining to the military police and promised to hold the aggressor accountable, but without keeping his promise!

-The militias of the Sultan Suleiman Shah Division - Al-Amshat have lately imposed various different royalties on the villagers of Barka" - Mapta / Maabatli as follows: 50 dollars for each walnut tree, 600 dollars for the olive fields belonging to two members of the Mastanaki family as well as royalties on the season of sumac.

- On the night of Wednesday 30/08/2023, gunmen broke into the house of the widow of Bakr Youssef Shashu in the village of Darkir, Mapta / Maabatli. After they drugged her, they messed around the house and stole what they could. The elderly woman, aged 70, dared not to disclose the stolen goods or file a

complaint, for fear of a more severe punishment. The Hamza Division militias that control the village did not move a finger.

We wonder how it comes that a country imposes its culture and language through various and intensive activities and with official sovereign cover on a part of another country and without the approval of its official government, and fights the language and culture of its indigenous population, and the presence and still not an occupying state, by society international?!

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**Attachments:**

- The civilian martyr "Ibrahim Ali Ali".
- The drying up of the Afrin River, North Press Agency, 17/8/2023.
- Four Turkish dams on the Afrin River and its tributaries, the spillover basin of the Midanki Dam.
- "The office of the police officer in the local council in Afrin" violated a number of farmers in the village of "Burj Abdalo"- Sherwa, 28/8/2023.
- An unprecedented decrease in the water level in the dam of the "Burj Abdalo" village and the only and exclusive irrigation canal, 28/8/2023 AD.
- Yunus Emre Institute branch, the buildings of the "Blacksmithing and Mechanics" department - the industrial school in Al-Mahmudiyah district.

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*\* Translated from Arabic by Europe's Organization of the Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria (Yekiti)*