



Afrin Under Occupation (303):

Turkish military visit, thefts and extortions during the olive harvest season, arbitrary arrests, the Mufti of Hatay in Afrin, forest fires, tension, and infighting

*Arabic to English Translation**

The Turkish Ministry of Defense stated on the "X" platform that "**Selçuk Bayraktaroglu**," Commander of the Turkish Land Forces, along with other military leaders, visited "one of the military bases in the Olive Branch operation area" (the Turkish military base in Kafr Jannah/Afrin) on October 2, 2024. This visit reaffirms Turkey's effective military and governmental control over the Afrin region as an occupying power. Additionally, numerous visits by officials from various Turkish institutions to the area have been noted, unlike other occupied regions (Azaz, al-Bab, and Jarabulus) in northern rural Aleppo. Moreover, there is a permanent presence of hundreds of Turkish employees, in addition to Turkish army and intelligence units.



The following are facts about the current situation:

= Olive Harvest:

- **A Woman Appeals:** On October 1, 2024, a video circulated on social media in which a Kurdish woman appeals to God, calling for punishment on the thieves who stole the harvest from 50 out of her 100 olive trees. She laments that she is a widow and an orphan, questioning the justice in such oppression.

The woman is identified as "**Azima Mustafa Rashid**," a resident of the village of "Haseh/Meerkan" – Mobato/Maabatli, and her olive field is located in "Sirta," between the neighboring villages of "Dargireh and Satiya." The theft occurred using a vehicle and a number of armed individuals. The Sultan Suleiman Shah Brigade militias controls the village.



- As the olive harvest approaches, **Adnan Al-Khweild/Abu Walid Al-Azzi's** group from the "Sultan Murad Brigade" militias is demanding that the residents of the villages of "Khalilka, Beebaka, Qota, Kareh, Zivngeh, and Ashuineh" – Bulbul, present new ownership documents for their olive fields, issued by the land registry in Aleppo, which are difficult to obtain. Most actual property transfers (sale, inheritance, etc.) since 2011 are unregistered due to the war, in what seems to be a new attempt to seize more fields or raise extortion fees.



- Armed militias members, their families, and settlers living in the camps east of the Ashrafiyah district in Afrin city are extensively and continuously stealing olives from fields east of the city, near Mount Leeloun and "Qeebar" village, despite residents hiring guards for protection.

- In the village of "Hammam" – Jenderes, the "Hamzat Division" militias imposed a \$14 levy on each olive tree in the village, regardless of its size or whether it is bearing fruit.

- Recently, the families of militias fighters and settlers living in Mobato/Maabatli Camp and Al-Manshara/Kokan Camp stole olives from fields between "Kokan" village and Maabatli town, while local residents are prohibited from harvesting until the fruits fully ripen.

- Last Wednesday, through WhatsApp groups, "**Majd Hakim Al-Shayesh,**" a member of the so-called "Economics Committee of the Northern Falcons Brigade," warned the residents of "**Ali Jaro**" village – Bulbul and the surrounding areas not to harvest their olives or visit their fields for any reason until Saturday, October 5, 2024, without providing any explanation. According to a local source, this measure is the result of disputes between the leaders of the "Northern Falcons Brigade" over the seizure of olive fields belonging to the village residents.

= Arbitrary Arrests:

- Approximately 25 days ago, the "Military Police" militia arrested "**Haytham Othman son of Ezzat,** /40/ years old," a resident of "Khazyannah" village – Mobato/Maabatli, on fabricated charges, and he remains under arbitrary detention. He resides in Afrin city and owns a household goods store.

- On October 2, 2024, Turkish intelligence and the "Military Police in Afrin" arrested the couple "**Jawdat Kanjo Kanjo**, /35/ years old, and "**Jeehan Bakr Alou**, /30/ years old," residents of "Jalameh" village – Jenderes. They are being held at the militia's headquarters in Kafr Jannah – Sharra/Sharran. Three months ago, "Jawdat" traveled from the village to Aleppo to marry his fiancée. Under the threat of having his home and property seized by the "Sham Legion" militia, he was forced to return to the village with his wife. However, they were arrested en route, on the pretext of the wife's alleged connection to the former Autonomous Administration.

= "Alleged Equality"... Mufti of Hatay:

Mevlüt Tabşo, the Mufti of Turkey's Hatay Province, has consistently overseen and directed religious activities in Afrin through frequent visits. This is in addition to the permanent presence of the Turkish coordinator, Yusuf Kesir, known as the "General Coordinator of the Olive Branch Area," in coordination with Salahuddin Kiro, the Director of Religious Endowments (Awqaf) in Afrin, appointed by the Turkish occupation. On September 27, 2024, Tabşo reviewed the programs and activities of the Directorate of Religious Endowments in Afrin, as well as the youth center affiliated with it. On September 29, 2024, he visited the "Paradise Buds" kindergartens, distributing bags and gifts to the children. On September 30, 2024, he attended the conclusion of the "Marriage Life Preparation Course," where he distributed gifts to around /85/ participants. The central question of the course was: Is it the woman's right to have equality with men? ... The so-called alleged equality, according to the course's terminology.

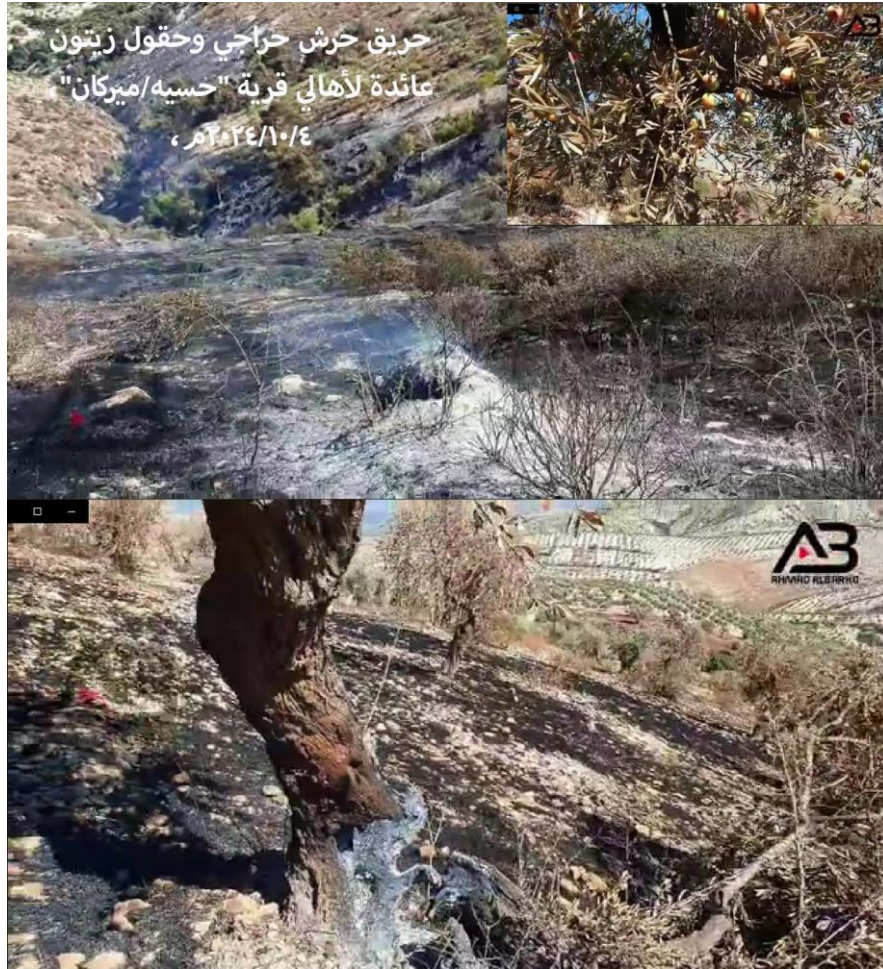


= Forest Fires:

In addition to the many indicators and facts supporting the theory that the forest fires are deliberately set under the supervision of the Turkish army and intelligence, their continuation and recurrence confirm this conclusion. Some examples include:

- The "Syrian Civil Defense" confirmed that its teams extinguished a fire that broke out in a forest in the village of "Qirh Guleh/Al-Yabsa" – Bulbul, on September 28, 2024.
- On Monday, September 30, 2024, fires were set in the wooded area between the three villages of Haseh/Meerkan, Kakhreh, and Sheetka" – Mobato/Maabatli, spreading to the surrounding olive fields. The

fire lasted until October 4, 2024, consuming forest trees – some of which had been previously cut – and approximately /400/ olive trees with their fruits, which belonged to the residents of Haseh village.



- On October 2, 2024, a fire broke out in a wooded area near the village of "Qastal Jindo" – Sharra/Sharran, spreading to some olive fields. The "Syrian Civil Defense" confirmed that its teams extinguished the fire.



- On October 3, 2024, smoke rose again on Mount Hawar in the Bulbul district, where over 80% of its natural forest has been devastated. The "Syrian Civil Defense" confirmed that its teams contributed to extinguishing the fire using isolation methods.



حريق غابة جبل هاوار من جهة ناحية بلبل، ٢٠٢٤/١٠/٣م

= Chaos and Lawlessness:

On September 27, 2024, clashes erupted between the "**Northern Falcons Brigade**" militia, led by "Hassan Khayriya," and one of its factions led by "**Abu Sheikh**," which controls the village of "**Draqliya**" – Sharra/Sharran. This faction declared its defection from "Khayriya," encouraged by Turkish intelligence as part of a decision to dissolve the "Northern Falcons Brigade." Both sides exchanged gunfire and shelling, causing panic among the local population.

Tensions remain high between the "Northern Falcons Brigade," supported by the "Sham Front" militia, and the "Military Police militia, the Joint Force (Amshat and Hamzat), and the Sultan Murad Brigade," backed by the Turkish army. On October 3, 2024, the Azaz-Afrin road was blocked due to the gathering of "Northern Falcons Brigade" supporters in "Kafr Jannah" village, attempting to defend the group and break the siege imposed on it.

= Other Violations:

- On the night of September 30, 2024, armed thieves stole six sheep along with their newborn lambs from the village of "Seiwiyo" – Mobato/Maabatli, belonging to the citizen "**Ahmed Manan**." This occurred just two weeks after about 20 lambs were stolen from the village's Mukhtar (local head).

Turkey exercises its military and governmental authority over Syrian territory at a high level and does not recognize itself as an occupying force, in blatant violation of international law. It refuses to acknowledge the principle of withdrawing from Syrian territories in the context of its attempts to normalize relations with the Syrian regime. Turkish policies do not contribute to resolving the Syrian crisis but instead further complicate it.

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

Images:

- The visit of Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu, Commander of the Turkish Land Forces, and his entourage to the Turkish military base in Kafr Jannah/Afrin on October 2, 2024.
- "Azima Mustafa Rashid," a citizen, appeals to God, calling for punishment against the olive thieves from her field.
- Adnan Al-Khweild/Abu Walid Al-Azzi, one of the leaders of the "Sultan Murad Brigade" militia.
- The "Marriage Life Preparation Course... Is it a woman's right to have equality with men?" attended by Mevlüt Tabşo, Mufti of Hatay, on September 30, 2024.

- A forest and olive field fire belonging to the residents of "Haseh/Meerkan" village on October 4, 2024, as documented in a video by media activist Ahmad Al-Barhou.
- A fire in the wooded area and olive fields of "Qastal Jindo" on October 2, 2024.
- A forest fire on Mount Hawar on October 3, 2024.

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