



Afrin Under Occupation (298):

New royalties demands by "Abu Amsha," arbitrary arrests, new fires in forests and olive fields, military exercises in olive fields and villages, shelling, clashes, and a car bombing

*Arabic to English Translation**

"Abu Amsha," his brothers, and his militia continue their crimes against the Kurds and their region without any moral, religious, political, or military restraint. They act with impunity, without fear of accountability, and without concern for American sanctions, as long as they feel protected by Turkey's intelligence services, government, and particularly the MHP nationalist movement.



The following are facts about the prevailing conditions:

=Abu Amsha's Royalties:

Every month, the so-called "**Mohammad Al-Jassim/Abu Amsha**," leader of the "Sultan Suleiman Shah Brigade" militia, issues decrees to collect money from the remaining Kurdish residents of villages and towns under his control through force of arms. On the night of Tuesday, August 13, 2024, a patrol of masked gunmen in two vehicles went from house to house in the village of "Heikejeh"- Jenderes, imposing a levy of \$100 USD on each family \$200 USD on each business, and \$300-500 USD on each artesian well, to be paid within an hour. Most residents immediately complied out of fear of punishment. Abu Amsha's brothers similarly imposed these levies on residents of other villages between August 9-12, 2024.

This extortion campaign targeted the entire Shiyeh/Sheikh Al-Hadid subdistrict, including the villages of "Ashkan Gharbi, Marwaniya Tahtani and Foqani, and Heikejeh" in Jenderes, as well as several nearby small villages. The total amount extorted this time is estimated to be around **\$500,000 USD**.

Notably, Abu Amsha extorted approximately **\$120,000 USD** from the same villages last July and around **\$27 million USD** from the last olive harvest alone, in addition to what he collects from returning families, other agricultural seasons, artesian well drilling, those accused of ties to the former Autonomous Administration, and from security checkpoints.

=Arbitrary Arrests:

-In early August, Turkish authorities arrested "**Mohammad Fakhri Omar** /24/ years old," from the village of "Ashouna"-Bulbul, along with his wife, as they attempted to migrate to Europe via smuggling routes. He was returned alone to Syria through the Bab al-Salameh crossing in Azaz after being stripped of his personal documents. He was then detained by the "Sham Legion" militia and released days later for a ransom of \$3,500 USD, facilitated by an acquaintance in Azaz.

-On August 3, 2024, the "Military Police in Raju" militia arrested "**Adnan Mohammad Ali Haji** /63/years old, the mukhtar (village head) of Adamo village in Raju, and his son **Ali** /20/ years old," after he demanded that the militia extinguish fires set in the forests around his village and neighboring villages. They were released the following day.

-On August 6, 2024, the "Sham Legion" militia detained "**Zakaria Ahmad Horo** /60/ years old, who has special needs, and his nephew **Ziad Mustafa Horo** /22/ years old," from the town of Meydan Akbas in Raju, on charges of human smuggling while they were grazing their sheep near the border. They were released later that evening.

=Forest Destruction and Fires:

- Currently, southeast of Bulbul town by /1/ km, the "Hamza Division" militia is uprooting the remaining stumps of olive and forest trees that were previously cut down, using heavy machinery.

- Since the major fires that broke out in the **Hawar Mountain natural forest**, spanning approximately 4,000 hectares, between the subdistricts of Bulbul and Raju in early June, which lasted for three days, fires have been ignited almost daily in different parts of the forest. It is estimated that about 50% of the forest area (2,000 hectares) has been burned. On August 13, 2024, a fire was ignited at "**Pouz Mishmisheh**" south of "Cheih/Al-Jabaliya" village, burning around 125 olive trees belonging to the sons of the late **Mohammad Ali Hamo**, despite the absence of dry grass between the trees.



- On August 14, 2024, new fires were set in the remaining forest on Mount "**Baifeh**," north of the villages of "**Meydono**" in Raju. Some locals extinguished the fires without any assistance from the Turkish occupation authorities or their affiliated militias. Residents of the neighboring village of "Kuisa" did not participate in extinguishing the fires this time, as several of them had been interrogated and questioned by the "Military Police in Raju" for their involvement in extinguishing the widespread fires on July 27, 2024, and for sharing photos and videos of the fires. They were warned not to repeat such actions.



It is worth noting that there are two large charcoal production centers in the village of "Seimolo-Meydono," operated by the "Sham Legion" militia.

-On August 15, 2024, the Syrian Civil Defense reported that its teams extinguished a grass fire within olive fields in the village of "Bafloun"- Sharra/Sharran. Upon investigation, it was found that the fields belong to the brothers "**Issa and Saado Seedo**," both deceased, who were forcibly displaced from their village in 2018. The fields were seized by the militias, and due to neglect and poor agricultural management, dry grass had overgrown the entire area.



حريق في حقول زيتون مستولى عليها، وهي عائدة للشقيقين المرحومين
عيسى و سعدو سيدو ابني شيخو" بالقرب من قرية بافلون - عفرين
٢٠٢٤/٨/١٥

=Military Exercises:

Since taking control of villages, towns, and cities in Afrin, the "Syrian National Army" militias have established their headquarters, bases, and conducted their military and security training within populated areas, agricultural lands, and forested areas, deliberately causing damage in various ways. For example:

-On August 10, 2024, "Al Jazeera - Syria" posted a video on its Facebook page showing "live-fire training by a Syrian opposition faction in Afrin," which upon investigation, was identified as "Samarqand Brigade" militia led by "**Thaer Maarouf/Abu Abdo**," conducting exercises in olive fields and forests at "Sabeelah" site north of "Kafr Safra" town, Jenderes, near inhabited villages.

-On the same date, the "Joint Forces" militias "Sultan Suleiman Shah Brigade - Amshat, Hamza Division" posted a video of their military exercises in olive fields and forested areas in Shiyeh/Sheikh Hadid subdistrict.



=Chaos and Disorder:

Amid the widespread presence and misuse of weapons:

- About ten days ago, several shells landed around the village of "**Kakhireh**"- Mobato/Maabatli, near homes controlled by the "Sultan Suleiman Shah Brigade - Amshat" militia. The shells nearly caused material and human damage, causing panic among the residents. It was later revealed that the shells were fired indiscriminately by the "Samarqand Brigade" militia stationed in "Ruita" village, Mobato/Maabatli, likely during their training exercises in the southern mountains.

- On August 12, 2024, a clash occurred between two armed groups of settlers living in **the city of Afrin**, in broad daylight, in front of the Qazan Bakery (formerly Al-Jabal Bakery), on the main road - the eastern entrance highway to the city, amidst civilians and their vehicles.



اشتباكات أمام فرن قازان بالعكك - أوتوستراد يدخل مدينة
عفرين الشرقي، بتاريخ ٢٠٢٤/٨/١٢

- On August 14, 2024, a **Jeep was detonated** with an explosive device, which we didn't know belonged to who, on a side street near the former customs building/Raju main street in Afrin city. While there were no casualties, the explosion caused material damage, burning the Jeep and parts of another Jeep parked on the street.



=Other Violations:

-Armed men who have taken over homes in the village of "Deir Sawan"- Sharra/Sharran, are stalling in vacating the houses of six Kurdish families forcibly displaced from Turkey and who have returned to their village. They are demanding financial extortion in exchange for vacating the houses, despite having stolen all the contents, including furniture, tools, and supplies, during the village's invasion in 2018.

Afrin is in a state of unbearable misery, with militias running rampant, media blackout, and political deadlock... The environment groans under daily assaults, and people cry out against injustice without anyone to list.

17.08.2024

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

Images:

- The two brothers: "Mohammad Al-Jassim/Abu Amsha" and "Waleed Jassim, also known as Saif."
- Burned olive trees in a field belonging to the sons of the late Mohammad Ali Hamo in the village of "Cheih/Jabaliya," Raju subdistrict, on August 13, 2024.
- Fires set in the "Baifeh" Mountain forest in the Raju subdistrict, on August 14, 2024.
- A fire within olive fields belonging to the late brothers "Issa and Saado Seedo, sons of Sheikho," in the village of "Bafloun," Sharra/Sharran subdistrict, on August 15, 2024.
- Military exercises by the "Samarqand Brigade" militia between olive fields and forested areas at the "Sabeelah" site, north of Kafr Safra town, Jenderes subdistrict, from a video by Al Jazeera Syria dated August 10, 2024.
- Military exercises by the Joint Forces militia among olive fields in the Shiyeh/Sheikh Al-Hadid subdistrict, from a video posted on August 10, 2024.
- Armed clashes in front of Qazan Bakery (formerly Al-Jabal Bakery) in Afrin city, on August 12, 2024.
- A Jeep explosion on a street near the former customs building/Raju Main Street in Afrin city, on August 14, 2024.

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