



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Genocide Emergency: Syria September 2020

Syria's ten-year civil war has killed more than 400,000 people, including over 116,000 civilians. Six million Syrians are internally displaced. Five million more fled Syria and became refugees. Military interventions by Russia, the U.S., and Turkey have prolonged the war.

The Assad regime tortures and murders its opponents. Syrian prisons killed up to 13,000 prisoners in just four years according to Amnesty International. The systematic persecution continues.

From 2013 – 2019, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), also called Rojava, successfully created a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society led by Kurds. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), allied with the U.S., conquered the last ISIS stronghold in Baghouz in 2019, a victory for Kurds, Yazidis, Christians, Shi'a and other groups that were targets of ISIS genocide.

Turkish and Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army (TFSA) troops drove over 100,000 Yazidis and Kurds out of Afrin in 2018. At least eighteen sacred Yazidi sites were destroyed and Yazidi cemeteries were desecrated. Turkey has repopulated Afrin with Syrian Arab refugees. Following President Trump's abrupt withdrawal of 2,000 U.S. troops in October 2019, Turkish forces invaded Syria and took over a 75-mile-long, 18-mile-wide strip along the Turkish border. TFSA troops committed war crimes and crimes against humanity by destroying Kurdish, Christian, and Yazidi communities in Northern Syria.

Turkey is resettling Syrian Arab refugees into the strip it conquered, replacing Kurds and Christians. Forced population transfers are crimes against humanity under Article 7 of the International Criminal Court's (ICC) Rome Statute and war crimes under Article 8 of the Statute. Turkey and Syria are not states-party to the ICC Statute.

In 2020, the Assad regime and Russia intensified bombing and ground attacks in Idlib province, the last rebel-held area. Daily airstrikes in the province from early December 2019 to late February 2020 forced another one million civilians to flee their homes. The Syrian and Russian air forces have targeted Idlib hospitals and civilian centers, committing war crimes.

The U.N. Security Council has been powerless to end the Syrian civil war because of Russian vetoes. It passed a single resolution that allows only one humanitarian aid flow through Northwestern Syria.

Syria, Turkey, TFSA, Russia, and Al Qaeda terrorists commit genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes against ethnic and religious minorities, including Kurds, Christians, Druze, Shi'a Muslims, Alawites, and Yazidis. Assad's armed forces, with assistance from the Russian air force, is bombing civilian centers and hospitals, committing crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Genocide Watch considers Syria to be at **Stage 9: Extermination.**

Genocide Watch recommends:

- Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) representatives must be included in all peace talks between the Syrian government and opposition.
- The U.N., Russia, U.S. and European Union must give more humanitarian aid to Syrian IDP's and refugees.
- Turkey must withdraw its troops from Syria and end its forcible resettlement of Syrian refugees.
- Turkey, Syria, and Russia must maintain the ceasefire they agreed upon in March 2020 until a peace agreement can be reached at upcoming Geneva negotiations.
- The U.N. General Assembly should create a special criminal court to try war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide committed in Syria and Iraq.