Afrin Under Occupation (324):

The Death of a Woman from Grief, Seizure of Property in the Village of "Khaziyaneh", Armed Robbery in Rajo, the Uprooting of a Centuries-Old Tree and Forest Fires, and Death Threats. "

*Arabic to English Translation**

The people of Afrin (especially the displaced among them) continue to await an end to the Turkish occupation, the disbanding of the militias known as the "Syrian National Army," and the withdrawal of all its members and their families, who were brought into the region, so that Afrin may enjoy safety, stability, and a path toward a prosperous future. This is particularly significant in light of the recent statement by the Minister of Defense in the government of President Ahmad al-Shara', who, on May 17th of this year, announced the "integration of all units within the Syrian Ministry of Defense," and called on "the remaining small armed groups" to "join" the Ministry of Defense within a maximum period of ten days from the date of the announcement.

The following are facts about the current situation:

= Death of a Woman from Grief:

On the afternoon of Tuesday, May 20, 2025, citizen "**Khanim Najjar**, aged /55/ and wife of Mustafa Khalid, " from the village of "Qurbeh " in the Jenderes subdistrict, suffered a fainting episode and was transported to a hospital in the city of Afrin. Despite attempts to revive her using electric shocks, her life could not be saved due to a severe heart attack that led to her death. This came after nearly six months of psychological distress and deprivation, during which she, her husband, and their two adult sons with special needs moved between houses in the village, waiting for the return of their home. Their house had been seized in 2018 by "**Ahmad Mousa**, " a member of the "Eastern Army" (Jaysh al-Sharqiya) militia, who openly refused to vacate the property for the family—despite their return from the Shahba region, which had itself been overrun by militias of the so-called "Syrian National Army" in early December 2024. Additionally, their olive grove of approximately 200 trees had previously suffered extensive destruction.

It Is worth noting that "Qurbeh " village consists of around /60/ homes. Currently, only about /30/ Kurdish families reside there, while the rest have been forcibly displaced. Meanwhile, /28/ families brought in from outside the region continue to delay returning to their places of origin.

= In the Village of "Khaziyana":

Located in the Mobato/Maabatli subdistrict, the village of Khaziyana consists of two sections and approximately /60/ houses. Currently, around /35/ Kurdish families reside there, while the remainder of the original inhabitants are scattered across displacement areas. Only two families from those resettled in the village remain. A military headquarters belonging to the militia "Liwa 112" (Brigade 112)—led by "**Abdul Karim Qassoum** "—has maintained control over the village since March 2018. The militia continues to occupy /25/ houses, most of which have been converted into stables for livestock, which are grazed in olive groves and on agricultural lands, causing extensive damage to property. Additionally, they have taken control of approximately 20,000 olive trees since 2018, under the direct supervision of "**Osama Rahhal**, " deputy to "Qassoum".

Despite the return of the families of "Faeq Eibo and Rashid Sheikho " to the village months ago, the olive fields belonging to them have not been returned. Likewise, "Ameen Eibo" has not regained possession of his house or land. These individuals do not dare to file complaints with the so-called "General Security" due to fear of retaliation.

= Thefts:

On the night of May 22, 2025, in an armed robbery, a masked group raided the home of "**Shukri Holilo bin Ali**, /60/ years old, " in the town of Rajo. Holilo works in the olive oil trade. The assailants stole gold jewelry, cash, and two mobile phones after restraining him and threatening to kill him.

= Tree Cutting and Forest Fires:

- Since May 3, 2025, an image of a large felled tree trunk in the Afrin region—Hashtiya Highlands has circulated. Upon verification, the tree was identified as an ancient Roman oak located near an old cemetery at the "Geli Tirba " site, which serves three villages: "**Gawruka, Satiya, and Kafr Dalleh Foqani**". It was cut down by militias from "Hamzat Division" for the purpose of firewood and trade. A Google Earth image dated June 26, 2023, showed the tree to be in good condition at that time.

In addition to the ongoing deforestation and illegal logging, forest fires have begun to consume the remaining wooded areas in Afrin. Firefighting units from the Syrian Civil Defense have responded to several incidents:

- On May 10, 2025, a fire in shrubs and brush spread to agricultural lands in "**Kordu** " village – Bulbul subdistrict.

- On May 18, 2025, a forest fire broke out near "**Khaziyana** " village – Mobayo/Maabatli subdistrict, reaching a wide area.

- At dawn on Friday, May 23, 2025, a fire erupted in a forest on the mountain of "**Dallo** " village – Mabata/Maabatli. The fire was set during the night.

- Additionally, on May 13, 2025, some residents of "**Haj Hasna** " village – Jenderes, succeeded in extinguishing a fire in a forest adjacent to their village.

= Chaos and Lawlessness:

- On May 16, 2025, two individuals— "Mustafa Awad Rahhal and Youssef Mohammed Sattouf, " both local leaders within the "Elite Army" (Jaysh al-Nukhba) militia—physically assaulted citizen "**Idris Othman Omar Simo**, /40/ years old, " in the village of "Umar Simo " – Sharra/Sharran subdistrict. The attack was intended to intimidate him and extort a portion of the grape leaf harvest. When a complaint was filed with the General Security office in Sharra, the authorities instead brokered a "reconciliation" between the two parties.

- Also, on the evening of May 16, 2025, a clash broke out between some original residents of "Kafr Dalleh Foqani, " west of Afrin city, and a group of resettled individuals living in the village—an area under the control of the "Hamzat Division" militia. The altercation was triggered when a militia member brandished a firearm at citizen "**Sadiq Kanjo**, " threatening to kill him after he intervened to prevent the militia member from shooting his dog. The General Security force intervened and once again arranged a "reconciliation" between the sides.

As long as the systems of Turkish occupation and its allied Syrian militias persist in Afrin, the threats and dangers to the lives of its residents will continue. It is imperative that the Damascus government establish effective control over the region and put an end to the ongoing violations, crimes, and various pressures on the population—until a modern constitutional framework is achieved that meets the aspirations of the Syrian people in all their diversity.

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Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria (Yekiti)

Images:

- The late Khanim Najjar, and the funeral procession held in front of her confiscated home in the village of "Qurbeh. "

- The village of "Khaziyana".

- The Roman oak tree and the ancient cemetery in the village of "Gawruka, " shown before and after the tree was cut down.

- Forest fires in the villages of "Kordu, Khaziyana, and Haj Hasna".

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