

October 17th, 2019

On October 9th, 2019, Turkey initiated an offensive against Rojava/North and East Syria. This incursion is a clear violation of international law, and has been carried out with the intention to ethnic cleanse the region. We are very much concerned that continues Turkish aggression will have serious consequences for the local peoples, including Kurds, Arabs, Syriacs, Arameans, Turkmen, Armenians, and Chechens. The invasion has already resulted in a series of grave human rights violations and war crimes. We have been hearing news of assassination of political leaders, targeting of journalists, killing of medical personnel, onsite execution of locals, indiscriminate shelling of residential areas, and large numbers of internally displaced people.

Another disturbing development is that the Turkish aggression against the SDF-controlled North and East Syria has facilitated the escape of hundreds of ISIS detainees from the prisons and camps. The ongoing Turkish invasion brings the risk of a resurgence of ISIS, posing an imminent threat to people of all ethnicities, races, religions, and genders living in the region and beyond.

Across Canada we see Kurdish and Syrian communities working hard to rebuild their lives here. We are in solidarity with Kurdish and Syrian workers in Canada and across the world. We are in solidarity with all those globally struggling against imperialism and war. We know that KESK, DISK and other trade unions in Turkey are speaking out and have said that “this is not the time of silence”.

As the labour movement we want to express our deep concern for the safety of the Kurdish community, and many other communities, residing in North and East Syria, many of whom have family members in Canada. We call on workers, and union leaders internationally, to take immediate action to stop the Turkish invasion and increasing militarization of the region. We urge the Canadian government to take all the required measures including suspension of arms sales to curb Turkish aggression. Finally, we express our solidarity with the peoples of the North and East Syria.

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