

# The Keys to our houses don't rust

Assessment of the ceasefire agreement in northeastern Syria Ras Al-Ain as a model

Brussels | NE Syria | 31 October 2020

## TEVNA KURDÎ

Whatever it is, the way you fight for your rights can make all the difference

**HEADQUARTERS**

Rue Eugene Toussaint 33, 1083 Brussel, Belgium

[Info@tevnakurdi.org](mailto:Info@tevnakurdi.org)

# Main conclusions

---

## what's new?

On October 9, a year has passed since Turkey announced the launch of Operation Peace Spring to form a safe zone along the border with Syria in the area between Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ain under the pretext of protecting its national security. The military operation ended with the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the United States of America and Turkey in northern and eastern Syria, which stipulated the withdrawal of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) from the city and handing it over to the Turkish army and the Syrian opposition factions (the Syrian National Army).

## Why is this important?

The ceasefire agreement contains a set of provisions aimed at protecting human rights and promoting stability, so it is important to evaluate the agreement to ascertain the extent to which these provisions are applied, as well as the extent to which this agreement is capable of achieving the real purpose of the ceasefire, which is to stabilize, contribute to the improvement of human rights conditions and create an environment conducive to political transition.

## What should be done?

The United States should re-evaluate the cease-fire agreement transparently as well as put greater pressure on Turkey to comply with its commitments to protect human rights and public property. The US should put in place mechanisms to monitor the agreement on an ongoing basis and work more seriously to find mechanisms to implement UN Resolution 2254, which guarantees the return of displaced people to their cities.

## Table of Contents

<i>Main conclusions</i> .....	<b>1</b>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	<b>3</b>
<i>Patterns of violations</i> .....	<b>4</b>
<i>Coordination and common interests</i> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>Human rights</i> .....	<b>8</b>
<i>Commitment to fighting ISIS</i> .....	<b>11</b>
<i>Protecting population centers and the city's infrastructure</i> .....	<b>14</b>
<i>Commitment to Syria's political unity</i> .....	<b>17</b>
<i>Overall assessment</i> .....	<b>19</b>
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	<b>20</b>

# Introduction.

---

On October 9, 2019, the Turkish army launched an air and ground offensive on northeastern Syria in the area between the cities of Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ain after the withdrawal of U.S. forces. A few days after the SDF dismantled its defense fortifications after a request from the United States, Turkey used Syrian opposition factions such as the Sultan Murada Turkmen faction and the Hamzat faction in this offensive. After several days of fierce fighting, [U.S. Vice President Mike Pence announced on October 17 that the United States and Turkey had reached an agreement to suspend the Turkish military operation for 5 days to allow for the withdrawal of the SDF from a proposed safe area south of the Turkish bo](#) On October 22, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reached another agreement to extend the ceasefire for an additional 150 hours in order for the SDF to complete its withdrawal 30 kilometers away from the border area, as well as from the cities of Tel Rifaat and Manbij. The agreement also included joint patrols between Russia on the one hand and Turkey on the other, 10 kilometers from the Syrian side of the border, with the exception of the city of Qamishli. The new ceasefire began on October 23 at 12:00 p.m. local time.

The Turkish military operation resulted in dozens of casualties and displaced more than 180,000 residents of the region, according to United Nations data. It resulted in looting of public and private property and hundreds of documented human rights violations. A year later, the situation continues to worsen day after day in Ras- Al ain city as a result of the continuing human rights violations by the Syrian National Army factions. This is allegedly a result of Turkish policies that are striving to carry out large-scale demographic change processes, distancing the Kurdish people from their southern borders under the pretext of protecting its national security. No actual threat to its security has been recorded from the Kurdish side.

To find out the extent to which the ceasefire agreement achieved its objectives, we selected a random sample of the city's residents representing all its components (Kurds, Arabs, Christians, and Yazidis) representing different segments (politicians, activists, journalists, and technocrats) in order to evaluate the ceasefire agreement. This consists of 13 items, including an immediate ceasefire and imposing obligations on the two parties in order to protect religious and ethnic minorities, in addition to cooperation in order to fight ISIS and other items.

# Patterns of violations.

---

During the one year since the signing of the agreement, widespread human rights violations have occurred, and the residents of the area, either internally displaced or still in their homes, face poor humanitarian conditions as a result of the practices of the Syrian National Army factions and Turkey's policies that include imposing Turkification on the area. Multiple patterns of violations were observed.

**First: Killings.** Military operations have resulted in dozens of victims, and have affected both the military and civilians, while populated areas, journalists, health sector workers and human rights defenders have been targeted. The region has also witnessed field executions of civilians, including civilians who wanted to inspect their homes after the fighting subsided, or as happened with the politician Havrin Khalaf.

**Second: Displacement.** Before the Turkish attack, there were 1.3 million people in need of assistance, including displaced people from other areas. The operation led to the displacement of the majority of the region's population, as United Nations statistics indicate that the number of the displaced reached more than 180,000, while some international organizations' statistics and local authorities indicate that the number of the displaced reached 219,000. Although some of the displaced returned to their homes, the majority were unable to return, especially the Kurdish people who feared being targeted under the pretext of accusing them of working with the SDF or the self-Administration authority.

**Third: Detention.** The region witnessed widespread arrests, as well as extralegal trials, and a group of detainees were transferred to Helwan Prison inside Turkey and tried there on charges of terrorism. Some prisoners were tortured to death, as happened to a young man with special needs, Mahmoud Omari. The region moreover witnessed kidnappings by factions and members of the National Army in order to obtain a ransom from the families of the kidnapped.

**Fourth: Seizure of private and public property.** Military factions of the National Army committed large scale looting of private and public property, as well as systematic seizure of Kurdish citizens' property and preventing the people from returning to their homes. Economic resources were extracted from the area including private and public agricultural crops. Thousands of hectares of agricultural land have also been seized.

**Fifth: Demographic change.** Hundreds of families were brought in from relatives of the National Army's soldiers. Civilians' houses and property were handed over to them, and banners and slogans written in the Kurdish and Syriac languages were removed and destroyed. An approach to Turkification of the language was adopted and glorification of the Ottoman state was imposed, as were Turkish symbols, images and flags and religious ideology. This happened to Mohiuddin Ezzo when a Turkish organization

(HII) in cooperation with the local council, converted his family's home into an institute for memorizing the Qur'an. In addition, houses of worship of the Yazidi and Christian communities were attacked and destroyed.

**Sixth:** Since the occupation of the region, we have witnessed a serious deterioration in the level of stability. Violations continue in all their forms, and the frequency of bombing operations has increased as a result of the security chaos and the state of conflicts between armed factions. Following the outbreak of disputes between the factions' leaders over the crossings, power-sharing and stolen goods, dozens of civilian casualties were recorded as a result of these bombings, including women and children. Deaths were moreover recorded as a result of indiscriminate bullets shot during clashes between factions of the Turkish-backed National Army. Unarmed children and women were killed as a result of the clashes and flying bullets, without any concern for civilian life.

# Coordination and common interests.

---

1. The US and Turkey reaffirm their relationship as fellow members of NATO. The US understands Turkey's legitimate security concerns on Turkey's southern border.
2. Turkey and the US agree that the conditions on the ground, northeast Syria in particular, necessitate closer coordination on the basis of common interests.
3. Turkey and the US remain committed to protecting NATO territories and NATO populations against all threats with the solid understanding of "one for all and all for one".

**As soon as the American soldiers withdrew from the Tal Arqam point in the southwest of the city of Ras al-Ain, panic and fear spread among the people. They realized, based on the experience of Afrin and the Russian withdrawal from the Kafr Jannah camp, that this withdrawal marked the beginning of Turkish military action and the release of Turkey's hand in the area. Based on that, it appeared that the level of coordination was and is still at the highest levels.** (A.A) Participant in the evaluation.

The majority of those who participated in this assessment agreed that coordination between the two parties was close before and during the Turkish military operation. but they differed in their perception of the form, mechanisms and objectives of coordination. Participants agreed that what had happened in the city of Ras al-Ain is very similar to what happened in Afrin, where the Russians gave the green light for the Turks to attack Afrin and its villages. The majority agree that the United States of America has not fulfilled its obligations to the Syrian Democratic Forces, its strategic ally in its war against ISIS, and left it facing its fate with Turkey and its affiliated armed Syrian opposition factions.

**The coordination between the two parties distills into the smallest details and at all levels, in a way that serves the interests of the two parties. However, there is no transparency and decisions go unannounced, as if they happen by chance or arbitrarily.** (M.A.) participant in the evaluation.

One participant alleged that coordination was not at the level that Turkey had hoped, because there is a conflict of interest between the Turkish and American agendas on the Syrian case. This was explained through Turkey's attempts to give the main role to the Muslim Brotherhood in future Syria, and its repeated attempts to keep the Kurds from playing any future role in Syria. Hence, he believes that the American coordination with Turkey is an American attempt to distance Turkey from the Russian-Iranian axis; especially after the S400 missile deal with Russia and Turkey's non-compliance with American sanctions on Iran and its continued purchase of Iranian gas.

**“The level of coordination between the two countries is high despite the tense relations between the two countries, with the United States monitoring the situation closely, but not overtly through its intelligence tools, while no American forces nor patrols have entered the city. All individuals who have participated in this assessment have confirmed that no neutral media outlet, except the Turkish media, and some outlets affiliated with the so-called pro-Turkey Syrian opposition have entered the city.** (A. H., participant in this evaluation).

Although Turkey's interests are clear from the signing of the ceasefire agreement "at least in relation to its claims related to protecting its national security," the American interest in signing this agreement is still being questioned by many. Despite this, some opinions are based on the personal interest of US President Donald Trump related to the 2020 elections that he will run in this year. Such opinions do not take into account any long-term or even medium and short American strategic interests, given that the defeat of ISIS and the withdrawal of US forces was one of President Trump's electoral promises, while others see it as an economic deal par excellence whose victims and fuel were the components of the city of Ras al-Ain and the rest of the population of the area that was attacked on October 9, 2019.

As for the United States' continued monitoring of the situation to ensure that Turkey fulfills its pledges, opinions have differed between skeptical and surprising, as most opinions agree that what is happening in terms of violations, thefts, kidnappings, killings and demographic change in a city, are taking place without American supervision. It is illogical that the United States condones these violations and makes itself a direct partner in these gross human rights violations.



# Human rights.

---

4. The two countries reiterate their pledge to uphold human life, human rights, and the protection of religious and ethnic communities.

(1)

**Turkey has not committed itself to the agreement at all, and has committed crimes against humanity, such as forced displacement, demographic change, targeting archaeological areas and populated places. Also, vital centers such as schools, hospitals and medical centers have been targeted. Yes, there are examples, my personal belongings and the assets of my house and office in Ras Al Ain city were seized for the benefit of the militant opposition members who were displaced from their areas.** Shahien Lali is one of those who have been forced to displace.

It seems clear that what is written on paper remains theoretical and completely separate from the reality in which civilians live in the various Syrian cities that have witnessed ceasefire agreements. including the city of Sere Kanye, where 90% of the sample targeted in the assessment confirmed their exposure to violations, whether directly or indirectly. The testimonies of those who have been subjected to violations carry with them the reality of the dramatic deterioration of the human rights situation in the city and its countryside and give a true picture of what civilians have experienced and are living today.

(2)

**Turkey has not committed anything of this. On the contrary, Turkey has committed in coordination with its affiliated factions (the National Army) many violations and abuses including displacement, theft, looting and killing of civilians in order to empty the city and achieve its goal of demographic change. He added "The examples are many, my entire house was stolen and looted. "The house is located in Al Diwan Square; my brother's office was completely looted, my neighbor Mustafa Ahmed Hesso was killed with two other people who were civilians while they were trying to return to the city after its occupation. In addition, there is one in the armed groups who occupies my house, he lives in it with his family.** A.A. one of hundreds whose homes were taken over

All the facts on the ground confirm Turkey's lack of commitment to human rights or to human life and the violations that have occurred are estimated in the thousands of violations including the seizure of civilian homes of the city's residents, the housing of the families of the militants in it (3)

and the homes that they seized. It is estimated in the thousands of homes, meaning that all the displaced from the city and its countryside (300,000 displaced and forcibly displaced persons) had their homes seized and their contents stolen at the beginning of the invasion and all the shops were seized after their contents were stolen at the beginning of the invasion, which are valued at hundreds of millions of Syrian pounds.

All agricultural projects have been seized with their contents including tractors, diesel tanks, agricultural tools and machinery belonging to the displaced Kurds and Christians. Including Yazidis and Chechens, dozens of civilians have been assassinated (according to some human rights websites, 235 civilians, including 18 children, 5 medical staff, 3 journalists, and 675 wounded civilians) at the beginning of the invasion by terrorist military factions affiliated with the so-called Syrian National Army.

K.A. One of those who suffered the ravages of the attack on the city and the displacement.

The attack caused the displacement of large numbers of residents of the city during the attack, especially from non-Muslim religious components such as Yazidis and Christians. Also witnessed was a mass exodus of Kurds and a high percentage of Arabs who felt their lives threatened, a very small percentage of them have returned and according to residents, the city has witnessed a systematic form of protection around the rights of components based on religious and national affiliation.

(4)

In Ras Al-Ain, according to my personal observations, there is no support for human life or any respect for human rights at all. Violations at all levels, from pillage, looting, appropriation of property, forced displacement and kidnapping have occurred. As for documentation, the testimonies of civilians are abundant. Personally, I do not have documentation but only my personal testimony. I am not concerned as a civil person, to document any cases officially. As for the religious and ethnic aspect, I have personally noticed a kind of discrimination in the Christian component in particular by preserving the role of their worship, their money and personal property in a clear and systematic manner and providing them with facilities; Chechens too have a somewhat special status. As for the Arabs and the Kurds their money and blood is permissible”.

M.A. a witness

(5)

**All Christians and Yazidis fled the city for fear of atrocities committed against them. Turkey has never adhered to this clause, and there are systematic demographic change movements against all members of Ras al-Ain by seizing their property, expelling them, imprisoning them, and raping women by the so-called Turkish National Army in full view of the Turkish army.**

Testimony of Humam Muhammad al-Rubaie

These testimonies that were mentioned together with the facts on the ground as documented by local organizations [and the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria in its semi-annual report issued on 14 September 2020](#), have included ample evidence of brutal human rights violations against ethnic and religious minorities, women and other vulnerable groups. They are irrefutable evidence that Turkey and the Syrian National Army factions have not fulfilled their pledges, have not adhered to any of the conventions, nor the international legitimacy of human rights, nor the protection of civilians, nor the protection of religious communities and other races.

# Commitment to fighting ISIS.

---

5. Turkey and the US are committed to D-ISIS/DAESH activities in northeast Syria. This will include coordination on detention facilities and internally displaced persons from formerly ISIS/DAESH-controlled areas, as appropriate.

6. Turkey and the US agree that counter-terrorism operations must target only terrorists and their hideouts, shelters, emplacements, weapons, vehicles and equipment.

It is no secret to anyone that the SDF, in full coordination and partnership with the international coalition to fight ISIS, were the reason for the elimination of the so-called caliphate. However, the recent Turkish military operation on the area between Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ain has created security confusion for the SDF, which made it difficult for it to fight ISIS and Turkey at the same time. For this we witnessed many attempts to flee from the camps and prisons, some of them succeeded and others failed, as Operation Peace Spring contributed to the restoration of ISIS terrorist activities in some spots that are still bustling with sleeper cells to organize because of the great security chaos left by the military operation throughout northern and eastern Syria, as the cells of the organization breathed a sigh of relief to regroup.

**The effect was very positive, as chaos reigned and some ISIS members managed to escape from some camps, especially the Ain Issa camp, and its cells began to operate in the area as a result of the chaos and security chaos due to the Turkish invasion.** A. K. Participant in the evaluation.

Through the evaluation, the vast majority of the participants confirm that the main goal of Turkey is the elimination of the Kurds, and that they have not heard of Turkey's attempt to strike ISIS or restrict it, not through the visual, audio or read media.

In fact, there have been good neighborly relations between Turkey and ISIS when it controlled large parts of the border strip. Most believed that the military operation contributed to the revitalization of ISIS cells and also contributed to the escape of some ISIS leaders and their joining the fight with the Syrian National Army in Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ain; [here the Aso News Network has monitored the names of 88 leaders who were with ISIS and are now fighting with the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army.](#)

**Certainly, this agreement did not positively contribute to fighting ISIS for a simple and good reason. How did a country provide all logistical support to this terrorist organization by opening**

its airports and land borders for them to reach the Syrian lands and then fight them? There are facts that have occurred confirming that Turkey has a direct link with this terrorist organization; for example, "Syrian oil was sold to Turkey when ISIS was controlling the oil wells in the city of Deir Ezzor, the tanks were entering through the gate of the city of Jarablus to Turkey; in addition, when ISIS took control of the Iraqi city of Mosul at the same time dozens of Turkish employees were detained in the Turkish consulate in the city yet were released within a few hours.

Third, when the Turkish forces and their Syrian mercenaries entered the city of Jarablus on the border with Turkey, the city was handed over to the Turkish army in a meager play and a battle that lasted only half an hour.

Fourth, the assassination of the leader of the ISIS organization who was located near the Turkish-Syrian border. Fifth, the arrest of ISIS leaders from the first row in the city of Jarablus, which is under the control of the Turkish forces and their mercenaries. There is much evidence confirming Turkey's involvement in secret relations with this terrorist organization. Therefore, Turkey will not and did not seriously fight this terrorist organization; for these reasons I say that the US-Turkish agreement has never positively contributed to fighting this terrorist organization.

K.H. a participant in the evaluation.

Accusations are still strong against Turkey with regard to its support for extremist Islamic groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS, and there are many reports indicating that Turkey has at least provided facilities to these groups in using its lands to reach Syria.

After years of war, its bitter experiences, its strange agreements and alliances, the conspiracy theory is still very popular among the Syrians, and this popularity is justified.

**My personal opinion regarding ISIS is that it is an intelligence creation to serve American interests in the first place, and America uses ISIS to justify its international interventions. Turkey is a partner in everything with the United States of America. Everyone knows Turkey's support for various Islamic groups and ISIS is not excluded from it and with regard to the impact on the fight against ISIS, positively or negatively, in my opinion this war has no effect at all because ISIS basically takes orders from intelligence whether American, Turkish, or even Syrian; so, every intelligence agency has factions within the organization.**

M.A. a participant in the evaluation

There is no doubt that the recent military operation has undermined local and international efforts in fighting ISIS and has led to the revitalization of ISIS sleeper cells in the Deir Ezzor desert and the countryside of Raqqa. It is certain that Turkey and the Syrian National Army, after a full year, have not

made any tangible efforts in fighting ISIS but on the contrary, the areas under the control of the National Army have become a safe haven for ISIS fighters.

# Protecting population centers and the city's infrastructure.

---

7. The Turkish side expressed its commitment to ensure safety and well-being of residents of all population centers in the safe zone controlled by the Turkish Forces (safe zone) and reiterated that maximum care will be exercised in order not to cause harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Since the conflict in Syria has turned into an armed conflict, it has been noticed through the practices and behavior of armed groups that looting and plundering have become a mechanism for the circulation of military capital, a means of making money by armed groups and the processes of demographic change are a prominent feature accompanying local agreements; it is also one of the tools for ensuring control, as all parties seek to change social structures by transferring population groups loyal to them to the areas they control. With the presence of millions of internally displaced persons and millions of refugees, the matter has become easier, especially for those who have lost their homes and cities as their return has become impossible.

**The camps and displaced persons in cities such as Tal Tamer, Hasakah and Qamishli are the best proof, contrary to what Turkey has confirmed by ensuring safety and well-being, as the people cannot return. Whoever returns is subjected to extortion and paying taxes to Turkish gangs; their ISIS allies resemble the Mafia (Pay, Receive) method otherwise you will not be protected. Additionally, these gangs have destroyed most of the Kurdish monuments, including statues and tombs of the martyrs who were martyred in order to liberate the region from ISIS terrorism. I am also one of those whose house has been seized and looted of its contents.** Abdul Hamid al-Khalil a witness

The demographic change processes have taken place in a systematic manner and on an ethnic and sectarian basis. Since its occupation of Afrin and its villages, Turkey has expressed its intentions to deport the Kurds from its southern borders under the pretext of a threat to its national security which was evident through its plan to establish a safe zone and resettle 2 million refugees. They are in Turkey and the majority of these are from Ghouta, Homs, Idlib and other areas.

**The population has been displaced on an ethnic basis and by orders of Turkey to the factions loyal to it and these factions are still continuing their practices to empty the city of some of the returnees and remaining ones, as they abuse them, kidnap them and arrest them under false pretenses in order to push them to leave the city and displace them.** M.S. a participant in the evaluation

The violent attack launched by Turkey and the factions loyal to it on northeastern Syria has led to the displacement of more than 180,000 residents of the region, according to United Nations data. After the ceasefire agreement signed with the Turkish side, Turkey released the hand of the factions' elements to practice their habits of looting as a reward for them for participating in the Turkish military operation. All the empty homes left by their people were looted and all the nearly 300 shops were looted. The factions of the Syrian National Army and the local council formed by Turkey were not satisfied with looting and stealing the contents of homes and shops, but rather they seized houses and turned some of them into military headquarters and others into homes for their relatives and some as facilities for the local council while preventing residents from returning to their homes following the end of the military operations.

**Turkey has never complied, the homes and properties of civilians were seized after looting them; Kurdish residents were prevented from returning to their homes in the city and the freedom of individuals was violated in addition to arrest, torture and murder.** A.S a participant in the evaluation

The takeover operations were carried out in a systematic manner, as Turkey used flimsy pretexts, the main aim of which was to carry out large-scale demographic change operations with the aim of removing the Kurds, Assyrians and other religious minorities such as the Yazidis and Christians from its southern borders, in addition to housing loyal groups, of Turkmen or Arab origins, and a much smaller percentage in comparison to other groups, such as the Kurds, who are associated with interests.

**All the residents of Ras Al Ain were forcibly displaced, the returnees were arrested and tortured under various pretexts and all civilian property was stolen. There is a change in the features of the city most notably the use of Turkish currency, the signs of shops and service institutions changed to Turkish and Arabic only and all Kurdish and Syriac paintings that were in the area were removed.** A. K. a participant in the evaluation

Also, the looting and seizure operations were not limited to the national army factions only, but the local council formed by the Turkish governor, who practiced the same actions, as well as the Turkish government, as it transferred all the silos of grain, crops and agricultural crops belonging to the displaced



population through the local council to Turkey. Turkey uses these funds to cover the expenses of its support for the national army and the local council, not to mention the spread of a network of influential Turkish merchants and beneficiaries of the war economy.

**Turkey has not committed to any form of protection of civilians and their property, as it practiced forced displacement against the city's residents and along with the factions, seized public and private property, the ensuing robbery and looting not to mention the destruction and theft of the infrastructure, which was represented by hospitals and medical clinics. In addition to the Alouk water station, which Turkey is exploiting as a political card and causing water cuts in the Hasakah Governorate, it has recently planted agricultural lands that belong to the forcibly displaced, and is exporting its crops to Turkey in flagrant violation of all international standards calling for the protection of human rights and ethnic minorities. Turkey is also seeking to change some of the city's features by imposing the Turkish curriculum in some schools it has recently opened. It is also changing the names of public facilities to Turkish, such as Roj Hospital in Ras Al-Ain, whose name was changed to Ras Al-Ain Hospital in Turkish accompanied by Turkish symbols and flags.**

A.H. a participant in the evaluation

The seventh article of the ceasefire agreement clearly indicated the necessity of Turkey's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of residents in all population centers in the safe zone controlled by Turkish forces, and reiterated its commitment to exert the utmost caution in injury to civilians and damage to civilian infrastructure. Despite this agreement, we have witnessed widespread theft and looting by factions of the Syrian National Army, and the deliberate destruction of infrastructure.

# Commitment to Syria's political unity.

---

8. Both countries reiterate their commitment to the political unity and territorial integrity of Syria and UN-led political process, which aims at ending the Syrian conflict in accordance with UNSCR 2254.

The security agreements that Syria has witnessed between the local parties and behind them its regional and international allies have not contributed to this day in creating a safe and neutral environment for political transition. These agreements do not go beyond the exchange of spheres of influence. Most importantly, these agreements have been disastrous for civilians, even those that predate the hostilities. Before the start of the Astana track, these agreements referred to "local reconciliation" and subsequently, in addition to the agreements that occurred outside the context of the two tracks.

**"Since March 2011, Syria has been witnessing one of the greatest humanitarian catastrophes of this era, as millions of people have been displaced from their homes and sought refuge in neighboring countries, as well Europe. The country has also been destroyed and at least 400,000 people have been killed according to Human Rights Watch. The conflict has not ended yet and one constantly hears the demand for a cessation of hostilities between the conflicting parties..... to no avail. Resolution 2254, unless it enters into force, remains a useless decision. As for the territorial integrity of Syria, all parties call for this, yet the main question is when the conflicting parties will reach to a radical solution.** Rakan Abdi, a participant in the assessment, based in Germany.

Participants in the meeting agree that the ceasefire agreement did not contribute to enhancing the chances of the political process in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2254, but rather undermined its opportunities, as some participants affirmed that Turkey is still dependent on the Sochi and Astana meetings and its agreements with the Russians and with the Iranians, far from any role mentioned for the UN.

**This agreement does not contribute to any political process, nor does it preserve the territorial integrity of Syria at all. On the contrary, this agreement is made on Syrian lands between two non-Syrian parties, without any regard for the opinion of the Syrian state or even the Syrian opposition, nor does any component of the Syrian people, even the so-called mercenaries of the National Army, have any role in this agreement. As such, how can an agreement be formed between two external parties on Syrian land that is in the interest of Syria? The agreement is the result of**

**strength and weakness, and the Syrians have no strength in it; the United Nations resolutions are ink on paper and nothing more, unfortunately.**

The participants in this assessment confirm that the agreement contributed to undermining the opportunities of the political process. The Turkish occupation of Ras al-Ain and other safe, populated and disparate areas was a reason for the displacement of thousands of civilians and contributed to the destruction of the city's infrastructure, which created many cracks among the components of the city. Prior to the Turkish occupation, the regions of northern and eastern Syria enjoyed a stable environment and proved a stable model for coexistence that could have been strengthened and launched towards all other areas in Syria.

# Overall assessment.

---

One year after the signing of the ceasefire agreement between the two governments, we asked the participants with a question about assessing the current situation of the city of Ras Al Ain – Sere Kanye. Everyone agreed that the situation is still poor and complicated and that Turkey has not respected its commitments to the United States. The United States is not monitoring the situation or trying to ensure the implementation of the terms that have been agreed upon. Also, this agreement has amplified the destruction of what has remained of the infrastructure, which has exacerbated the extent of what this bizarre war has destroyed in Syria, which contributes to prolonging life and complicating the crisis even more.

A state of anxiety still exists among the displaced from the city of Sere Kanye and its residents, as they see that the agreement has contributed to stopping the war for a period, but has not put an end to its effects and consequences. Turkey will return to occupy more lands in the event that the situation remains as such.

# Recommendations.

---

- 1 . The United States should work to comprehensively reassess the ceasefire agreement, to determine the extent to which Turkey and the factions loyal to it adhere to their pledges; it should assess the damage to the infrastructure and review all cases of house seizure.
- 2 . The United States should work to add a protocol to the ceasefire agreement that includes establishing mechanisms and centers to monitor Turkey's commitment to its obligations, and it should make more efforts to monitor the human rights situation.
- 3 . The United States should follow a stricter policy regarding the human rights situation, and it should exert more public pressure on Turkey to stop the violations and demographic change processes that have continued since the launch of its infamous military operation.
- 4 . Imposing sanctions on armed groups and individuals who are found guilty of human rights violations in the occupied territories, according to the authority stipulated in Executive Order No. 13894 issued on October 14, 2019. Among those found involved, according to the United Nations report, are the Ahrar al-Sharqiyah group and the Brigades, the Suleiman Shah Division, the Hamza Brigade, the Sultan Murad Brigade, and the Military Police of the Syrian National Army.
- 5 . Immediately cease all transfers of weapons and security assistance to all individuals and security units involved in committing human rights violations in the occupied areas, including the Turkish forces operating in Syria.
- 6 . Providing support to victims of human rights violations in the areas occupied by Turkey, as well as for local documentation efforts.
- 7 . Re-drafting the ceasefire agreement signed with Turkey on October 17th, in a way that contributes to stopping demographic change processes, the forcible return of all displaced persons to their original homes, and the return of stolen property to their owners. There is no doubt that ending the Turkish occupation and its factions in the city of Ras al-Ain, Afrin, Tal Abyad and other Syrian regions, and placing these areas under the control of international forces and under the auspices of the United Nations will ensure the return of the people of those areas, and will establish the foundations of stability in the region, which will contribute to increasing the chances of a political solution.

- 8 . The United States must work immediately for a radical solution to the Syrian issue through the commitment of all parties to Resolution 2254 under the direct supervision of the United Nations, which contributes to ending the Turkish occupation of Ras al-Ain, Tal Abyad, Jarablus, Afrin and others, and placing them under the management of their people.

- 
- 1 . The title of the research, “The Keys of Our Homes Don’t Rust” is one of the slogans of a campaign launched by activists and journalists from Ras al-Ain / Sere Kanye to affirm the right of the displaced from the city to return to their homes and places of residence, and to stop the hands of the Turkish National Army factions from the civilian property that was looted and looted.
  - 2 . <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/united-states-turkey-agree-ceasefire-northeast-syria/>
  - 3 . <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc13994.doc.htm>
  - 4 . <https://news.un.org/ar/story/2019/10/1042161>
  - 5 . <https://arabic.euronews.com/2019/10/23/all-you-need-to-know-about-the-turkish-russian-agreement-on-northern-syria>
  - 6 . [https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F45%2F31&Language=A&DeviceType=Mobile&fbclid=IwAR1\\_D1\\_k\\_Hs8kgUDYR1aaGECO6JKrpH3ZB5GEQVhDfy4KIIOFSQYX6\\_SYI](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FHRC%2F45%2F31&Language=A&DeviceType=Mobile&fbclid=IwAR1_D1_k_Hs8kgUDYR1aaGECO6JKrpH3ZB5GEQVhDfy4KIIOFSQYX6_SYI)
  - 7 . <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2019/11/12/displacement-and-despair-the-turkish-invasion-of-northeast-syria>
  - 8 . <http://kurdchr.net/?p=2423>