



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE IN GENEVA

Z-2021/62441669/32530148 - URGENT

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations Office in Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference the Joint Communication from Special Procedures dated 26 January 2021 (AL TUR 2/2021), has the honour to enclose herewith the observations provided by the Government of the Republic of Turkey.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Turkey avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 26 March 2021

Encl: As stated.



Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10

**INFORMATION NOTE IN REPLY TO THE JOINT COMMUNICATION FROM
THE SPECIAL PROCEDURES
(Reference: AL TUR 2/2021)**

a) - In accordance with the concept of “unity” within the framework of the 7 basic principles of the Red Crescent-Red Cross Movement, it is stated that there can only be one Red Crescent / Red Cross organization in a country. Therefore, using the concept of “Kurdish Red Crescent” is primarily contrary to the basic principles of the Red Crescent-Red Cross Movement. This situation is confirmed by the ICRC. In short, the so-called “Kurdish Red Crescent” is an illegal formation that is not an element of the International Red Cross-Red Crescent Movement.

- In this context, Denmark, in its statement on 17 June 2003, stated that the “Kurdish Red Crescent” was found guilty of violating the Conventions which protect the name and logo of the Red Crescent-Red Cross organizations in Denmark. On the other hand, the aforementioned entity, which arbitrarily uses the name “Kurdish Red Crescent”, tries to gain legitimacy through its current name and emblem, contrary to international law. The “Kurdish Red Crescent” essentially operates as a fund raiser and propaganda tool of the PKK, which is internationally recognized as a terrorist organization.

b) - YPG is the Syrian branch of the terrorist organization PKK and constitutes the backbone of the so-called “Syrian Democratic Forces” (SDF). SDF, continues to oppress people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, including Syrian Kurds, in the areas under its control in northeast Syria, forcibly recruits minors, seizes people’s property, uses violence against peaceful demonstrations, pursues discriminatory policies, imposes a controversial curriculum in schools, imprisons teachers who do not use this curriculum and attempts social-demographic engineering in line with its separatist agenda. In fact, one of the aims of the “Olive Branch” and “Peace Spring” operations carried out by Turkey in Syria was to save the local people from the pressure of the PKK/YPG led “SDF”. Those detained in Al Hol and Al Roj I/II camps under de facto control of “SDF” also suffer from the aforementioned practices.

c) - The so-called “SDF” uses the fight against DAESH as a tool in the service of its separatist agenda. PKK/YPG led “SDF” exploits the issue of the repatriation of third country nationals from the camps where DAESH members are held, such as Al Hol and Al Roj, in order to gain legitimacy in international arena. Expressions such as “camp authorities” that may attribute legitimacy to an illegal organization, whose backbone is a terrorist organization that pursues a separatist agenda, should be avoided in official UN correspondence as it also contradicts the official position of the UN. Numerous UN Security Council resolutions regarding the Syrian conflict refer to Syria’s territorial integrity.

- Referring to the so-called “SDF” as an entity which represents the Syrian Kurds does not reflect the reality. In fact, Syrian Kurds have suffered most from the cruelty and oppression of the so-called “SDF”. To date, more than 300,000 Syrian Kurds fled to Turkey due to the oppression of the “SDF”. The “SDF” also suppresses political parties under the umbrella of the Syrian National Kurdish Council, does not allow them to open offices in areas under its de facto control and arrests their party members. In this respect, the reference on page 15 of the letter (Both Al-Hol and Al-Roj camps, which are run by a non-State actor representing the Kurdish authority...), which tries to portray “SDF” as a representative of Syrian Kurds, does not have any legal base and does not reflect the facts on the ground.

- PKK/YPG-led “SDF” terrorist organization is responsible for violations such as murder, torture, starvation, confiscation, looting, ill-treatment and forced displacement in the camps under its control, including Al Hol and Al Roj. As noted in the letter of the UN Special Rapporteurs, these violations occur daily in these camps and affect all those who are forcibly detained in the camps, including women and children.

d) – Turkey considers PKK/YPG, which forms the backbone of “SDF”, as a terrorist organization. Therefore, engaging in any relation with the so-called “SDF” and other affiliated illegitimate formations, including information and intelligence sharing that contains biometric data, is not possible. Turkey reminds third countries engaging with “SDF” to reconsider and amend their approach on every occasion.

- Turkish legislation attributes special importance to the protection of personal data. In this context, all personal information, including biometric data, is protected by the Personal Data Protection Law No. 6698 dated 24.03.2016. The Personal Data Protection Board has been established in accordance with the said law.

- It is not a surprise that “SDF”, which has deployed more than 1000 armed militants to the camps during the "registration and identity verification" activities mentioned in the letter, prohibited the access of all humanitarian workers to the camps, including representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and medical personnel.

In fact, the PKK/YPG terrorist organization did not hesitate to target humanitarian aid workers and humanitarian infrastructure such as hospitals and water pumping stations, and to use hospitals for military purposes in the past.

Turkey and the Syrian Interim Government, the executive body of the legitimate opposition, have delivered information and documents to the relevant international organizations and third countries, including the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (IICISyria) regarding these violations of “SDF”.

e) - It is known that PKK/YPG-led “SDF” is responsible for violations against minors, as reflected in the IICISyria reports. SDF has so far forcibly recruited minors (A/HRC/46/54), prevented education of minors, tried to impose a curriculum in line with its deviant ideology, indoctrinated some minors in the camps, especially those without parents, in order to recruit and use them as warriors. In this context, “SDF” has kidnapped boys over 10 years old from their families during their transfer from Al Hol camp to Al Roj camp, transferred about 100 children aged 12-14 from Al Hol camp to Telesved IDP camp where 1,800 women and children lives, and imposed ideological and subsequently military training on them. It is also reported that “SDF” announced that kidnapped children, who received military and ideological training under the pretext of “rehabilitation” in the camps in the Qamishli region in 2019, would not be allowed to meet their families in Al Hol and Al Roj camps again, and that children who have completed their training would be placed among the ranks of the organization.

- There are also reports that PKK/YPG led “SDF” sends personal information of detainees in camps such as identity papers or photographs to their relatives in order to extort money or force them to collaboration in exchange for their release and demands 25.000 USD for the release of DEASH member women of European nationality living in these camps.

- It is also known that “SDF” generates income from the illicit trade in the camps such as drug trafficking, women trafficking and prostitution, electronic equipment smuggling, organ trade and other smuggling activities.