



Afrin Under Occupation (297):

Targeting of civilians, widespread and deliberate forest fires, arbitrary arrests, violations by the "112" militia, infighting, and transgressions

*Arabic to English Translation**

On Wednesday, July 17, **Mustafa Masatli**, the governor of Turkey's Hatay province, chaired a meeting of local council leaders and Turkish coordinators in the Afrin region. His deputies and security officials attended the meeting, and Masatli had armed protection even inside the meeting room of the local council building in Afrin. According to the council, the meeting "discussed several important issues concerning the region, with a focus on service and health realities and the challenges facing operations," indicating Turkey's exercise of authority as **an occupying state**, without acknowledging this status under international law, and without addressing the protection of forests and vegetation in Afrin on the meeting's agenda!



The following are facts about the prevailing situation:

= Targeting Civilians:

For more than six years, Turkish occupation forces and their Syrian militias have continued to bombard villages, towns, and cities in northern rural Aleppo under Syrian army control, which are crowded with displaced people from Afrin. These include areas that belong to the Afrin region. Civilians, homes, and public facilities are targeted, as seen in the following incidents:

- On the morning of Wednesday, July 31, 2024, the village of "Beineh" – Sheirawa was shelled, seriously injuring "95-year-old **Abdul Rahim Khaki Abdul Ghubari** and his "42-year-old son, **Muhammad Abdul Rahim Abdi Al-Ghubari**. They were transferred to Fafin Hospital for treatment, and their home sustained significant damage.



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- On the morning of Friday, August 9, 2024, the vicinity of the "Al-Awda" camp for Afrin IDPs near the village of "Kashtaar" – Sharra/Sharran was shelled, injuring "15-year-old **Lilav Ali Bakr**" from the village of "Muiskeh" – Raju.



= Forest Fires:

According to the Syrian Civil Defense, **/55/ forest fires** occurred in July 2024; most of these were within the Afrin region, as reported. Field sources and social media posts indicate that widespread fires have been deliberately set in Afrin's natural and artificial forests, coinciding with ongoing deforestation activities, deliberately and with no effort made by Turkish occupation authorities, their allied militias, or the interim government to extinguish them—except for limited contributions from the Syrian Civil Defense. Large swaths of forests and woodlands have been turned into barren land, while some locals struggled to extinguish what fires they could, calling for the rescue of forests, olive groves, and fig, cherry, and pistachio orchards!

Notable fires include:

- Wednesday, August 7, 2024, in the "**Qazqli**" forest – Jenderes, near a settler village.
- Monday, August 5, 2024, in the Hawar Mountain woods near the village of "**Qarah Goul/Yabiseh**" – Bulbul.
- The night of August 4, 2024, in a forest near the town of "**Kafr Safra**" – Jenderes.
- The evening of Friday, August 2, 2024, in a forest near the village of "**Bakhja/Baqjeh**" – Bulbul.



- Monday, July 29, 2024, two forest fires in Bulbul subdistrict and the village of "**Muiskeh/Mosia**" – Raju.
- Sunday, July 28, 2024, a fire in the "Shamshek" woods near the village of "**Deirswan**" – Sharra/Sharran.
- July 28, 2024, three fires in forested areas in the Raju countryside.
- July 28, 2024, a fire in the woods of the village of "**Muiskeh/Miskeh**" – Raju.
- The evening of Sunday, July 28, 2024, a fire on the mountain of the village of "**Darwish/Al-Darwishiyah**" – Raju.
- July 27 and, 28, 2024, in the mountains of the village of "**Shingeileh**" – Bulbul.
- Saturday, July 27, 2024, in a forest near the village of "**Arandeh**" – Shiyeh/Sheikh al-Hadid.



= Arbitrary Arrests:

Occupation authorities have arrested:

- More than a month ago, the citizen "**Bahouz Adham Ibrahim/Hamkaleh family**, /27/ years old," from the village of "Tilifeh" west of Afrin, on charges of ties to the previous self-administration. The arrest was carried out by the "military police in Afrin" after he returned to the village from the displacement area of al-Shahba in northern Aleppo. He was transferred to the central prison in Morotah.

= Violations by the "112th Brigade":

- A week ago, "**Absi al-Hamad/Abbas**," one of the leaders of the "112th Brigade" militia, opened a wholesale fruit and vegetable store in the town of "Badino" – Raju and prevents shop owners in the town and the neighboring village of "Dimilyo" from going to the wholesale markets in Raju and Afrin, forcing them to buy from him.

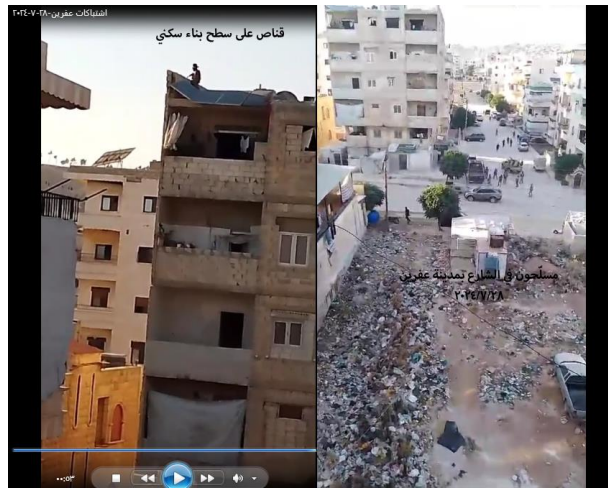
- Citing insufficient levies imposed on Kurdish residents of Badino town and "Dimilyo" village totaling \$24,000 USD last June for road repairs, "**Osama Rahal, nicknamed Abu Hassan Obama**," the deputy leader of the "112th Brigade," imposed a new levy of /1,000/ Turkish liras on each of the Kurdish shop and vehicle owners in "Badino and Dimilyo," and for the third time /500/ Turkish liras on each one, amounting to around /600,000 Turkish liras across the last two rounds= approximately \$18,000 USD/. These sums far exceed the actual cost of repairs, and no similar contributions were imposed on Arabs settlers, who have used these roads for over six years and own more shops and vehicles than the Kurds.



- Members of the "112th Brigade" occupying homes in "Badino" since 2018 refuse to vacate and return them to their rightful owners who have returned to their homes. The owners, "**Ahmed Muhammad Ebesh/aka Hajji** for a year, **Abdul Latif Bakr Shaqino** for three months, and "**Izzat Rashkeilo** for two months," have been forced to live with relatives.

= Chaos and Outlaw:

- On the evening of Sunday, July 28, 2024, clashes erupted between two groups from the "Hamzat Division" militia, led by "**Abu Malik Al-Dairi**" and "**Abu Yusuf Mayadin**," both from Deir ez-Zor province, over a piece of seized land near the new western highway in Afrin city. The fighting resulted in the injury of three civilians from the settlers, including two children. The groups deployed snipers on residential rooftops and used heavy machine guns.



- On June 3, 2024, clashes occurred between "Abu Malik al-Dairi/Hamzat" and "Mustafa al-Kahm" from the "Ahrar al-Sharqiya" militia at the same location in Afrin city, over land belonging to a Kurdish citizen. More than /20/ settlers were killed or injured, including civilians, with significant material damage in the city, causing panic and chaos. The leaders of "Hamzat and Sharqiya" reconciled days later, "Abu Malik Al-Dairi" returned to his post, and "Mustafa al-Kahm" was released on June 23, 2024, after being detained by the "military police," without anyone being held accountable for the crimes committed, leaving the rights of the injured and the families of the deceased unaddressed.



- On the evening of Saturday, August 3, 2024, clashes broke out between two groups of settlers residing in the forest camp of the village of "Qatma" – Sharra/Sharran, following a dispute between two people over a shepherd dog. The "military police in Afrin" intervened to end the conflict, during which some individuals were shot.



= Other Violations:

- On the night of Saturday, July 27, 2024, a group of armed men set fire to the home of "Aref Haj Yusuf son of Yusuf" in the village of "Maraskeh" – Sharra/Sharran, controlled by joint militias (Amshat and

Hamzat), causing significant material damage. The act was committed while Aref and his wife were forced to sleep with his elderly father, who lives alone, and the home had been targeted for theft twice before.

- Three months ago, the wife and mother of the detainee "**Bahouz Adham Ibrahim**" returned to their village "Tilifeh" west of Afrin, demanding the return of their home, but the "Hamzat Division" militia from the Mawali tribe, who have occupied it and two other family homes since 2018, refuse to vacate.

- Recently, the "Hamzat Division" militia, which controls the village of "Abla" – Bulbul, detained the elderly "**Muhammad Walu son of Muhammad Sheikhwalik** - aka Khoja" for three days, demanding a \$500 USD ransom for his release because he failed to provide a water tank with his tractor as they had requested, due to being occupied with his work.

These incidents highlight the extent of the impunity enjoyed by the leaders and members of the Turkish-backed "Syrian National Army" militias under the protection and support of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, which uses these groups to further its various agendas and objectives.

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Images:

- Photos of "Farhad Haj Abdo son of Haidar," bedridden in "Mateeno" village, Shara/Sharran area, July 27, 2024.
- Photos of the armed robbery victim "Abdel Aziz Zakaria Khilo."
- Photos of forest fires in the mountains between the villages of "Adamo, Meydan Ekbes, Aleebiskeh, Bileelko, Seimalk-Meydono, to the mountains of "Jalo" village in the south," Raju area, July 23-25, 2024.
- Photos of forest fires in "Baeifeh" mountain and its surroundings, between the villages of "Meydono, Kuisa, Bneirka, and Shingeileh" in Raju area, July 27, 2024.
- Photos of olive tree cutting in fields belonging to "Qatma" village in the Shara/Sharran area, from a video published on July 26, 2024, by the media activist Ahmad Al-Barhou.

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