



Afrin Under Occupation (294):

The late Rashid Hamo's house has been turned into a prison, an elderly woman, her son-in-law, and her minor grandchild have been assaulted, "Osama Rahal" is extorting money, olive trees are being cut down and fires are breaking out in the forests, there are clashes between armed groups and Turkish forces, as well as infighting among militias

*Arabic to English Translation**

The flag of any country is established in its constitution and regulated by law; it is raised throughout its territory and on all official institutions. Any attack on the flag results in punishment for the perpetrator. However, if a flag is imposed by force of arms on the territory of another country without legal cover, its very raising is considered an attack on the sovereignty and dignity of the concerned state, and it is the right of its people to reject it. This is exemplified by Turkey imposing its flag on parts of Syrian territory forcefully and without legal justification (such as occupation law), giving it an Islamic dimension and justifying its imposition with Ottoman historical pretexts, and issuing orders to kill anyone who touches it.

The following are facts about the prevailing conditions:

= Village of "Houbko" and the home of the late politician Rashid Hamo:



Located /2/ km west of Raju town, Houbko comprises /27/ houses. The original Kurdish residents fled during the attack on the region in January 2018, and only seven families have returned. Twenty families of settlers have been placed there by the militia "Northern Brigade," led by "Abu Abdullah al-Zarba" from Zarba town in southern Aleppo countryside, which now controls the village. Around thirty settler families live in tents at the village junction. The militia has stolen most household contents and seized the olive and grape fields of absent owners or imposed high taxes on caretakers. They also took over /20/ houses, including the home of **the late Kurdish politician Rashid Hamo**, one of the founders of the first Kurdish political organization in Syria in 1957, converting it into a **private prison**. Before the Turkish occupation, this house was a symbol of political struggle, a hub for spreading knowledge, a destination for hundreds of interested and visitors, and a venue for national events, as "Hamo and his wife Khadija" lived and were buried there, along with their eldest son Kadri Jan.



What kind of "revolutionaries" are they, under the cover of the Syrian Coalition – The Brotherhood, occupying a civilian house who was a politician who opposed ignorance, tyranny, and the Baath regimes. He was a fighter who defended toilers, democracy, and the just Kurdish cause for more than sixty years. He was thrown in prison and pursued by the securities devices..... instead of preserving the house and protecting its symbolism.

= Assault on an elderly Kurdish woman, her grandson, and son-in-law:

On June 23, 2024, Abu Imran, a commander at the "Ahrar al-Sharqiya" checkpoint, severely beat "**Mohammed Mustafa son of Ali**" from the village of "Jalo" - Raju, who was forced with his wife to temporarily stay with his elderly mother-in-law, "Zainab Sheikho Mustafa /85/ years old," in the village of Kura - Raju. He also threatened and insulted the villagers. When the elderly woman intervened, she was beaten and pushed, causing a stroke due to a brain hemorrhage according to a medical report. She was rushed to Raju Hospital and then to Afrin City, where her condition remains unstable.

This incident was triggered by "Abu Imran," along with "Abu Mamdouh, Abu Waddah/the mosque muezzin" (all from Ghouta Damascus and former members of the Army of Islam militia), and "Alaa Marzouk Abu Khaled," responsible for security studies at "Ahrar al-Sharqiya" militias, residing in the village of "Koura," kidnapping the 14-year-old "**Ahmed Mohammed Mustafa,**" the elderly woman's only resident grandchild, accusing him of immoral conduct for delivering olive oil to "Abu Imran's wife - Ne'ma," they also kidnapped his relative, "**Forqan Mohammed Brimo /40/ years old,**" accusing him of speaking about "Ne'ma". They demanded a \$2,000 ransom for each but refused to pay due to their innocence. Consequently, they were handed over to the "civil police" militia in Raju and transferred to Marateh Central Prison in Afrin with fabricated charges.

Two days after attacking the elderly woman and her son in-law, Abu Imran, Abu Mamdouh, and Abu Waddah raided the home of "Mohammed Ali Khilfan /43/ years old" in "Kura," threatening to kill him, accusing him of speaking ill of Abu Imran's wife. They kidnapped Khilfan, demanded a \$2,000 ransom, and he remains detained.



During the attack on the elderly woman, some villagers contacted "Ahrar al-Sharqiya" and the "civil police" in Raju for intervention, to no avail. When the "local council member Hanif Brimo", who helped the injured woman, complained, the "civil police" detained him for hours.

= Extortions by "Osama Rahhal":



"Osama Rahhal, known as Abu Hassan Obama," from Ma'alli village, Jabal al-Zawiya - Idlib, and deputy to "Abdul Karim Jamal Qassoum," the leader of the "112th Brigade" militia, sent a member to "Aref Ahmed Dahdo /63/ years old" in "Badino" town - Raju on July 1, 2024, demanding a \$50 extortion fee for his newly purchased car under the pretext of road repairs. When he refused to pay, he was summoned, detained, and his brothers had to pay a \$300 ransom for his release.

Rahhal recently repaired the asphalt roads in the town and nearby "Dimilyo" village, particularly the road to an olive press he established in a confiscated building belonging to the forcibly migrant "Habash Habash Battal" from the village of "Dimilyo". This was funded by Kurdish families only, exempting Arab and Turkmen settlers who have cars and vehicles many times the ones owned by the Kurds and who have interests (Gas station, Bakery, Exchange offices, Shops). Rahhal imposed a \$50 fee on each Kurdish family with a vehicle and \$500 on each olive press owner, collecting approximately \$16,000 from Badino and \$8,000 from Dimliyo.

A month ago, Rahhal severely beat a young barber and detained four other young men for days under the pretext of consuming alcohol, although some of his men openly drink it.

Since 2018, Rahhal has forcibly seized many Kurdish properties in Badino, including (a home and shops for the late "Mustafa Nashat Mustafa" for his family, a fuel station for "Rashid Hassan Dahdo" despite his presence, an olive press building for "Ghassan Omar Fawzi Dahdo," and a poultry building for the late "Mustafa Abdo Jafar" despite the presence of two of his children) in the town of Badino. He controls approximately 7,000 olive trees from "Khazianeh, Shitko, and Habo" villages in Mobato/Mabatli, employing local residents with their vehicles in the service of the fields stolen by him, without pay and owning livestock. Much more remains undisclosed.

= Cutting olive trees:

Despite the current lack of need for heating fuel and the olive trees bearing fruit, which is the primary source of income for their owners, an armed group cut down ten large olive trees south of the "Habo" village cemetery in Mobato/Mabatli. These belonged to "Ramzi Rashid Ageed" from the village.

= Forest Fires:

Following news from the "Syrian Civil Defense," those interested can observe the extent of the forest fires consuming the woodlands in the Afrin area, which we have repeatedly confirmed are deliberately set for various reasons. On July 1, 2024, the "Civil Defense" reported extinguishing three fires in the forests of Afrin's rural areas: Maabatli, Meydan Akbas, and Badino/Badinli. Fires were also extinguished in the "Haj

Hasanli/Haj hassna forest in Jenderes, which reignited on Thursday, July 4, 2024, and continue to burn. Previous fires occurred on June 27-28, 2024. Published images reveal the damage and the previously cut tree trunks by militias for logging and trade purposes.



Additionally, according to a local source, fires reignited at multiple points in the **Hawar Mountain** forest in Raju on the evening of Wednesday, July 3, 2024. Previous large fires occurred from June 3-6, 2024, and on June 15, 2024.

= Protests and Clashes:

In response to statements by Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Feedan and President Erdogan regarding reconciliation and normalization with the Syrian regime, the opening of the Abu Zandin crossing in Al-Bab city, and attacks by Turks on Syrian refugees in Kayseri, among other incidents, protest gatherings of armed men and settlers took place in Afrin city and the centers of Jenderes and Raju on July 1. They chanted anti-Turkey slogans and lowered the Turkish flag in several locations and major checkpoints. This escalated to an exchange of gunfire between guards (Turkish soldiers and elements of the civil police militia) at the old Saray building—the Turkish governor's headquarters—and the protesters, where a Turkish armored vehicle targeted them with heavy machine gun fire, resulting in more than /10/ deaths and dozens of injuries. Significant material damage to civilian properties, including homes, shops, and cars, also occurred.



In the following days, the "Military Police in Afrin," established and directly supervised by Turkish intelligence, along with the most loyal Turkish militias, the Joint Forces militias (The "Hamza Division" and the "Sultan Suleiman Shah Division - Al-Amshat"), strengthened their control over the city and its districts. The three entities launched a campaign of security pursuits and arrests against protest participants, re-raised the Turkish flag everywhere, and issued stern warnings to anyone who touches it. The "Joint Forces" gained more influence, while a heavily armed convoy from the "77th Division," loyal to "Hayat Tahrir al-Sham," entered Jenderes city in coordination with the "Joint Forces," claiming to "restore order in the city".



= Chaos and Outlaw:

- On June 30, 2024, security tensions rose in the village of "Meteeno" - Sharra/Sharan due to a conflict between the "Sultan Murad Division" militias and a group of settlers from the city of Rastan - Homs. This was after elements at a division checkpoint at the village junction severely beat a man and his child from the settlers for stealing sumac from land seized by the division. Their relatives called in armed reinforcements from Rastan, demanding accountability for the checkpoint elements.

- On June 30, 2024, clashes occurred in **the industrial area** of Afrin city between the "Ahrar al-Sham" militias and armed men from the town of Hayan in northern Aleppo countryside, resulting in five injuries of varying severity, damage to a military police vehicle, and civilian cars. This tension expanded following an assault by several "Ahrar al-Sham" members on the civilian "Ahmed," an Afrin local, in his car electrical repair shop, alleging he was causing loud noises. Men from Hayan intervened in the dispute.

It is natural for the flag to be respected as a symbol of the state by its citizens and others as long as it is raised in its appropriate and natural place. However, it will certainly be mistreated if it symbolizes aggression against other peoples. Mercenaries cannot protect the values and symbols of a state and might turn against it whenever their mercenary interests change. Therefore, the Turkish army should withdraw from Syria to its international borders to keep the Turkish flag away from rejection and mistreatment.

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Media Office-Afrin
Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria (Yekiti)

Images:

- The late Kurdish politician, "Rashid Hamo," in front of his home in the village of "Houbko" in Raju district, and the three graves in his yard.

- "Abu Abdullah al-Zarba," leader of the "Northern Brigade" militia.
- "Abu Imran, Alaa Marzouq, Abu Mamdouh," involved in the assault on the elderly Kurdish woman "Zainab Sheikho Mustafa," her son-in-law, and her grandson in the village of "Kaira" in Raju district.
- Osama Rahhal, deputy leader of the "112th Brigade" militia, in the town of "Badino" on October 27, 2018.
- Fires in the forest of the village "Haj Hassna" in Jenderes.
- Clashes in front of the old Saray building—the Turkish governor's headquarters in Afrin city.
- The "77th Division" militia's convoy entering the village of Jenderes.

** Under the supervision of the European Organization of the Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria (Yekîti).*