



Afrin Under Occupation (320):

Widespread celebrations of Newroz, attacks on civilians, violations by "Abu Amsha" and "Abu Kassar", forcibly disappeared individuals, extortion, theft, and assaults in the towns of Rajo and Badina, as well as olive tree cutting

*Arabic to English Translation**

The Kurds in Afrin widely celebrated their Newroz festival this year by lighting fires and holding festivities in various villages and towns on the evening of March 20. The following day, they gathered in nature and participated in central celebrations, reaffirming their unbreakable will and calling for peace, freedom, and equality. This year's celebrations were marked by the fall of the previous regime and the emergence of public freedoms, along with the relative security ensured by the General Security Service under the new Syrian authorities. However, the festivities were marred by some attacks on civilians, as well as threats and offensive remarks directed at the celebrants.

The following are facts about the current situation:

= Assault on Civilians:

- On the evening of March 20, 2025, as "Hassan Sido /45/ years old" from "Burj Abdallo" – Sheirawa was returning home with relatives from the Newroz celebrations on Funfair Street in Afrin, he was shot in the leg with a Kalashnikov by an armed settler on a motorcycle, accompanied by another armed individual. The attack occurred after "Sido" protested against them pulling down a Kurdish flag along with the young man carrying it. The injured man was taken to a hospital for treatment, while the assailants fled the scene.



- That same evening, in "Marateh" Street, Afrin, as Kurds celebrated Newroz, armed individuals and settlers threw stones at their vehicles and attempted to tear down Kurdish flags, while also shouting offensive remarks at them.

- Also on March 20, "Hazem Mar'i/Abu Omar," the commander of the "Hamzat Division" militia in Raju, who resides in "Haj Khalil" village, threatened locals with gunfire and demanded they cancel the Newroz celebrations. However, he was unsuccessful, as the locals insisted on continuing their festivities.



- On March 23, 2025, the principal of the girls' high school in Raju – Al-Sukhour neighborhood, Amer Al-Raya, originally from Maarat Hurma – Idlib, forcibly removed Kurdish fabric flags that some female students had wrapped around their necks and verbally insulted them. He then reported the incident to Turkish intelligence and the "Civil Police" militia, which led to the arrest of "Ali Haj Oso," the owner of the "Alloush" gift and accessories store, who sold Kurdish flags. He was severely beaten and insulted, then released the same day after being forced to pay a ransom, despite the fact that selling Kurdish flags was permitted, and many were displayed during the celebrations.

= In "Sheikh Al-Hadid/Shiyeh" Town

On the evening of March 16, 2025, upon arriving at Al-Nabaa Square in Sheikh Al-Hadid/Shiyeh with over ten militia members on motorcycles, "**Mohammad Al-Jassem/Abu Amsha**," the commander of the "Sultan Suleiman Shah Division" militia, brutally assaulted "**Ahmed Suleiman Sheikho** /30/ years old" without any direct provocation, leaving him bedridden. The militia members also issued threats and insults, vowing that they would not leave the area. A patrol from the General Security Force arrived after being contacted and conducted an investigation into the incident. However, after their departure, Abu Amsha's militants fired gunshots into the air, and the perpetrators remain at large.



= Arbitrary Arrests:

Reports have emerged regarding an attack on a prison in the town of Al-Rai, located in the Al-Bab region, on the night of March 21, 2025. A group of masked gunmen stormed the facility, leading to the escape of dozens of prisoners, including over /20/ forcibly disappeared Kurdish detainees who had been held since mid-2018, following the Turkish military's occupation of Afrin in collaboration with Syrian militias.

Confirmed among the escapees were:

"**Bakr Abdin Habash** /35/ years old" from "Badino" town, detained since September 23, 2018. "**Walat Tashi son of Hassan** /40/ years old" from "Arabo" village. "**Ismat Khalil Kalo** /46/ years old" from "Korzeileh" village, both detained since April 2018. It is noteworthy that approximately /500/ detainees from Afrin remain forcibly disappeared in Al-Rai Central Prison, where they have been held incommunicado for nearly seven years, without fair trials or contact with the outside world. The facility is reportedly run by the "Sultan Murad Division" militia and Turkish intelligence.

The families of the detainees are urging the Damascus government, led by President Ahmad Al-Shar'a, to take immediate action for their release and to clear Turkish-occupied prisons of all political detainees, following the precedent set by other prisons that were opened during the collapse of the previous regime.

= in Rajo District:

- The economic office of the "Ahrar al-Sharqiya" militia continues to seize dozens of shops in central Rajo, collecting their monthly rents. If a house is vacated by settlers returning to their original regions, the militia immediately takes control of the property and refuses to return it to its rightful owner without proof of ownership and payment of a financial levy.

- The "Northern Brigade" militia in Rajo still occupies dozens of olive fields and refuses to return them to their rightful owners, even after some have returned to their villages.

- Both "Ahrar al-Sharqiya" and the "Northern Brigade" forcibly confiscate 50% of the firewood collected from pruning olive trees belonging to absent landowners, even when managed by their legal representatives.

- "Haydar Ba'aj" and "Muhammad al-Barqi/Abu Hayat" continue to illegally control shops in Rajo town and the neighboring village of "Mosako" under the name of the "9th Division" militia, despite having returned to their original areas. They return at the end of each month to collect rental fees from these properties.



- Kurdish civilians who return to their homes in Rajo are compelled to report to the "Civil Police" militia headquarters, where they are interrogated by Turkish intelligence, following notifications from village mukhtars. Some face arbitrary arrests, extortion, or are forced to pay ransoms to secure their release.

= In the Town of "Badino":

Residents of Badino are living in a state of fear and heightened alertness due to the increasing frequency of home invasions and thefts committed by armed robbers.

- On the night of March 20, 2025, a Porter pickup truck belonging to citizen "**Reizan Muhammad Rashkeilo**" was stolen.

- On the night of Saturday, March 22, 2025, another Porter pickup truck was stolen, this time belonging to "**Ahmad Hassan Habash.**"

- On the evening of March 16, 2025, armed assailants attempted to break into the home of "**Walid Mustafa Shaaban,**" but failed after dozens of residents gathered outside the house in response.

= In the Village of "Sharqiya" – Bulbul:

The individual known as "**Abu Kassar**", originally from the Idlib countryside and a leader within the "Hamzat Division" militia who oversees the village and its surroundings, continues to seize control of approximately 50,000 olive trees belonging to forcibly displaced individuals. He refuses to return homes and olive fields to their rightful owners among the returning families unless they pay financial extortion fees. Since 2018, he has illegally occupied a villa belonging to the forcibly displaced "**Mustafa Khillo**/from the **Watan family**" in "Sharqiya."

= Olive Tree Cutting:

On March 22, 2025, armed settlers partially cut down approximately /40/ olive trees, each /40/ years old, belonging to "**Luqman Abdullah Hamdo,**" a resident of "Alkeh" village – Sharra/Sharran. Two of these trees were cut down to the trunks. Additionally, around /15/ olive trees belonging to "Hikmat Abu Manan" from the same village were partially cut down.



قطع ما يقارب أربعين شجرة زيتون عائدة للمواطن "لقمان عبد الله حمدو" في قرية "علكه" - شران

The joy of Afrin's residents during their Newroz celebrations remains incomplete until the Turkish occupation and its affiliated militias are removed, allowing the region to return to Syrian sovereignty under the genuine governance and protection of its people.

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

Images:

- The injured: "Hassan Sido."
- Militia leaders: "Hazem Mar'i, Haider Ba'aj, Mohammad Al-Barqi."
- The victim: "Ahmad Suleiman Sheikho."
- Olive tree cutting of "Luqman Abdullah Hamdo," from a video clip posted by journalist Ahmad Al-Barho on his Facebook page.

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

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