

**Declaration of the delegation "Mothers for Peace"  
on the threat of invasion of Northern Syria by Turkey**

Since the beginning of the war in Syria, Western media have been reporting on battles, destruction and massacres. Just yesterday, the international press echoed President Trump's decision to give Turkey the green light to invade northern Syria, which could escalate the conflict that has entered its ninth year. However, this same press has hardly mentioned the democratic social revolution that has been taking place in the North of this suffering country since 2012.

A year ago, in October 2018, a group of seven women from four European countries visited Northern Syria - the region known by the Kurdish name of Rojava - with the support of women's organisations from our countries of origin. Our aim was to find out about the social changes promoted in Rojava, the advances in gender equality led by women's organisations and to see first-hand the situation of the displaced people from Afrin. And, on our return, to spread what we have learned and generate solidarity networks with the people of Northern Syria. The first part of the objective was achieved thanks to the generosity and commitment of our hosts. Our mission here is underway; we know it is a long-distance journey.

Since our visit to Rojava, there have been significant events in the area, and undoubtedly the most significant was the defeat of the Islamic State (ISIS). Twelve thousand young people - full cemeteries, as in Verdun - have given their lives to liberate the world from terror and inhumanity. Now, this sacrificed people find themselves alone, without outside support, faced with the enormous task of maintaining the Al Hol camp, where more than 70,000 ISIS fighters and their families live, many of them foreigners whose countries of origin refuse to take responsibility for their citizens who joined the caliphate. The Democratic Self-Administration of North and East Syria (DANES) spares no effort to find a solution to this humanitarian crisis, while launching a campaign for the creation of an international tribunal to try the crimes of ISIS. The people of northern Syria know that there can be no peace without justice.

If this year has been characterised by anything, it has been by the recurrent and insidious threat of invasion of Rojava by Turkey. President Trump has just given the green light to the Turkish state for the extermination operation, which seems imminent. President Erdogan insists on the need for a security zone south to Syrian-Turkish border, accusing Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which have fought against ISIS until their defeat, of terrorism. While Turkey itself, which at one time armed and facilitated the access of combatants to the caliphate, arms and supports today the jihadist hordes that occupy Afrin and have provoked an exodus of more than 200 thousand people. It is not terrorism that worries Erdogan, but that the success of the democratic nation spreads the longing for freedom to the Kurdish-Turkish people. The demographic change it seeks in this area - expelling the Kurdish population and repopulating with Syrian refugees of Arab origin - is called a crime against humanity.

On the other hand, the creation of a Constitutional Committee under the auspices of the UN, charged with drafting a new Constitution for Syria, may seem like a step towards the end of the conflict, but Turkey's veto on the inclusion of DANES in that Committee closes the door to true reconciliation. The SDF control 30% of Syrian territory and have shown that, in the territories they have liberated, a new form of organisation is being established, democratic, inclusive, equal - gender equality in roles of responsibility - and centred on solving the daily problems of the population through self-management. Without the participation of all the components of Syria, the decisions taken by the Constitutional Committee will be partial and therefore ineffective.

The people of northern Syria want a democratic nation, and for that they have created institutions that represent the melting pot of ethnicities and religions that make up this society; and this radical change is led by women, who have already achieved parity in institutions and are moving relentlessly towards overcoming patriarchy and gender equality. In spite of the difficulties derived from war, the destruction of infrastructures, the exhaustion of the fields and the hostility of the neighbouring countries, the people of Rojava are working to build an ecological society that will allow them to reconstruct their country in a lasting way, promoting education and defending their culture as pillars of a future of coexistence for the whole of Syria.

Democracy, inclusion, parity and harmony with Nature are the objectives of the people of northern Syria. After seven years of struggle, the results begin to flourish and will not be renounced. If these people are attacked, they will defend themselves with the means at their disposal. Like the rose, its thorns are its self-defense, they do not seek aggression.

As women and mothers, witnesses of the social advances developed at the DANES and defenders of free life in equality, we appeal to feminist organizations and women's associations, as well as to all people who still believe that a just and peaceful society is possible, so that:

- Demand that governments and political institutions repulse the Turkish government's invasion of Northern Syria;
- Denounce the belligerent attitude of President Erdogan against Kurdish people, and demand an end to the occupation of Afrin and the return of the displaced population;
- Support DANES in its fight against ISIS terrorism, request the help of international institutions for the support of Al Hol camp and support the creation of an international tribunal to judge ISIS crimes;
- Advocate to the UN for the inclusion of the Syrian Democratic Council in the Syrian Constitutional Committee, in order to reach a consensus that will put an end to the bloodshed in Syria and produce a democratic and inclusive Constitution.

**Give peace a chance!**

**No to Turkey's invasion of northern Syria!**

***Jin, Jiyan Azadi! - Woman, Life, Freedom!***

Mothers for Peace  
Europe, October 8<sup>th</sup> 2019